

Children and Young People's Services Select Committee

25 April 2012 – At a meeting of the Committee held at 10.30am at County Hall, Chichester.

Present: Mr Burrett (Chairman)

Mr Burgess	Mrs Ross	Mr Watson
Mr T M E Dunn	Mr Sheldon	Dr Wilsdon
Mr Graysmark	Mr Smytherman	Mr Wilson
Mr Lanzer	Mr Strong	
Mrs Mills	Mr Tyler	

In attendance by invitation: Mr Evans (Cabinet Member for Children and Families) and Mr Griffiths (Cabinet Member for Education and Schools).

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Le Rossignol, Mrs Reynolds and Mrs Waight.

Declaration of Interests

1. In accordance with the Code of Conduct the following personal interests were declared:-
 - Mr Burgess – Item 9 (Education and Schools Policy – Review of Achievement) as his daughter is a teacher at a West Sussex School
 - Mrs Mills – Item 9 as a member of the management committee of Links College South.
 - Mrs Ross – Item 8 (Improvement Board Update) as a member of the West Sussex Improvement Board
 - Mr Smytherman – Item 9 as a member of the management committee of Links College South.
 - Mr Strong – Item 9 as a governor of The Regis School
 - Mr Tyler – Item 9 as his daughter is a teacher at a West Sussex School

Minutes

2. Resolved - That the minutes of the meeting held on 7th March 2012 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

Terms of Reference

3. The Committee considered its terms of reference (copy appended to the signed minutes).
4. Mr Dunn declared an interest as an advisor to the Cabinet Member for Education and Schools
5. The following points were covered in discussion:
 - It was confirmed that point 9 of the Committee's Terms of Reference also included referring matters to the Joint Area Committee's.

- Members suggested that consideration should be given to including a representative from an Academy as a nominated member on the Committee particularly as increasing numbers of children within the County were being educated in Academies. It was also suggested that the parent governors should be referred to in the Terms of Reference as parent governor representatives. *Mr Burrett advised that these suggestions would be referred to the Scrutiny Review Group for consideration.*
6. Resolved – That the Committee notes its terms of reference.

Committee Membership

7. The Committee was invited to note its membership of Mr Burgess, Mr Burrett, Mr T M E Dunn, Mr Graysmark, Mr Lanzer, Mrs Mills, Mrs Ross, Mr Sheldon, Mr Smytherman, Mr Tyler, Mrs Waight, Mr Watson and Dr Wilsdon; the Committee also currently had one vacancy for a conservative member.

8. Resolved – That the Committee notes its membership

Appointment of Business Planning Group Members

9. The Chairman advised that the nominations from the Conservative group for the Committee's Business Planning Group were Mr Burrett, Mrs Waight and Mr Graysmark.

10. The Chairman called for nominations to the Business Planning Group from the Liberal Democrat group and nominations were received for Dr Wilsdon and Mrs Ross.

11. Resolved – That the Committee appoints Mr Burrett, Mr Graysmark, Mrs Ross, Mrs Waight and Dr Wilsdon to the Business Planning Group.

Nomination for Chairman and Vice-Chairman

12. Nominations were received for Mr Burrett as Chairman and Mrs Waight as Vice-Chairman.

13. Resolved – That the Committee nominates Mr Burrett as its Chairman and Mrs Waight as its Vice Chairman for approval by the County Council at its meeting on 18 May 2012.

Improvement Board Update

14. The Committee considered a report by the Director of Children's Services (copy appended to the signed minutes).

15. Stuart Gallimore, Director of Children's Services, introduced the report and advised the Committee that:

- It was now 18 months since the safeguarding service had received an inadequate rating from Ofsted, which meant that an unannounced re-inspection could occur at any time from 1st May 2012 onwards.

Agenda Item Number 2

- As part of preparations for the re-inspection, internal audit had reviewed the service's quality assurance processes; this had resulted in an overall assessment of substantial assurance.
- The Adoption service had recently received an Ofsted inspection result of 'good with outstanding features'.
- As a result of the commitment to partnership working police officers would be based at the Children's Access Point (CAP) from 25th June 2012.

16. The Cabinet Member for Children and Families explained that a meeting with the Minister of State for Children and Families had been arranged for the 17th May, which he would attend along with the Leader, the Chief Executive and the Director of Children's Services. This provided an opportunity to demonstrate how much work the County Council had done to make improvements to the service.

17. The Committee made comments and asked questions, including those that follow. Members:

- Were concerned that during the re-inspection process staff would feel pressured to alter their way of working in order to impress the Ofsted inspectors. *Peter Evans, Cabinet Member for Children and Families explained that staff would not be putting on a show for Ofsted and that the inspectors would observe normal day to day delivery of the service. Mr Gallimore advised that staff had been fully briefed as to what would be required of them during the inspection process to ensure that they felt prepared.*
- Requested clarification regarding the recommendation in the Internal Audit report to adopt a more risk-based approach to case auditing. *Mr Gallimore advised that the proposal was to assess some aspects of case recording less frequently but that this would be frequent enough to identify any issues of concern that did occur and deal with these promptly.*
- Raised concern about the Internal Audit report findings regarding the quality of recording case notes. *Mr Gallimore explained that this was partly due to a technicality with Frameworki which meant that if an officer omitted to click a tick box to indicate they had completed an action when recording their case notes then this would create an error in the data as it would appear that the action was outstanding. The service were liaising with Frameworki to address this issue. Mr Gallimore also advised that the service were trialling the Dragon Dictation software which enabled Social Workers to dictate case notes direct onto Frameworki, rather than type them. This had proved effective in accurately recording information and speeding up the process of creating case reports.*

18. The Leader, who was seated in the public gallery, was invited to speak to the Committee by the Chairman. She emphasised that the service had moved on from the inadequate judgement and had established a sound foundation from which to continue improving. She commended Mr Evans, members who sat on the Improvement Board and staff for the amount of hard work they had done to make the service fit for purpose and also thanked Mr Simmons for his work with the Corporate Parenting Panel, stressing the important role all members have in being corporate parents.

19. Resolved: That the Director of Children's Services provides a further update to the Committee on progress delivering against the Improvement Plan at it's next meeting on 13 June 2012.

Education and Schools Policy – Review of Achievement

20. The Committee considered a report by the Review of Education and Schools Policy Task Force (copy appended to the signed minutes). Richard Burrett, Chairman of the Task Force, introduced the report.

21. The following points were raised in discussion. Members: -

- Recognised the importance of maximising the learning potential of all young people.
- Stressed that exam results were only a reflection of how an individual had performed on one day and were not necessarily representative of a child's overall learning throughout the year. For these reasons it was felt that using a schools exam performance as an indicator of their success did not reflect the wider achievement of pupils and this concern should be raised at a ministerial level. *David Sword, Director of Learning, explained that statistical data relating to a school's exam results performance provided the ability to benchmark and compare a school with its neighbour but that this was only one measure used to assess performance.*
- Raised concern that 'labelling' children – for example as coming from a disadvantaged area meant that there was the risk this would be used as an excuse for under-performance. *Mr Sword explained that research indicated there was a correlation between deprivation and under-achievement and this started at an early age. The focus of the County Council on Early Intervention was aiming to break this cycle by putting in place support for the child and family to improve attainment. The Cabinet Member for Education and Schools confirmed that the role of the parents in inspiring the child was essential and the 'Think Family' initiative was working with families to encourage this.*
- Acknowledged that evidence indicated attainment of children at Key Stage 2 (KS2) was better at 'all-through' primary schools in comparison with children who had been schooled at an infant and junior school.
- Queried how collaborative working between schools would improve KS2 results. *Mr Sword advised that schools were encouraged to be less reliant on intervention from the Local Authority to make improvements and were expected to share expertise with other schools – for example a school with poor maths results working with one that excelled in maths.*
- Understood the importance of elected members engaging with schools in their areas but felt that some members were concerned how this could be achieved. *The Cabinet Member for Education and Schools advised that members were welcome to accompany him when he visited schools in their area which would initiate engagement between the member and their local schools.*
- Highlighted that the general public may need more information so that they understand the County Council policy on encouraging academy status. *The*

Cabinet Member for Education and Schools advised that he would investigate this further.

22. Resolved: That the Task Force recommendations be agreed with the following amendments:

Recommendation 3: All schools should be encouraged to work in partnership with neighbouring schools to raise attainment particularly at Key Stage 2.

Recommendation 4: All elected members should be encouraged to visit and get to know schools in their area and ask relevant questions about raising attainment at Key Stage 2.

Recommendation 6: The definition of pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) who are identified as School Action and School Action Plus should be included in the final version of the Executive Summary.

Forward Plan of Key Decisions

23. The Committee considered the Forward Plan – May – August 2012 (copy appended to the signed minutes).

24. Resolved: That the Forward Plan be noted.

Date of the Next Meeting

25. The Committee noted that its next scheduled meeting will be held on 13 June 2012 at 10.30am at County Hall, Chichester.

The meeting ended at 12.20 pm.

Chairman