

Children and Young People's Services Select Committee

25 November 2015 – At a meeting of the Committee held at 10.30am at County Hall, Chichester.

Present: Mr Burrett (Chairman)

Mrs Bennett	Mr High	Mr R Oakley
Mr Blunden	Dr Holt	Mr Parsons
Mr Cloake	Mrs Le Rossignol	Mr Smith
Mrs Duncton	Mrs Mullins	Mr Wickremaratchi

In attendance by invitation: Mr Evans (Cabinet Member for Children – Start of Life) and Mr Hunt (Cabinet Member for Education and Skills).

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Jupp. Mr Oppler and Mrs Ryan were absent.

Declaration of Interests

87. No interests were declared.

Minutes

88. Resolved - That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2015 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

Urgent Matters

89. The Chairman of the Committee explained that a 4 week Ofsted inspection of the County Council's Children's Services had been completed on the 19th November 2015. Due to the importance of this inspection it was considered prudent that the Committee was promptly made aware of the impact it had on the service and any initial feedback received, thereby warranting consideration as an Urgent Matter.

90. The Cabinet Member for Children – Start of Life and the Executive Director Care, Wellbeing and Education briefed the Committee on the recent Ofsted inspection. The following points were highlighted: -

- Up to 14 Inspectors were on site at any one time and feedback had been very positive on the professionalism of the staff they interacted with.
- As well as speaking to staff the Inspectors had interviewed partners of the service, customers (such as Foster Carers) and service users (young people) too.
- Provision of data requested by the Inspectors had been swift and efficient indicating that staff understood how and where to access information, demonstrating processes were clear and working well.
- Initial feedback from the Inspectors had not revealed any surprises and acknowledged that the authority was aware of issues and had action plans in place to make improvements where required.
- The report would be published on the Ofsted website on 20th January 2016.
- Sir Robin Boshier, South East Regional Director of Ofsted, had offered to come to the County Council following publication of the Ofsted report and

address Members on the inspection process and subsequent outcome. This may assist Members in gaining a greater understanding of how the County Council was performing comparatively both regionally and nationally.

- The inspection was entirely funded by central Government but it was acknowledged to be a resource intensive process for the Inspectors and the County Council. Recognising the need for efficiency, from April 2017 the Ofsted framework would be changing, moving away from authorities being subject to a number of separate inspections to a joint inspection regime including the Care Quality Commission.

91. The Cabinet Member expressed his thanks to staff for all their hard work, the long hours they had put in and to partners such as the Police, for accommodating requests for meetings at short notice and the resultant disruption to their other work this caused during the inspection period.

92. The Executive Director Care, Wellbeing and Education advised the Committee that the County Council's Adult Education Services provider Aspire had also recently been inspected by Ofsted. Due to the County Council's safeguarding and commissioning role in relation to this service, Ofsted Inspectors had interviewed County Council officers as part of the inspection process. The results of this inspection would be known prior to Christmas.

93. Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) had also visited the County Council to assess the School Improvement Service. The feedback had indicated HMI was satisfied with the service and the plan the County Council had put in place to raise standards at Key Stage 2 following disappointing results in the summer.

94. The Committee Chairman explained that the Ofsted report on Children's Services would form an agenda item at a future meeting of the Select Committee. The option of taking up the invitation from the South East Regional Director of Ofsted to come to the County Council and address Members would also be investigated further. He expressed his thanks on behalf of the Committee to all the staff and to the Cabinet Member for the considerable amount of work they had done during the inspection period.

West Sussex Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2014-15

95. The Committee considered a report by the Independent Chair of the West Sussex Safeguarding Children Board (WSSCB) (copy appended to the signed minutes).

96. Jimmy Doyle, Independent Chair, advised the Committee that the recent Ofsted inspection of Children's Services had included an assessment of the Board and its work. He explained initial feedback from Inspectors had echoed that of the County Council, indicating there were no surprises and the Board was aware of areas where additional work was required.

97. Mr Doyle introduced the WSSCB Annual Report and provided a presentation (copy appended to the signed minutes). The following points were highlighted: -

- The Annual Report was an opportunity for the Board to highlight the achievements made and challenges faced over the previous year and set out future plans and priorities.

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- One of the main achievements was the progression of work in raising awareness of and tackling Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).
- Not all the aspirations set out in the Business Plan for the year had been achieved so some had been rolled forward to the 2015-16 Business Plan.
- The membership and structure of the Board had been re-assessed to ensure the right cross sector of partners was represented.
- The governance arrangements relating to the sub-groups had been revised to enable them to work more effectively.

98. Peter Evans, Cabinet Member for Children – Start of Life, highlighted the importance of the direct links that the WSSCB had with the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Start of Life Partnership Board to ensure good communication and the ability to enable a consistent approach on issues of concern across the working of these different Boards.

99. The following points were raised in discussion; Members: -

- Requested clarification regarding the involvement of the Child Death Overview Panel in reviewing a child's death. *Mr Doyle explained that a Coroner's verdict on cause of death would be awaited before the Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) proceeded to look at a case. The purpose of the CDOP was to make recommendations to the WSSCB regarding potential factors that could have led to the death and whether there were actions that could be taken to try and prevent similar deaths in the future.*
- Raised concern regarding the potential vulnerability of those children who were home educated and the apparent lack of powers afforded to the County Council by legislation in relation to safeguarding these children. *Mr Doyle explained that both the WSSCB and other Safeguarding Boards around the country were concerned that regulations had not been changed in relation to electively home educated (EHE) children, in that social workers were only allowed to visit EHE children when concerns had formally been raised about their safety. The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills highlighted that he had written to the Secretary of State for Education earlier in the year to highlight the need for greater safeguarding powers in relation to EHE children and that these children may be more vulnerable to radicalisation. Members asked that these issues and concerns be raised with the Local Government Association (LGA). The Cabinet Member for Children – Start of Life, who sits on the LGA Children's Board, agreed to raise these matters with the LGA Board.*
- Wondered whether, with more than 40 members and variable attendance levels, the WSSCB membership should be streamlined. *Mr Doyle indicated that the WSSCB adhered to national guidance that set out who should be represented on the Safeguarding Board. In addition, issues specific to a particular area would influence membership, so due to the presence of Gatwick airport, UKBA were represented on the WSSCB. Membership had been reviewed over the past year and the Board was content membership was appropriate. A letter had also been sent to all members reminding them of the importance of coming to Board meetings which had resulted in improved attendance. Future meetings were to be held at Billingshurst Village Hall, a more accessible and central location in the County.*
- Raised concern at the number of Child and Family Assessments taking more than 56 days and the fact that there appeared to be a high rate of children being placed on a Child Protection Plan (CPP) who had previously been

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subject to a CPP. *Mr Doyle indicated that the Board had scrutinised this issue and raised concern that some children may be taken off CPPs too soon. Avril Wilson, Executive Director Care, Wellbeing and Education explained that through embedding the Signs of Safety approach within the workforce social workers were becoming better equipped to assess the progress a family had made and so were more accurately able to assess when it was suitable to step the child down from the CPP.*

- Wondered why there was no reference in the Annual Report or the Business Plan to the issue of E-Safety, when there was an increased awareness about the vulnerability of children when they were using the internet. *Mr Doyle indicated that this was an area of work the Board was currently focussing on but that, in the previous year, the need to address CSE as a matter of urgency had taken priority. He indicated that he would highlight to the Board the need to feature the work they were doing on E-Safety in the 2015-16 Annual Report.*
- Were pleased to hear that the production 'Chelsea's Choice' was being shown at secondary schools across the County raising awareness about Child Sexual Exploitation.

100. Resolved that the Committee: -

- (1) Notes the West Sussex Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2014-15.
- (2) Asks the Cabinet Member to highlight the concerns in relation to the lack of safeguarding powers for electively home educated children with the Local Government Association Children's Board.

West Sussex Partnership Families Strategic Plan 2020

101. The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director Care, Wellbeing and Education (copy appended to the signed minutes). Ms Wilson introduced the report and a presentation was provided by Sharon Dodd, External Consultant, who provided an overview of the consultation process to date and highlighted that the priorities of the Plan would change as outcomes improved over time (copy appended to the signed minutes).

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

- Were concerned at the omission of a reference in the Plan to the problem of Social Media being used to facilitate abuse/and or Child Sexual Exploitation. *Ms Wilson explained that there were clear processes in place and work was underway to raise awareness of and tackle this issue but she acknowledged that this was not explicitly set out in the Plan. In this respect the Plan would be amended to reference this important area of work. Ms Wilson also explained that she could provide further details to Members at a future meeting regarding the preventative activity that was being undertaken in relation to this issue.*
- Queried what support and guidance was available for young fathers, as it seemed that service provision was generally focussed on young mothers. *Ms Wilson explained that the Family Nurse Partnership, who supported young*

mothers up to the age of 19, would also seek to create links with the father. The aim of this was to assist the building of a relationship between the father and child and to provide an opportunity of assessing the emotional wellbeing of the father. Peter Evans also highlighted the work of Children and Family Centres where sessions were held for fathers as part of the regular programme of events.

- Were reassured to hear that the County Council was seeking to influence the provision of more affordable housing through the Growth Plans as it was recognised that there was currently a serious lack of provision.

103. Resolved that the Committee: -

- (1) Endorses the draft West Sussex Partnership Families Strategic Plan 2020 with the inclusion of additional information setting out the preventative work being carried out to tackle the use of social media to facilitate Child Abuse and Child Sexual Exploitation
- (2) Accepts the offer from the Executive Director to provide further information on the work being undertaken by the County Council to tackle the use of social media to facilitate Child Abuse and Child Sexual Exploitation and suggests that this is extended to all Members via the use of a Member Day.
- (3) Agrees that the Committee should scrutinise the impact of implementation of the service plans on an annual basis to 2020 and receive any proposed significant updates to the Families Plan during that time.

Report from the Business Planning Group

104. The Committee considered a report by the Chairman of the Business Planning Group (copy appended to the signed minutes).

105. The following points were raised in discussion; Members: -

- Requested that the item on the proposed 2016-17 work programme to cover CSE and Safeguarding should include consideration of the impact of social media on these issues and should be extended to cover radicalisation.
- Requested that the item on Early Years provision detailed in Appendix 2 should include consideration of the relationship between the County Council and Private Nurseries, the issues caused by the different approaches taken by the various operators and how this impacts on children's readiness for school.

106. Mandy Shipley, Senior Advisor, explained that, since publication of the papers, it had become obvious that changes would need to be made to the timetable of items shown in Appendix 1. An item to consider the Budget would be included at the January 2016 meeting of the Committee and it was unlikely that an item on the "STARS" area schools would be ready for the March 2016 meeting. In addition, it was likely that the Project Day scheduled for 3 February would be used for a formal meeting of the Committee to consider the published Ofsted report.

107. Resolved that the Committee:-

- (1) Supports the proposed approach to the agenda items for forthcoming meetings and updates to the work programme for the period to the end of March 2016.
- (2) Supports the draft outline work programme for the 2016/17 year to be presented to the Performance and Finance Select Committee on 3rd December 2015

Forward Plan

108. The Committee considered the Forward Plan, December 2015 – March 2016 (copy appended to the signed minutes).

109. Resolved – That the Committee notes the Forward Plan.

Possible Items for Future Scrutiny

110. No items were raised.

Date of next meeting

111. The Committee noted that the next scheduled meeting will be held on 14 January 2016 at 10.30am at County Hall, Chichester.

The meeting ended at 1.23pm.

Chairman