

Children and Young People's Services Select Committee

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

Present: Mr Burrett (Chairman)

Mr Burgess	Mrs Le Rossignol	Mr Smytherman
Mr T M E Dunn	Mr McDougall	Mrs Waight
Mr Graysmark	Mrs Mills	Dr Wilsdon
Mr Lanzer	Mrs Ross	

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

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Arculus, Mrs Reynolds, Mrs Thompson, Mr Tyler, Mr Watson and from Mr Evans (Cabinet Member for Children and Families). Mr Strong was absent.

Declaration of Interests

105. In accordance with the Code of Conduct the following personal interests were declared: -

- Mrs Ross – Item 6 (Improvement Board Update) – as a member of the West Sussex Children's Services Improvement Board
- Mr Smytherman – Item 5 (Proposed Changes to the Education Welfare Service) - as a member of the Management Committee of Links College South.

Minutes

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

Music Education Hub

107. The Committee considered a report by the Director Commercial Services, (copy appended to the signed minutes). Mr Griffiths, Cabinet Member for Education and Schools, introduced the report explaining that the current West Sussex Music Service was an outstanding but traditional service. The Music Education Hub provided an opportunity to move with the times and deliver participants a service with greater choice.

108. Andrew Kerry, Head of Music Service, gave a presentation outlining the vision for the Music Education Hub (MEH). He explained that the preferred operating model for the MEH was a 'Company Limited by Guarantee' with clear charitable aims and status (copy of slides appended to the signed minutes).

109. Philip Litchfield, Chief Executive of Berkshire Maestros Limited, gave an overview of the origins and work of Berkshire Maestros, an independent company

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with charitable status that had provided a music service within Berkshire for over 10 years. He explained the initial difficulties of adjusting to trading as an independent company following previous experience of operating as a service provider within the 'safety net' of a Local Authority, such as the need to balance the competing priorities of ensuring financial matters were being dealt with at the same time as focussing on the primary aim, to teach and inspire young people.

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

- Queried how Berkshire Maestros had dealt with constrained budgets. *Mr Litchfield explained that an income development officer had been employed to explore new income streams like Gift Aid. Challenging targets were also set within the organisation such as aiming to have no empty seats at concerts and attempting to reduce costs by 10% when contracts were due to be re-negotiated.*
- Wondered how Berkshire Maestros assessed customer perception and satisfaction. *Mr Litchfield advised that the service undertook a biannual survey and met with stakeholder groups to assess customer views. In addition a good indicator of success was that figures showed the service was working with a higher number of customers than when it was operating as part of the Local Authority.*
- Asked if Berkshire Maestros offered a subsidised service for young people from low income families. *Mr Litchfield confirmed that there was a sliding scale of fees which took financial situation into account and a scheme to support those in challenging financial circumstances. Members queried how the service was able to identify young people who qualified for a subsidised service. Mr Litchfield explained that being in receipt of free school meals (fsm) would automatically mean a young person could benefit from a subsidised service. Due to the Data Protection Act it was not possible for the Local Authorities to pass information about those who received fsm to Berkshire Maestros; therefore it was likely that, as a result of this inability to share data, some of these children were missing out on the service. However Mr Litchfield advised that good relationships had developed between the service and the schools, who, in part, would be aware of such eligible young people at their school and be able to put them in touch with the Berkshire Maestros service.*
- Queried if Berkshire Maestros worked with any Academies. *Mr Litchfield explained that they did and that flexibility within the service was important in order to create a model which suited the needs of the academy.*
- Were encouraged to hear that the service provided instrument hire for a flat rate annual fee.

111. Tegwen Elliott and Eli Pailthorpe-Peart, Members of the Youth Cabinet, each explained their experience of using the current West Sussex Music Service.

- Tegwen was a Clarinet player and, had in the past, taken private lessons. She now received lessons via the West Sussex Music Service and described her teacher as inspiring and enthusiastic.

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- Eli played a number of instruments and had previously taken lessons through the Music Service but did not feel the method of teaching was appropriate for him. He ceased receiving lessons and chose to teach himself via other methods such as the internet.

112. Tegwen and Eli provided feedback from research undertaken amongst their peers regarding what they'd like the MEH to provide and highlighted the following points they felt should be taken into consideration in shaping the MEH: -

- Retention of Music Centres around the County (as provided by the current West Sussex Music Service) to offer young people the opportunity to meet and play music but also socialise.
- Good quality teaching from inspirational, enthusiastic teachers.
- An affordable service with the option to hire instruments and try them out to assist young people in finding the right instrument for them.
- A service that offered opportunities for progression, both via a formal route through completion of grades and the potential to perform in different musical groups as proficiency to play an instrument improved.
- It should offer a varied range of musical genres to cater for a wide range of tastes.
- Ensuring young people were made aware of the proposed changes in relation to creation of the MEH, forming a focus group of young people to obtain their views on what it should provide and, where possible, incorporating these when developing the service.

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

- Acknowledged the importance of good music teachers but queried whether peer mentoring was also effective. *Tegwen confirmed that peer mentoring was happening in the current Music Service with older musicians working with and developing the younger musicians. She also explained that attending a performance of the Chichester Youth Band when she was younger had contributed to her determination to excel at playing her instrument and become a member of the band herself.*
- Queried how the views of young people would be taken into account in designing the MEH and how the service would offer choice. *Derek Irvine, Director Commercial Services, explained that officers developing the proposal for the MEH had already been working with the Youth Cabinet and the feedback received would be reflected in the service design. It was anticipated that a key part of the operating model would be the ability to bring in partners with strengths in different areas to ensure that choice was provided to service users.*
- Asked how accessible the Music Service was and whether there could be any lessons learnt in promotion of the MEH. *Eli explained that some improvements were required, particularly in regard to how the service was promoted. He suggested that use of Social Media such as Facebook and Twitter would reach a wider youth audience and could result in a better uptake.*

114. Daniel Sartin, representing Unison, and Dave Thomas, representing the National Union of Teachers, addressed the Committee and highlighted the following issues: -

- There was concern at the lack of detail in the report regarding the alternative proposals that had been considered and the associated risks.
- It was felt that Aspire Sussex Limited (the former West Sussex County Council Adult and Community Learning) had not been established for very long. In this respect it was not necessarily appropriate to use this as a benchmark for establishment of the MEH, as those running Aspire were still learning the lessons of trading as an independent company with charitable status.
- There was concern at the limited information available on staff involvement in shaping the model for the MEH. It was acknowledged that staff were more likely to feel secure and 'buy-in' to proposed change if they had been fully consulted and provided with opportunities to input suggestions regarding the operation of the MEH.
- It was felt there was insufficient information regarding models other than Berkshire Maestros Limited that had been explored.

115. During debate the following points were covered - Members: -

- Were concerned that there was limited supporting evidence in the report to provide the reasoning behind why the proposed model would be best for the County Council to adopt and queried what staff consultation had taken place to date. *Mr Irvine advised that further work was being done on the Business Case for the MEH and the outcome of this, along with all the different options considered, would be included within the Cabinet Member Decision Report. The project team had received specific input from Human Resources in relation to the impact of the proposals on the staff and there were ongoing discussions with the management and staff of the service. In addition Mr Kerry explained that a staff survey had been undertaken and staff had been involved in focus group sessions to contribute ideas regarding the design of the hub. Further sessions with the staff were also scheduled during January.*
- Asked whether a premises had been identified that the MEH could use as its administrative base. *Mr Griffiths advised that a County Council owned premises had been identified.* Members suggested that to assist in improving the viability of the MEH the facility should be made available on a repairing lease.
- Highlighted that in order to enable effective scrutiny of proposed Cabinet Member Decisions more comprehensive information should be provided in reports to Members to assist them in making their recommendations.

116. Mrs Le Rossignol proposed that the Select Committee support the proposals for the future operation of the Music Education Hub Target Operating Model; this was seconded by Mr Dunn.

117. A vote was held and the proposal was agreed.

Resolved - that the Committee:

- (1) Supports the proposals for the future operation of the Music Education Hub Target Operating Model.
- (2) Requests that the service focus on developing further opportunities for engagement with staff and their representatives.
- (3) Asks the Cabinet Member to ensure the County Council build on best practice by drawing on the experience of other organisations in developing the detailed plans for implementing the Music Education Hub.
- (4) Asks the Cabinet Member to ensure adequate safeguards are in place to maintain a service for those who require a subsidised service.
- (5) Asks the Cabinet Member to ensure the opportunity is provided for young people to contribute towards development of the new service and its ongoing operation.
- (6) Asks the Cabinet Member to ensure a premises is provided for the Music Education Hub for the foreseeable future.
- (7) Requests that the Business Planning Group highlight to service managers the necessity of providing sufficient detail within Cabinet Member Decision preview reports prepared for Select Committees.

Proposed Changes to the Education Welfare Service

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

119. Mr Burgess declared a personal interest as a Governor of St Wilfrid's Catholic School, Crawley.

120. David Sword, Director of Learning, and Richard Barker, Senior Manager Pupil Compliance, introduced the report acknowledging that due to staff turnover the model described for implementation in April 2013 had become operational at the start of the autumn term.

121. Mary Ramacciotti, Headteacher of Yapton Primary School in Yapton, Rob Hatherley, Headteacher of Littlegreen School in Compton and Jonathan Morris, Headteacher of St. Wilfrid's School in Crawley, addressed the Committee and highlighted the following issues: -

- It was felt that there had been very little notice regarding the changes, as schools were only informed in September regarding the proposed staff reductions due in April 2013, but the model was implemented in September.
- There was concern about the potential negative effect that schools threatening parents with action could have on the relationship between the school and families.
- There was concern at the additional workload and cost that schools would have to absorb in carrying out absence investigation.
- It was felt that the threshold level of absenteeism for referring a case to the Education Welfare Service was too high and by this point there would already have been a detrimental effect on the child's education.
- It was recognised that the advice line could provide good, supportive assistance but it could be difficult to get through and there needed to be additional training of the staff to ensure they gave consistent advice.

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- The level of concern about the changes to the service had been voiced widely amongst schools as demonstrated by the strength of feeling expressed to the Heads Executive.

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

- Raised concern that the reduced staffing levels were already in place despite implementation not being due until April 2013. *Mr Sword explained that staff consultation regarding the proposals had taken place early in the process and following on from this a number of Education Welfare Officers (EWOs) achieved employment elsewhere in the authority or took a post at a school. Although a recruitment process could have been undertaken for these vacant EWO roles this would have been irresponsible as the posts would have to be made redundant in time for implementation of the new model in April 2013 so the reduced staff levels were in place earlier than anticipated. However the County Council would provide support to those schools that either wanted to employ their own EWOs or train existing staff to carry out that function.*
- Queried whether an alternative model for the service could be considered. *Mr Sword acknowledged that, going forward, the new working arrangements would be reviewed to assess their effectiveness and consideration would be given to any changes necessary. However Mr Gallimore, Director of Children's Services, stressed that Central Government was increasingly driving through the re-allocation of funding from the Local Authority to schools. In this respect schools would need to be more creative in developing locality hubs to take on some of the work historically carried out by the County Council.*
- Requested clarification regarding the number of full time equivalent (fte) staff who would be available to undertake case work across the County. *Mr Barker advised that 3fte staff were carrying out work to fulfil statutory duties and 6fte staff were allocated to case work.*
- Queried whether there would be additional guidance produced for Governors due to their increasing responsibility regarding pupil attendance. *Mr Barker explained that existing legislation already meant accurate recording of pupil attendance was a requirement. However a briefing document for Governors was due to be circulated in due course.*
- Raised concern that cuts would lead to a worse service and potential harm to children. *Mr Griffiths stressed that he had already seen evidence of schools working in partnership to develop local solutions and felt there was not a risk of harm occurring. Mr Sword explained that if reductions were not made within the Education Welfare Service, the cost savings would have to be found elsewhere, such as by cutting the Educational Psychology Service (EPS). Mr Morris stressed that Headteachers would not want to see any cuts in the EPS.*

123. Mr Lanzer proposed that the Select Committee support the proposed changes to the role of the Education Welfare Service and its staffing levels; this was seconded by Mrs Waight.

A vote was held and the proposal was agreed

124. Resolved - that the Committee:

- (1) Supports the proposed changes to the role of the Education Welfare Service and its staffing levels.
- (2) Requests that the Learning Service undertake a review at a suitable interval of the effectiveness of the new arrangements, including the advice line, and the thresholds for intervention by the Education Welfare Service.
- (3) Requests that the service investigate the potential to provide further support to schools and area partnerships wishing to take on responsibilities themselves.
- (4) Requests that the service should provide a progress report in one year's time to update the Committee on the impact of the service review.

Improvement Board Update

125. The Committee considered a report by the Director of Children's Services (copy appended to the signed minutes). Stuart Gallimore, Director of Children's Services, introduced the report.

126. Mr Gallimore explained that since his report was published additional authorities had received the results of their Ofsted inspections. The first authority to receive a judgement of 'Good' under the new inspection regime had been announced – the London Borough of Redbridge.

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

- Requested clarification regarding the percentage of staff who were Senior Social Workers or Senior Practitioners and how this compared to the national average. *Mr Gallimore explained that a figure of 55% was favourable compared to the national average and was a good indicator that the authority had improved staff retention. He stressed that he would be happier if the levels at the County Council were between 60-70%.*
- Asked whether incentives could be used to increase staff retention within Intensive Family Support. *Mr Gallimore advised that Annie MacIver, who had recently joined the authority in a newly created role as Head of Children's Social Care, was currently assessing the role profile of these staff and what changes could be made to the service to improve retention in this area.*
- Requested an update on the situation with the American Social Workers who had joined the authority to fulfil a 2 year contract. *Mr Gallimore advised that one member of staff remained and that investigations were ongoing to ascertain whether appropriate work visas could be obtained for two other staff.*

128. Resolved that: the report be noted.

Total Performance Monitoring Report to 30th September 2012

129. The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director Finance and Performance and Director of Children's Services (copy appended to the signed minutes). Clare Hodgson, Client Service Support Manager, introduced the report.

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

- Requested clarification regarding what was being done to address the issue of Special Schools being at 98% capacity thereby limiting the County Council's ability to place any new cases within West Sussex maintained schools. *Mr Sword explained that in the short term a budget was being planned for funding the placement of children in schools in other counties if this proved necessary. However in relation to proactively planning for the future, work was being done to explore expansion of existing special school sites to take increased pupil numbers and improvements were being made to the data used to help forecast planning places.*
- Queried why there had been an underspend on the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) contract when it seemed that this was an area where there should be better uptake of the service. *Mr Gallimore advised that this was due to a delay in the commencement of a tendering process for a new contract.*

131. Resolved that: the report be noted.

Budget Update and Business Planning 2013/14

132. The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director Finance and Performance and the Director of Children's Services (copy appended to the signed minutes). Mr Gallimore introduced the report explaining that following recent guidance received from Central Government some of the measures used to assess performance against the Performance Framework Objectives set out in the report would be altered prior to being taken to the Policy and Resources Select Committee (PRSC) on 6 December 2012. This was due to the need to reflect government indicators surrounding aspirations for services in the objectives of the County Council.

133. Mr Sword advised that improvements in Key Stage 2 results during the summer meant that the statistics for the County Council's performance in this area were in line with the national average; however the aim now would be to achieve results above the national average. He also explained that the intention was to expand the programme to work with a range of providers to develop young people's entrepreneurial skills needed for work in order to cover a wider area and reach a larger number of pupils.

134. Members welcomed the expansion of the programme to work with education and training providers, learners of all ages and with businesses to develop young people's entrepreneurial skills needed for work as it opened up opportunities to those pupils who may not excel at more traditional academic pursuits.

135. Resolved that the Committee: - Supports the proposed measures that relate to Children and Young People's Services with the understanding that these will be

altered prior to being reported to the PRSC meeting on 6th December 2012 to reflect Central Government initiatives.

**Education and Schools Policy implementation progress review -
Establishment of a Task Force**

136. The Chairman advised that nominations were requested to join the Task Force to consider the Annual Report of the Learning Service, and to assess the performance of the Learning Service and progress towards achievement of the Education and Schools Policy.

137. The following Members expressed an interest in being part of the Task Force: Mr Burrett, Mr Graysmark, Mrs Le Rossignol and Dr Wilsdon.

138. The Chairman proposed that, as not all members of the Committee were present, those not present should also be contacted and offered the opportunity to join the Task Force. The Committee supported this approach.

139. Resolved that:

(1) The Committee agrees to the establishment of a Task Force to consider the Annual report of the Learning Service, and to assess the performance of the Learning Service and progress towards achievement of the Education and Schools Policy.

(2) The Committee appoints Mr Burrett as Chairman of the Task Force.

Report from the Business Planning Group

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

141. Resolved: that the Committee supports the proposed approach to the agenda items for forthcoming meetings and updates to the work programme as recommended by the Business Planning Group at its meeting on 13 November 2012.

Forward Plan of Key Decisions

142. The Committee considered the Forward Plan – December 2012 – March 2013 (copy appended to the signed minutes).

143. Resolved: that the Forward Plan be noted.

Members' Items

144. Mr Smytherman advised he had been made aware that the operators of the Glynn Owen Youth Centre in Worthing had been given 4 months' notice by the landlord to vacate their premises. It was understood that they were investigating whether they could move to the old Pupil Referral Unit building in Worthing but were concerned at the short notice period they had been given to vacate. It was agreed that Mandy Shipley, Scrutiny Officer, would obtain further details from the Youth Service and circulate a briefing note to all Worthing Members.

Date of the Next Meeting

145. The Committee noted that its next scheduled meeting will be held on 17 January 2013 at 10.30am at County Hall, Chichester.

The meeting ended at 3.35 pm.

Chairman