

Children and Young People's Services Select Committee

18 June 2014 – At a meeting of the Committee held at 10.30am at County Hall, Chichester.

Present: Mr Burrett (Chairman)

Mrs Arculus (Part)	Mrs Duncton	Mr Parsons
Mr Barling	Mr High (Part)	Mr Smith
Mrs Bennett	Mrs Le Rossignol	Mr Wickremaratchi
Mr Blunden	Mr Oppler (Part)	
Mr Cloake	Mr Oxlade (Part)	

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

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Ryan.

Declaration of Interests

1. There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes

2. Resolved - That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2014 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

Cabinet Member Response

3. The Committee considered a response from the Cabinet Member for Children Start of Life, to recommendations made at its meeting of 16 January 2014 in relation to the West Sussex Think Family Early Help Action Plan (copy appended to the signed minutes).

4. Resolved - That the response from the Cabinet Member be noted.

Future Operation of the Learning Service

5. The Committee considered a report by the Director of Communities Commissioning (copy appended to the signed minutes).

6. Brin Martin, Strategic Commissioner for Learning, gave a PowerPoint presentation (copy appended to the signed minutes) that summarised the case for change; the options considered and the preferred choice.

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

- Noted that the need for change and requirement to make savings by 2015 meant that implementation had to commence by April 2015, and that the in-house solution was definitely able to deliver the required savings in the required timeframe - other solutions did not have this surety.

- Commented that the in-house solution would be welcomed by schools and should help in improving our relationship with them.
 - Noted that the report referred to this being an interim solution. It was felt that this was open to misinterpretation and suggested using the phrase "evolving solution" instead.
 - Queried how the County Council would deliver its obligations in future. *Mr Martin replied that his department would have to focus on what it has to do and other tasks would need to be eliminated, so the proposed new service will only commission statutory functions and a small amount of strategic duties on behalf of the County Council.*
 - Asked what procedures would be/are in place to stop schools, including academies from failing and emphasised the need to work proactively with schools that require improvement or are causing concerns. *Mr Martin replied that the County Council has in place and will continue to run robust desktop monitoring arrangements to look for indicators in our datasets – these procedures are designed to identify issues at an early stage. The County Council will continue to work with schools and other partners to directly influence the achievement of the outcomes for young people.*
 - Asked how with more limited resources the County Council will cope if a school fails an OFSTED inspection. *Mr Martin replied that he would expect that monitoring arrangements already mentioned should mean that nothing comes completely from leftfield but in exceptional circumstances – i.e. a school going into special measures he could contract-in expertise as required.*
 - Requested that the Learning Service maintains links with other authorities and stakeholders to share best practice. *Mr Martin confirmed that the County Council would continue to look outwardly and share best practise with schools.*
 - Asked for confirmation of the numbers of posts being lost. *Mr Martin confirmed that 10 FTE equate to 7.9 posts, which it is hoped could be managed through efficiencies and/or voluntary redundancies. Initial discussions with staff had been positively received. The involved Unions had been invited to make written statements to the Committee but had chosen not to do so.*
8. Resolved – That the Committee supports the recommendation to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills to approve that the future operation of the Learning Service is delivered in-house in order to meet the savings requirements in 2014/15 and 2015/16 and place the County Council in the best position to consider alternative delivery options in the future.

The introduction of the Universal Free School Meal (UFSM)

9. The Committee considered a report by the Chief Operating Officer and Director of Communities Commissioning.

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

- Highlighted the need to provide attractive meals for small children and for schools to actively monitor whether children are eating them.

- Welcomed the assurances that meals meet national nutritional standards and the aim to increase sustainability of food in future contracts.
- Asked what surety we have that Chartwells can deliver the up-scaled service. *Mr Clarke replied that this does represent a very significant increase in volume and the risks are being monitored accordingly. Chartwells are part of Compass - the largest Catering Company in Europe and are looking at employing an additional 300 people as result of the revised contract.*
- Expressed concern about those schools which are currently only offering the cold lunch option and whether they will provide a hot meal under UFSM. *Mr Clarke replied that it is expected that there will be a move to providing a hot meal within 1 year as it was in the interests of schools to do so as failure could result in OFSTED involvement.*
- Queried whether schools can deliver on the infrastructure, waste management and scheduling of the UFSM. *Mr Clarke said schools are currently working through the processes and requirements. The County Council will provide help and support but ultimately it is the schools responsibility to deliver.*
- Queried what was being done to ensure as little waste as possible i.e. how were absences taken into account and can un-used meals be utilised elsewhere. *Mr Figgins explained that the schools notify their requirements to the contractor who then provided the specified numbers of meals. It is important to remember that passing on un-used meals to others is not practical because of possible special dietary/religious requirements.*
- Asked for clarification of the County Council's remit in relation to Academies and Private Schools. *Mr Clarke explained that The County Council has no involvement in provision for private schools, but the position in relation to Academies was less clear and we are awaiting advice from Central Government on this.*
- Expressed concern about how schools will now capture data used in determining premium plus funding, as the indicator had always been Free School Meals. One possibility would be issuing a press release encouraging eligible parents to make themselves known to schools. *Mr Clarke agreed that this was a concern but there were other incentives for eligible parents to make themselves known - such as free schools uniforms.*

11. Resolved – That the Committee: -

- (1) Supports the recommendation to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills to agree the expansion of the current contract arrangements to support the introduction of the UFSM service.
- (2) Refers to the Business Planning Group the need to monitor the impact the arrangements and future contract arrangements in due course.

Education and Schools Policy Implementation Review Task and Finish Group Report

12. The Committee considered a report by the Education and Schools Policy Review Task and Finish Group (copy appended to the signed minutes). Richard Burrett introduced the report.

13. The following points were raised in discussion:-

- It was noted that the Task and Finish Group focused its scrutiny on meeting the priorities within the Education and Schools Policy.
- Members noted that improvements to Key Stage 2 performance had been funded through the use of an underspend from elsewhere in the Learning Service and were concerned about future funding arrangements. *Mr Martin explained that this was a one-off payment to improve results this summer and should not be misconstrued as a bid for additional funding. He hoped to continue focussed support where required within the existing budget.*
- It was noted that the Memorandum of Understanding between the County Council and the Sponsor of academies (Recommendation 4 of the report refers) was now in place.
- Members had already received some guidance on the role of Academies (Recommendation 5 of the report refers).

14. Resolved – that the Task and Finish recommendations be agreed with the following amendments:

- (1) Recommendation 2: Sustainable funding should be prioritised for the strategic targeted intervention and support required to improve performance at Key Stage 2.
- (2) Recommendation 5: The Cabinet Member be requested to develop the information and guidance available to Members on their role in relation to academies.

Business Planning Group

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

16. Resolved – that the Committee supports the proposed approach to the agenda for forthcoming meetings and the outline work programme as recommended by the Business Planning Group at its meeting on 3 April 2014.

17. The Committee deferred considering appointments to its Business Planning Group to a future meeting.

Forward Plan

18. The Committee considered the Forward Plan – July – October 2014 (copy appended to the signed minutes).

19. Resolved – That the Forward Plan be noted.

Members' Items

20. Mr Parsons explained that he was awaiting a response regarding his request for information about the lease of the Club 39 in Bognor Regis. The Cabinet Member said he would check and confirm the position.

21. Mrs Arculus raised the matter of high end accommodation costs arising from children being placed outside the county. It was agreed to refer this matter to the Business Planning Group.

22. Mr Parsons highlighted that the previously available Youth Facility at West Lane was longer available. The Cabinet Member agreed to ask the appropriate officer to look into the matter and report back to Mr Parsons.

Date of next meeting.

23. The Committee noted that its next scheduled meeting will be held on 18 July 2014 at 10.30am at County Hall, Chichester.

The meeting ended at 2.10pm

Chairman