

Children and Young People’s Services Select Committee

14 March 2018 – At a meeting of the Committee held at 10.30am at County Hall, Chichester.

Present: Mr Cloake (Chairman)

Mr Baldwin	Mrs Hall	Mrs Mullins
Mrs Bennett	Mr High	Mrs Pendleton
Mr Blunden	Mrs Le Rossignol	Mr Wickremaratchi
Mrs Dennis	Mr Marshall	

In attendance by invitation: Mr Burrett (Cabinet Member for Education and Skills [and Deputy Leader]), Mr Hillier (Cabinet Member for Children and Young People), Mrs Sparkes (Adviser to Mr Hillier), and Mrs Cumming (Church of England Diocesan Representative).

Apologies for absence: Mrs Jones, Ms Lord, Dr Holt, and Mrs Ryan.

Declaration of Interests

73. No interests were declared.

Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee

74. The Committee considered the unconfirmed minutes of the last meeting and agreed that the word ‘suggested’ be replaced by ‘requested’ in minute 60.

75. Resolved – subject to the amendment as agreed above, the minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2018, be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

Responses to Recommendations

76. The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills thanked the Task and Finish Group (TFG) for their deliberation and support of the Proposed Changes to School Funding as detailed in the letter (copy appended to the signed minutes).

78. Resolved – that the response be noted.

Forward Plan of Key Decisions

79. The Committee considered a tabled paper which was a new version of the Forward Plan, April – July 2018 (copy appended to the signed minutes). This version of the Forward Plan was not included in the Committee papers as it had been published following the statutory despatch of the agenda.

80. Resolved – that the Forward Plan be noted.

Review of Education and Skills Annual Report Summary 2016/17 – Report from the Task and Finish Group

81. The Committee considered the report summary from the TFG which was introduced by the Vice-Chairman (copy appended to the signed minutes). He explained the TFG was very informative, and that the group were pleased with the improvements shown in the report. Deborah Myers, Director of Education and Skills, provided the Committee with a brief summary of the report. Some key points included:

- There has been relative progress in relation to national averages. This has been particularly good at Key Stage 4, and in the Early Year Foundation Stage (EYFS).
- Although good progress has been made for Key Stages 1 and 2 from last year, improving in line with national averages continues to be a priority. West Sussex has potential to make improvements.
- A new grading system for English and Mathematics in Key Stage 4 has been introduced rather than the former A* to G grading system. The new grades span from 1 – 9, 9 is the top grade, 4 is a pass, and 5 is a strong pass.
- Securing improved outcomes for vulnerable children and young people in West Sussex remain a key priority.
- The 2017 outcomes are a good indicator of the determination to raise standards; this remains the primary focus for the service.

82. The Committee raised questions which were addressed by the Director of Education and Skills. The main points of discussion include those that follow:

- Members noted the persistent absence figures were surprising, particularly in the Primary phase. Members heard that part-weeks occurring at the beginning or end of terms could be accountable for some of these absences. The term dates for 2019 have been set to include only full weeks where possible.
- Members noted the 91% increase in the last 4 years of Elective Home Education and welcomed more information as to why parents were choosing to home educate. It was pointed out that home educating parents are under no obligation to inform the local authority why they make this choice, therefore providing further insight in this area is difficult.
- The Committee questioned whether the issues identified in the Annual Report were solely down to inadequate funding. The Director of Education and Skills advised there were other contributing factors, such as significant areas of deprivation across the County, and historical changes to the education service which were also attributable.
- It was also considered that the full effect of the new National Curriculum, introduced in 2014, will only be known in July 2019. This will be the first

assessment year that all pupils nationally will have been taught the 2014 new curriculum for the entire period of their Key Stage 2 career. West Sussex applied the interim assessment frameworks rigorously, whereas other Local Authorities may not have done. This means that West Sussex moderation was based on children meeting the criteria as laid down by the Standards and Testing Agency. Previously, assessment was based on a 'best fit' model. This makes it difficult to accurately judge where West Sussex sits nationally until this time.

- Reducing the number of pupils at risk of permanent exclusion was considered as a priority. Members heard that in Years 9 and 10, numbers of excluded students had spiked. The service is working actively to mitigate this problem by developing ideas for sustained activities that engage young people.
- Members asked whether building aspirations for children could be achieved by accessing parent groups. The Director of Education and Skills confirmed that a social mobility report was being addressed through the set-up of Education and Skills Strategic boards in Crawley, Chichester and Adur. These strategic boards should explore ways to raise aspirations, and therefore attainment, in focussed areas across the County.

83. Resolved –

- i. That the Committee agree the recommendation that the scrutiny of education data should happen in advance of the published national deadline to enable clear direction for forward planning for West Sussex County Council's goals.
- ii. That the Director of Education and Skills provide the Committee with Ofsted data in terms of the number and details of schools that have dropped from 'Good' or 'Outstanding' and into 'Requires Improvement' (RI).

West Sussex Partnership Families Strategic Plan 2020

84. Annie MacIver, Director of Children and Family Services introduced the report (copy appended to the signed minutes). She explained the purpose of the original plan was to improve the outcomes of the most vulnerable and marginalised children, young people and families within the County. In 2015, a disparate range of plans designed to address the above were brought together to form the West Sussex Partnership Families Strategic Plan (The Families Plan). The Families Plan is no longer an active document, and the policies contained within it will now be undertaken through the West Sussex Plan under the 'best start in life' priority. The key points arising from discussion include:

- The Director of Children and Family Services explained that The Families Plan had served as a useful function, particularly in developing the Integrated Prevention and Earliest Help (IPEH) service, for example. The new West Sussex Plan however has clearer improvement strategies for the best start in life.
- Members questioned whether the departure from The Families Plan would run the risk of a loss of detail in terms of priorities and outcomes. The Director of Children and Family Services advised the West Sussex Plan offered a robust set of over-arching strands, under which individual matters could be clearly categorised. This system will be easier to manage than the pre-existing plan, and allows the service to build on outcomes and achievements. She added that Quality and Development Boards offered a space for the focussed scrutiny of matters.
- The new West Sussex Plan avoids any ambiguity, is easier to review, and has much clearer measures for success than The Families Plan. The West Sussex Plan also eliminates any duplication through its 5 key priorities, reflecting the ambitions of the service.
- Members were pleased to know the outreach activities in community settings were popular, and in some cases oversubscribed. The Director of Children and Family Services advised she hoped more libraries and Children and Family Centres (CFC) would be made available for these young family sessions.

85. Resolved -

- i. That the Committee endorses the West Sussex Plan as a replacement for the Partnership Families Strategic Plan, and noted the outcomes as listed in Appendix A.
- ii. That the 1,001 Days principle is considered as a future item for scrutiny.

Business Planning Group Report

86. Members asked if the item on Mental Health Services and Young People could be brought to the June meeting. Members were advised that this item would require significant planning as there are a number of potential topics for inclusion and that therefore September may be more realistic.

87. Members asked when the item on future provision for Small Schools was likely to come to the Committee. The Director of Education and Skills advised a sensible time for the item would be the September meeting.

88. The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills asked if the work programme could revert to the landscape version as he found this clearer to navigate.

89. Resolved –

- i. That the report and proposed work programme be endorsed.

- ii. Democratic Services to locate the previous format for the work programme.

Date of next meeting

The Committee noted that the next scheduled meeting will be held on 20 June 2018 at 10.30am at County Hall, Chichester.

The Chairman thanked Mr Blunden and Mrs Le Rossignol for their contributions as co-opted members of the Committee. This meeting signalled the end of their membership to the Children and Young People's Services Select Committee.

The meeting ended at 12.20pm.

Chairman