

## **Unconfirmed Minutes subject to approval/amendment at the next Children and Young People's Services Select Committee**

### **Children and Young People's Services Select Committee**

23<sup>rd</sup> November 2011 – At a meeting of the Committee held at 10.30am at County Hall, Chichester.

Present: Mr Burrett (Chairman)

Mr Burgess	Mrs Mills	Mrs Waight
Mr T M E Dunn	Mr Simmons	Dr Wilsdon
Mr Graysmark	Mr Smytherman	Mr Wilson

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

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Lanzer, Mrs Le Rossignol, Mr Oxlade, Mrs Reynolds, Mrs Ross, Mr Strong and Mr Griffiths (Cabinet Member for Education and Schools).

### **Declaration of Interests**

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

- Mrs Mills – Item 5 (Provision of Housing Support for Vulnerable Young People) as a member of the management committees of Lancing Children and Family Centre, Lancing Information Shop and Links College South.
- Mr Smytherman – Item 5 (Provision of Housing Support for Vulnerable Young People) as a trustee of Worthing and Arun Mind, a member of Worthing Borough Council and as a member of the management committee of Links College South.
- Mr Simmons – Item 5 (Provision of Housing Support for Vulnerable Young People) as Cabinet Member for Adur District Council whose portfolio includes young people.
- Mr Burrett - Item 5 (Provision of Housing Support for Vulnerable Young People) as a member of Crawley Borough Council, a trustee of Crawley Open House and as Chair of the management committee of Southwell Lodge.

### **Minutes**

89. Resolved - That the minutes of the meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2011 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

### **Safeguarding Champion within the Children and Young People's Services Select Committee**

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

91. Sue Cart, Head of Safeguarding, introduced the report, explaining that, as the Safeguarding Champion was a new role, an assessment would be made after

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the first six months to ascertain both progress made and the time demands of the role. She advised that one or more Safeguarding Champions were being sought from both the Adults' Services Select Committee and the Children and Young People's Services Select Committee and confirmed that Mrs Jupp had recently been appointed as Safeguarding Champion by the Adults' Services Select Committee.

92. The Cabinet Member for Children and Families stressed that he welcomed the initiative as he felt the Safeguarding Champion's role would provide an additional opportunity to challenge and hold him to account.

93. The Committee agreed that only one Safeguarding Champion should be appointed from the Select Committee and queried the expected remit and time required for the role. *The Cabinet Member explained that he would expect the Safeguarding Champion to meet regularly with him, to read reports and that they would be eligible to attend meetings of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board. Mrs Cart confirmed that the Champion would support safeguarding work for all children, not just Looked After Children.*

94. The Chairman asked the Committee for expressions of interest in undertaking the role. Mr Graysmark indicated that he would be interested and the Committee agreed to this appointment.

95. Resolved: That the Committee appoints Mr Graysmark as Safeguarding Champion for the Children and Young People's Services Select Committee.

### **Provision of Housing Support for Vulnerable Young People**

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

97. Stuart Gallimore, Director of Children's Services, introduced the report emphasising the positive outcomes, including the rise in the quality and consistency of help for homeless 16 and 17 year olds that had been achieved through joint working with the District and Borough Councils.

98. Graham Vagg (Service Manager, Coastal, for the Youth Support and Development Service) gave a Powerpoint presentation. This gave an overview of the work of the service and emphasised the requirement for a sustainable funding model to ensure the service could continue after 2013/14 when the current funding would cease (copy of slides appended to the signed minutes).

99. The Cabinet Member explained that the initiative was a good example of Early Intervention in preventing young people from becoming involved with the criminal justice system. In addition in certain cases where a relationship had broken down between parent and child the mediation provided by the service could assist in bringing the family back together.

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

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- Requested clarification about how the service was currently funded and whether there was the possibility of receiving financial contribution from the District or Borough councils in the future. *Mr Gallimore explained that the service was currently wholly funded by the County Council and that District and Borough Councils contributed by the provision of staff and accommodation for young people. Mr Gallimore confirmed that the County Council was ultimately responsible for these young people so would also be liable for funding a service in the future. Mr Hickson, Head of Housing Management at Arun District Council explained that it was anticipated his District Council would be able to continue providing resources in the form of staff and accommodation in the future but would not expect to be able to provide financial assistance to the County Council.*
- Asked whether any users of the service had returned at a later date requiring further assistance. *Mr Vagg confirmed that this had not been the case and explained when a young, homeless person first becomes a user of the service this was logged on a system and a programme of future monitoring and support could then be put in place to provide the young person some stability. This ensured that the service maintained contact and prevented the potential for the young person to disappear and return to the service at a future date with the same problems.*
- Queried what happened to young people just below the age of 16 who didn't fit the criteria for supported housing but risked becoming homeless and what happened to those who turned 18. *Mr. Gallimore advised that there were suitable arrangements in place through the social care system to assist young people below the age of 16. In addition experience gained in carrying out family mediation for the supported housing programme had provided valuable learning that could be applied to family liaison work for under 16's. Ivan Western, Commissioning Manager, Supported Housing explained that those young people who were already being assisted by the service when they turned 18 could stay in their existing accommodation if it was an appropriate setting, for example Crawley Foyer accommodated people up to the age of 25. However when they became 18 the benefits system would fund this accommodation. Those who became homeless at 18 and were not already involved with the service would be dealt with through the benefits system.*
- Requested clarification regarding the protocol that had been agreed between the County Council (as provider of Children's Services) and District/Borough Councils (as providers of Housing services). *Mr Hickson confirmed that whilst the protocol was not legally binding, the District and Borough Councils had signed up to it and would be striving to ensure it evolved to accurately reflect requirements. Mr Vagg advised that the protocol would be reviewed annually.*
- Asked how the young people's experiences of using the service were being monitored. *Mr Vagg explained that since the start of the project in May the views of the users were being recorded which would assist with developing the service going forward.*

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- Queried whether private sector landlords and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) were being involved with the project. *Mr Hickson advised that private sector landlords provided accommodation used by a number of the Districts and Boroughs, including Arun District Council, and Mr Vagg confirmed that the project liaises with a range of other organisations including CAMHS in delivering the service.*

101. Resolved that:

- (1) The Committee supports the continuation of funding to support this initiative from 2012-2014.
- (2) The service should provide a progress report in 18 months to update the Committee on achievements of the project and the position regarding potential future funding after 2014.

### **Budget Update and Business Planning 2012-15**

102. 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).

103. Stuart Gallimore introduced the report and highlighted to the Committee an emerging budget pressure generated by the responsibility for bearing remand costs being transferred from the Youth Justice Board to the County Council during 2012.

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

- Requested clarification regarding the top-slice of Dedicated Schools Grant funding to be awarded to academies. *David Sword, Director of Learning, explained that there were two strands to the awarding of funding to academies, known as the Local Authority Central Spend Equivalent Grant (LACSEG). One strand was a top-slice of core Local Authority funding that was made regardless of the number of academies within West Sussex and the amount of the top-slice would be known in December/January. Mr Sword also advised that there was potential for this element of the LACSEG figure to be revised upward following a government review. The second strand was the withdrawal of funding from the Dedicated Schools Grant. This reduction in Council grant would be proportionate to the number of academies within West Sussex. However it would lead to budgetary pressures on centrally provided support services such as HR and Payroll as these were included as part of this LACSEG figure.*
- Queried how the shortage in primary school places was being addressed. *Mr Sword advised where it was cost-effective the option to extend existing schools was the preferred option and the capital programme was being targeted accordingly where possible. However where the creation of a new school was essential these needs would be met in future by establishment of either a free school or academy.*

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- Requested clarification regarding how the removal of the £9.5million Council Tax freeze grant in 2013/14 would be mitigated without the need for further cuts. *Mr Harrison (Chief Technical Officer, Corporate Finance) explained that this could not be confirmed until the outcome of the finance settlement was known, but it was anticipated that savings from the non-portfolio budgets could assist with mitigation.*
- Expressed concern that the Council continued to invest in the markets, which proved more risky than using government deposit schemes.

105. Caroline Morley, Planning Manager, Resources and Performance, explained that as part of the Business Planning Process additional priorities had been identified against the Performance Framework themes. The Select Committee was invited to consider both the existing and additional priorities and make appropriate recommendations.

106. During debate the following points were covered:

- Concern was raised at the number of proposals and capacity of the service to fulfil all these priorities. It was felt that the good work already being done by the service could be undermined if it was under pressure to achieve additional targets.
- Further information and clarification would be needed in order to make an informed recommendation about prioritising the objectives. For example, would stating an objective mean funding would be targeted to assist in achieving the objective, possibly at the expense of the rest of the service?
- Concern was raised that by making recommendations this could constrain the Cabinet Members, whereas their decisions should be unhindered and wholly driven by need.
- More time was needed to assess the outcomes of the work currently being done - for example - early intervention, before decisions about future priorities could be made.

107. Resolved that:

- (1) The Committee does not wish to constrain the Cabinet Members by prioritising the list of objectives as they are all considered important, but Members are concerned about the overall capacity of Children's Services to deliver against the competing priorities
- (2) The focus on existing priorities should be retained
- (3) Further information should be provided to the Select Committee at the 18 January 2012 meeting to assist the Committee in making final recommendations.

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### **Establishment of Task Force – Education and Schools Policy implementation progress review**

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

109. The following Members expressed an interest in being part of the Task Force: Mr Burrett, Mr T M E Dunn, Mr Graysmark, Mr Smytherman, Dr Wilsdon and Mr Wilson.

110. The Chairman proposed that as the parent governor representatives on the Committee were not present, they should also be contacted and offered the opportunity for one of them to join the Task Force. The Committee supported this approach.

111. Resolved that:

- (1) The Committee agrees to the establishment of an Education and Schools Policy Task Force to meet in early 2012.
- (2) The Members listed in minute 109 be appointed to the Task Force as well as one parent governor representative.

### **Business Planning Group Update and Revised Work Plan 2011/12**

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

113. Resolved: That the report be noted.

### **Forward Plan of Key Decisions**

114. The Committee considered the Forward Plan – December 2011 – March 2012.

115. Members requested clarification on the following items in the Forward Plan:

- Extension of Educational Provision for 14-19 year olds in Area A Special Schools. A query was raised about collaborative working between Links College South and Northbrook College which appeared to be resulting in County Council staff from Links College South being employed on different terms and conditions and pay rates to other County Council staff. *Mrs Shipley agreed to obtain further details from the service and circulate a briefing note to members of the Committee.*
- West Sussex Scheme for Financing Schools and Formula Review 2012/13. Concern was expressed at the tight timescale for responding to the consultation as the Christmas period would effectively shorten this further. *Mrs Shipley agreed to obtain further details from those officers managing the consultation and circulate a briefing note to members of the Committee.*

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- Extension of Educational Provision for 14-19 year olds in Area A Special Schools. Further information was requested regarding the costs levied by Chichester College for pupils referred there by the Links Colleges, and whether or not this represented good value for money. *Mrs Shipley agreed to obtain further details from the service and circulate a briefing note to members of the Committee.*

### **Date of the Next Meeting**

116. The Committee noted that its next scheduled meeting will be held on 18 January 2012 at 10.30am at County Hall, Chichester.

The meeting ended at 2.10pm.

Chairman