

Agenda Item No 2

Children and Young People's Services Select Committee

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

Present: Mr Burrett (Chairman)

Mrs Arculus
Mr Cloake

Mrs Duncton
Mr High

Mr Parsons
Mr Smith

In attendance by invitation: Mr Evans (Cabinet Member for Children – Start of Life), Ms Kennard (Deputy to Cabinet Member) and Mr O'Brien (Chairman of the Corporate Parenting Panel)

Apologies for absence were received from:

Mr Barling
Mrs Bennett
Mr Blunden

Mrs Le Rossignol
Mr Oppler
Mr Oxlade

Mrs Ryan
Mr Wickremaratchi

Declaration of Interests

24. In accordance with the Code of Conduct, Members declared the following personal interests:

- Mrs Duncton as a member of the Corporate Parenting Panel in relation to the Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report
- Mr Cloake as a foster carer.

Minutes

25. The following amendment was agreed:

- Minute 22 - replace " ..at West Lane was longer available" with "..at West Lane, Lancing was no longer available."

26. Resolved – That, subject to the amendment agreed in minutes 25 above and correction of minor typographical errors, the minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2014 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

Performance Outturn2013/14

27. The Committee considered the Performance Outturn Report for the Children - Start of Life portfolio for 2013/14 (copy appended to the signed minutes).

28. Nigel Street, Service Finance Manager, introduced the report and highlighted the following points: -

- The Total Performance Monitor Outturn Report for 2013/14 was published in May 2014. In the past the Committee would have received and reviewed this. However, it was suggested that in future in line with all other Select

Committees, the full report goes to the Committee's Business Planning Group for scrutiny.

- The formal financial statements were still in preparation for external audit, the position therefore was provisional but no material changes were anticipated and within this context -
 - The total net portfolio spend in 2013/14 was £120.029m. This represents an underspend of £3.738m, of which £2.3m has been returned to the Early Intervention Reserve (to ensure that it is available to the programme in future years).
 - Since the budget was set in February 2014 some additional grants have been announced by Government. Those relating to the portfolio are: a SEN Reform Grant of £0.891m and an Adoption Reform Grant of £0.037m.
- That all portfolio Performance Framework measures are on track and showing green in the Risk Register.

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

- Sought an assurance about what would happen to the -£1.438m portfolio underspend variation. *Nigel Street confirmed that this will go back into the corporate reserves.*
- Asked if statistics were kept on failure rates of foster placements or adoption. *Brin Martin, Strategic Commissioner for Learning, agreed to check and confirm this to members.*
- Questioned why the report does not refer to Out-of-County placements as either a cost or risk. *Brin Martin confirmed that there is an associated risk, as the Beechfield secure unit may require refurbishing, in which case the County Council will lose the funding stream it generates and will also have to pay another Council to take the two current in-County placements during the refurbishment.*
- Why had the Worthing Age of Transfer project overspent by £300,000? *Nigel Street confirmed that site investigations and other work had been undertaken early and as result had generated an earlier than expected spend.*
- Questioned how the -£300,000 underspend had been achieved on Home to School Transport costs. *Brin Martin explained that this has been achieved through encouraging independent travel arrangements.*
- Questioned what the additional SEN funding could be used for and if this needed to be ring-fenced. *Brin Martin confirmed that £500,000 was for the additional 3000 assessments arising from changes arising from the Children and Families Act. This was being managed but there were agency staff and training risks and costs.*

30. Resolved – That the Committee:

- 1) Agrees that the full outturn report can be referred to the Business Planning Group in future, with any significant exceptions to be reported to the Committee.
- 2) Welcomes the overall positive position shown in the outturn report.
- 3) Requires more information on Child Disability Services increased agency costs and details of the funding targeted to the STARS group of First Schools, to be circulated to Members by email.
- 4) Wishes to seek a commitment to ring-fence the SEN Reform Grant.

Corporate Parenting Panel

31. The Committee considered a report by the Head of Law and Governance (copy appended to the signed minutes). John O'Brien introduced the report and highlighted the following: -

- That the Panel has introduced a challenge card system that enables Children Looked After to give challenges directly to the Panel.
- That the Children in Care Council had issued the first challenge as it is concerned about negative stereo-typing of those in care.
- That the Pupil Premium funding for Children Looked After is now held centrally by the Head of the Virtual School.
- As a result of the Panel's intervention residential care homes were allocated additional holiday budgets in line with existing foster placement arrangements.
- Members have agreed to take on individual roles on behalf of the Panel.
- That Panel members are working with the Children in Care Council to build bridges and trust.
- That a new on-line consultation service "Mind of My Own" has been launched. This is an OIS based self-advocacy app that helps young people express their views and get more involved in decision making. The app operates through a system of scenario-themed options from which a series of open and multi-choice questions can be answered. The app populates the responses made/selected into a statement which can then be sent via email to a County Council email box.

32. The following points were raised in discussion; Members:

- Noted that the "Welcome to Care DVD" is due to go on-line in early August and requested a link be sent to all Members.

- Welcomed the work being undertaken to support Care Leavers into employment and suggested that all Members should be encouraged to raise the subject with their local business contacts.

33. Resolved – That the Committee:

- 1) Welcomes the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel.
- 2) Supports the Panel's aim to liaise more directly with the Children in Care Council.
- 3) Requests that all Council Members should take a proactive interest in the education of Children Looked After in their divisions when they visit schools or act as school governors.
- 4) Recommends that support for care leavers in accessing further education or employment should be investigated as a priority.

Forward Plan

34. The Committee considered the Forward Plan – August – November 2014 (copy appended to the signed minutes).

35. Resolved – That the Forward Plan be noted.

Date of next meeting

36. The Committee noted that its next scheduled meeting will be held on 25 September 2014 at 10.30am at County Hall, Chichester.

The meeting ended at 12.20pm.

Chairman