

Children and Young People's Services Select Committee

19 June 2013 – At a meeting of the Committee held at 11.30am at County Hall, Chichester.

Present: Mr Burrett (Chairman)

Mrs Arculus	Mr Cloake	Mr Oppler
Mr Barling	Mrs Duncton	Mr Oxlade
Mrs Bennett	Mr High	Mr Parsons
Mr Blunden	Mrs Le Rossignol	Mr Smith

In attendance by invitation: Mr Evans (Cabinet Member for Children – Start of Life) and Mrs Thompson, representative of the Diocese of Chichester.

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Reynolds and Mr Wickremaratchi.

Declaration of Interests

1. In accordance with the Code of Conduct the following personal interests were declared: -
 - Mr Oxlade– Item 11 (Youth Support and Development Service – Bognor Area Review) – as a Director of Ifield Community Youth Service
 - Mr Sword – Item 10 (High Needs Funding Phase 3 – Alternative Provision College) – as a member of the governing body of Northbrook College.

Minutes

2. Resolved - That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2013 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

Committee Membership

3. Resolved – That the Committee notes its membership of Mrs Arculus, Mr Barling, Mrs Bennett, Mr Burrett, Mr Cloake, Mrs Duncton, Mr High, Mr Oppler, Mr Oxlade, Mr Parsons, Mr Smith, Mr Wickremaratchi and the co-opted members – Mr Blunden, Mrs Le Rossignol and Mrs Reynolds. The Committee also currently has one vacancy for a Church of England Diocese of Chichester co-opted member.

Terms of Reference

4. Resolved – That the Committee notes its Terms of Reference.

Appointment of the Committee's Business Planning Group

5. The Chairman advised that the nominations for the Committee's Business Planning Group from the Conservative Group were Mr Burrett, Mr Cloake and Mrs Duncton; and from the opposition were Mr Oppler and Mr Oxlade.
6. Members requested clarification regarding how nominations had been sought and the Chairman advised that these had been provided by Group Leaders.

7. Resolved – That the Committee appoints those Members named in Minute 5 to the Business Planning Group.

Work Programme Planning

8. The Committee considered a report by the Director of Finance and Assurance and the Head of Law and Governance (copy appended to the signed minutes).

9. The following points were covered in discussion: -

- It was confirmed that routine items such as examination of the Total Performance Monitor and scrutiny of the budget would still be considered by the Committee even though they were not included in the outline work programme.
- It was agreed that email updates would be sent to all members of the Committee, and copied to all Worthing Members, about any developments in relation to proposals to alter the age of transfer in the Worthing area.

10. Resolved – That the Committee approves the interim work programme.

Cabinet Member Responses

11. The Committee considered responses from the Cabinet Members to the recommendations made at its meeting of 13 March 2013 in relation to the West Sussex Children's Services Improvement Board, the Dual Registered Pupils Task Force and Post 16 Transport Policy – Impact on College attendance (copies appended to the signed minutes).

12. Clarification was requested regarding whether the new centralised system of assessing young people for alternative provision would include those Children Looked After who were placed in West Sussex from other areas. *David Sword, Head of Learning, confirmed that this assessment process was all-encompassing and so, if circumstances meant that alternative provision was suitable for such young people placed in West Sussex it would include them.*

13. Resolved – That the Committee notes the responses from the Cabinet Members.

Ofsted inspection of local authority arrangements for the protection of children

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

15. Stuart Gallimore, Director of Children's Services, introduced the report and advised the Committee that: -

- Having been judged 'Adequate' by Ofsted the service was striving to improve this rating to 'Good' by 2016. Ofsted were in the process of raising the level of inspection standard again but as yet the framework for this new regime had not been released; therefore at present it was not possible to ascertain what

the authority would have to do to achieve a rating 'Good' under the new standards.

- The commencement date of the three year inspection cycle within which the next Ofsted inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children could occur had now been delayed from September to November 2013.
- The authority had been advised that in July Ofsted would be carrying out an announced two day inspection of services for Looked After Children from West Sussex who had been placed outside of the County boundary. An identical inspection of this service at a number of other authorities would be carried out and the overall findings of the inspection published in November.

16. Mr Evans, Cabinet Member for Children – Start of Life, commended the commitment of the staff who had worked hard to make improvements and stressed that the service would not relax now the Improvement Notice had been removed and the 'Adequate' judgement received but they would continue the aim of driving through continuous improvement.

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

- Queried what measures were being taken to ensure early help and preventative services were available as identified as an area for improvement in the Ofsted report. *Mr Gallimore explained that these services were already being delivered by a number of partners, such as Children and Family Centres, but to ensure cohesion between the disparate initiatives an overarching strategy was being developed. Meetings with all the relevant partners had taken place and the service was on course to deliver the strategy in draft form in September.*
- Appreciated the investment made in developing a well-qualified team of social workers and asked what measures were being taken to ensure staff retention. *Mr Gallimore explained that the vacancy rate across the service was 7% and there was a considerable reduction in the use of agency staff. By training and developing their own staff 60% were now judged experienced as opposed to 30% in 2009/10. To aid retention regular checks were made to ensure salary levels were comparable with neighbouring authorities, staff were also able to work flexibly and provided with quality equipment to aid them in carrying out their work. It was also important that staff had a supportive line manager who assisted in improving confidence in the quality of their practice.*
- Requested a breakdown of the Ofsted judgements of all authorities inspected under the current regime *Mr Gallimore advised that 4 had been rated 'Good', 21 'Adequate' and 14 'Inadequate'.*
- Noted that some items identified in the quality improvement plan for completion within 3 months had slipped and wondered if this would be criticised in a future Ofsted inspection. *Mr Gallimore stressed that it was important to ensure implementation of the proposed actions in the plan was done sustainably and correctly. Ofsted would be more interested in seeing the proposals in place and working and less concerned about minor slippage in delivery of the required improvements.*
- Queried whether it would be difficult to integrate the Signs of Safety casework approach within the current set-up of Frameworki. *Mr Gallimore explained that it would require system changes to Frameworki to implement and that a planned underspend from the 2012/13 Children's Services budget had been carried forward to fund the necessary alterations and staff training.*

- Asked what the service would identify as the top three priorities for action and whether it would be possible to visit and observe staff in their workplace to gain a better understanding of the issues they deal with. *Mr Gallimore highlighted implementing Signs of Safety, improving the outcomes for Looked After Children and keeping the pressure on the court system to speed up progress to obtain permanent placements as the key priorities. Members were welcome to visit front line staff and he requested that Members provide their contact details to him so this could be arranged.*

18. Resolved that:-

- (1) The Committee's Business Planning Group (BPG) analyse the monthly data report and request that the service produce a report to the Select Committee should the BPG identify areas of concern.
- (2) The BPG monitor progress against the action plan and keep the Select Committee informed of developments.

High Needs Funding Phase 3 – Alternative Provision College

19. The Committee considered a report by the Director of Communities Commissioning and Head of Learning (copy appended to the signed minutes).

20. David Sword, Head of Learning, and Mary Carrigan, Principal Advisor Support and Intervention, introduced the report highlighting the following points:-

- To ensure that the County Council had the most effective arrangements in place for alternative provision the Department for Education had agreed that the delegation of funding for alternative provision could be delayed until September.
- It was acknowledged that there was a lack of facilities for those young people who were in receipt of alternative provision and situated in the centre of the county which led to extensive travel to access appropriate services.
- The transitional year funding proposal was based on 292 full time places; currently there were 386 full time pupils in alternative provision but pupil numbers fluctuated throughout the year. A substantial contingency fund was also in place should the West Sussex Alternative Provision College (WSAPC) find it necessary to draw on additional emergency funding during the first year.
- The situation would be reviewed after the first year to assess whether the funding position and charging arrangement with schools was appropriate.

21. The Cabinet Member explained that this was an opportunity to change and improve alternative provision but that the issue of lack of facilities in the centre of the county needed to be addressed.

22. Mark Whitby, Interim Executive Headteacher of The Links College, and Vicki Illingworth, Member of the Shadow Governing Body of the West Sussex Alternative Provision College addressed the Committee and highlighted the following issues:-

- Providing the College with greater autonomy to shape proposals meant there was an opportunity to provide appropriate education to the individual pupils.
- The top up funding would be necessary to ensure financial viability initially and it would be important to balance funding in the future to ensure continued viability.

- It would be important to have an innovative accommodation strategy to look at the most appropriate use of the available sites from which services should be delivered.

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

- Queried what alternative provision arrangements would be available for primary age pupils. *Mr Whitby explained that currently there was provision for primary age pupils at Crawley, Burgess Hill and Lancing; for those outside of this area outreach work was done by a peripatetic team of staff who worked with the primary age pupil in their own school. In addition work was being done to develop the skill set of teachers within schools so they were able to identify the needs of children at risk of exclusion and work with pupils in a school environment with the aim of preventing the need for alternative provision. However in the long term the aim was to offer provision for all age ranges at each alternative provision facility but works to the buildings would be required to facilitate this.*
- Asked about progress of the strategic vision for alternative provision as recommended by the Dual Registered Pupils Task Force. *Mr Sword explained that the strategy would be developed as an outcome of the experience gained during the first year of operation of the Alternative Provision College and that this strategy could be shared with the Committee once developed.*
- Requested clarification regarding how the College would provide provision when pupil numbers exceeded the 292 planned places. *Mr Whitby advised that capacity could be created through the use of peripatetic staff going to school to work with pupils or by offering home tuition; there was also the option to buy in additional provision from an outside provider if necessary.*
- Wondered how the College would deal with students who refused to engage in education. *Mr Whitby explained that this was a very rare occurrence but if it happened the College could adapt their work patterns – for example having two adults working with one pupil. If absenteeism became a problem with a particular pupil staff who were highly skilled in engaging with young people would visit the pupil in their home to meet with them and their family and try and address the issues.*
- Requested clarification regarding the financial impact of providing transport such as taxis to enable children to access alternative provision. *Mr Sword explained that transport was a major cost which was why options were being explored to improve the location of facilities in the long term so they were more evenly spread across the county. Mr Whitby added that there was a policy to avoid the use of taxis where possible, apart from where it was necessary for primary age children; older pupils were expected to use public transport.*
- Asked where the budget was delegated to and how a sustainable funding model would be created for 2014/15. *Ms Illingworth explained that the budget would be delegated to the Business Manager for the Alternative Provision College. The Business Manager then apportioned the budget across each of the College's individual sites providing the appropriate funding to make it possible to run each facility efficiently and effectively. Dr Nigel Street, Service*

Finance Advisor- Learning and Schools, explained that in starting to develop the funding model for 2014/15 the possibility was being explored of removing a pro-rata portion of funding from a school where a pupil was excluded to contribute to the cost of alternative provision for that excluded pupil. However the funding model was in the very early stages of development and consultation with the Schools Forum would be required. Mr Sword also explained that the government would be reviewing the new funding arrangements for alternative provision on a regular basis and any particular problems the County Council encountered in funding would be fed back to the Department for Education. Members raised concern about the sustainability of funding the College in the future and requested that more information should be provided to the Committee when the funding model for 2014/15 was more developed.

24. Resolved that the Committee: -

- (1) Support the proposed arrangements for the delegation of the budget to WSAPC from 1st September 2013 and the allocation of the funding for the other services covered by Alternative Provision.
- (2) Support the proposal to use 2013-14 as a transitional year to full implementation of the guidance on Alternative Provision.
- (3) Support the development of arrangements with the West Sussex Further Education (FE) colleges for a more structured and accountable framework for students undertaking a full time placement at college (educated off site) from September 2013.
- (4) Support the proposal that WSAPC provides education at Chalkhill and Beechfield under the terms of a Service Level Agreement (SLA).
- (5) Support the proposal that the fees for places commissioned in FE colleges is £8,000 for the 2013/14 academic year.
- (6) Request that the service closely monitors the development of the funding model for the College in 2014/15 and provides a report to the Committee's Business Planning Group to update it on progress within nine months.
- (7) Request that the strategy for alternative provision is shared with the Committee when developed.

Youth Support and Development Service – Bognor Area Review

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

26. Carl Burton (Interim Head of Youth Support and Development Service) introduced the report and gave a Powerpoint presentation (copy appended to the signed minutes) and explained that: -

- The aim was to have multiple services delivered from one site to avoid the necessity of young people having to access multiple locations. Following the Bognor area review it had been established that the Neighbourhood Centre was the most suitable building to use for this purpose being spacious, having good access (being Disability Discrimination Act compliant) and parking.

- Once the Cabinet Member decision had been made the Youth Support and Development Service (YSDS) would engage with young people to consult them about the services they would like to see delivered from that site.

27. The Chairman invited Mr Oppler, local Member for Bognor Regis East, the Division where the proposed facility would operate, to address the Committee in relation to the proposals. Mr Oppler explained that: -

- The work of the Hotham Park Heritage Trust and the 39 Club were very well respected by the local community with the 39 Club being a popular youth facility.
- He accepted the need for reconfiguration of services but felt that the Community Asset Transfer option should not be discounted.
- If the organisations were to operate from the Neighbourhood Centre the County Council should allow them to have sole access of the annexe facility. This would provide a facility they could rent out thereby generating income for the charities and ensuring their financial viability. *Mr Evans said he would consider this proposal again but it was not clear that it would be possible to alter the building to enable this.*

28. The Chairman explained that the three voluntary organisations most affected by the proposals were in attendance to answer any questions the Committee had in relation to the written submissions the organisations had produced, copies of which had been provided to Members in advance of the meeting (copies appended to the signed minutes). Representatives in attendance were Laurie Barnes, Chairman of the Hotham Park Heritage Trust (HPHT), Vicky Hennessy, Chairman of the 39 Club and Jan Cosgrove, Acting Chair of the Number 18 Project.

29. Members asked the representatives from the voluntary organisations about how they felt the young people would be affected by the proposals. The following points were highlighted: -

- It was considered that the location of the Number 18 Project, close to the town centre, was important for those who self-refer and that the Neighbourhood Centre, situated in a residential area, would be perceived as a less favourable location and the location may act as a barrier to self-referral.
- Young people had not been consulted about the proposals and it was felt that if the young people had not been involved they would feel less inclined to use the facility.
- It was considered misleading to indicate that the Number 18 Project buildings were not spacious enough to accommodate the proposed facility.
- Generic youth provision could be provided successfully at the Neighbourhood Centre but the flexibility to hire out the annexe would be necessary to provide the funding necessary to maintain facilities and pay a member of staff. HPHT had been successful in obtaining grant funding previously and this could complement rental income and ensure a full range of generic provision.
- Young people valued the 39 Club so much that they had undertaken their own fundraising efforts to improve kitchen and bathroom facilities.

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

- Felt it was important to gain the views of young people to understand what they wanted. *Mr Burton explained that the service had reflected on evidence gathered from young people during the consultation carried out at the time of proposals for funding reductions to assist in forming its decision. Once the*

Cabinet Member had made his decision the opportunity would be taken to carry out a more formal consultation with young people.

- Raised concern that the proposal could jeopardise the delivery of generic youth provision which was intended to complement the County Council targeted service.
 - Requested clarification regarding whether or not the proposal would mean young offenders using the facility would be able to mix with non-offenders. *Mr Burton confirmed that this would be the case but it was important to work with offenders to try and establish the reasons for their behaviour, for example they could be offending as a result of homelessness which the service could assist with resolving.*
 - Asked if the voluntary organisations could continue to operate if they did not co-locate into the Neighbourhood Centre with the County Council. All organisations confirmed they could. *Mr Burton also confirmed that the specialist advice and guidance service run by the County Council would not be a duplication of the service provided by the Number 18 Project.*
31. Mr Evans stressed that the option of a Community Asset Transfer was not available and suggested that the fourth proposal be re-worded as follows: - Work with local voluntary and charitable organisations to develop wider community services alongside YSDS provision **in the Neighbourhood Centre**.
32. Mr Barling suggested that the second proposal be altered as follows – **Subject to Recommendation 4** reconfigure the youth provision within Bognor by reutilising the Neighbourhood Centre for the development of a specialised service for young people, their carers and families.
33. Mr Cloake proposed that the Committee support the proposals for the reconfiguration of youth provision within the Bognor Regis area including the amendments noted in minutes 31 and 32; this proposal was seconded by Mrs Duncton.
34. A vote was held and the proposal was agreed.
35. Resolved: that the Committee supports the proposals for the reconfiguration of youth provision within the Bognor Regis area subject to the amendments noted in minutes 31 and 32.

Forward Plan of Key Decisions

36. The Committee considered the Forward Plan – July - October 2013 (copy appended to the signed minutes).
37. Resolved: that the Forward Plan be noted.

Members' Items

38. None raised.

Date of the Next Meeting

39. The Committee noted that its next scheduled meeting will be held on 26 September 2013 at 10.30am at County Hall, Chichester.

The meeting ended at 4.40pm.

Chairman