

Children and Young People's Services Select Committee

24 October 2013 – At a meeting of the Committee held at 10.30am at County Hall, Chichester.

Present: Mr Burrett (Chairman)

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

In attendance by invitation: Mr Evans (Cabinet Member for Children – Start of Life).

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Barling, Mr Oppler and Mrs Ryan.

Declaration of Interests

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

- Mrs Arculus – Item 5 (Youth Support and Development Services Review – Savings Proposals) as a member of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Committee and a trustee of the Purple Bus.
- Mrs Bennett – Item 5 – as Chairman of the Public Services Committee of East Grinstead Town Council who are considering a Community Asset Transfer of the Wallis Centre
- Mr Oxlade – Item 5 – as a Director of Crawley Community Youth Service
- See also minutes 66 and 75.

Minutes

59. Resolved - That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2013 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

Cabinet Member Response

60. The Committee considered a response from the Cabinet Member for Children – Start of Life to the recommendations made at its meeting of 26 September 2013 in relation to Options for Future Delivery of Learning Services (copy appended to the signed minutes).

61. Resolved – That the Committee notes the response from the Cabinet Member.

Youth Support and Development Services Review – Savings Proposals

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

63. Stuart Gallimore, Director of Children's Services, introduced the report and Carl Burton, Interim Principal Manager Youth Support and Development Service, provided a Powerpoint presentation (copy appended to the signed minutes); the following points were highlighted: -

- With the need for the County Council to save £141 million over the next four years it was necessary for the Youth Service to make reductions in order to contribute to meeting this savings target.
- More than 80% of the current Youth Support and Development Service (YSDS) budget consisted of staffing costs so staff numbers would have to be reduced to enable savings to be made.
- The intention was to retain the existing focus of YSDS by offering a targeted service to those young people who most needed it.

64. Members requested clarification regarding the precise amount of savings the service had to make and what the gross budget of the service consisted of. *Mr Gallimore confirmed that the total saving would be £1.65million and that the gross budget was made up of the funding from the County Council plus any additional grant monies such as those provided by the Youth Justice Board.*

65. Daniel Sartin, representing Unison, addressed the Committee and highlighted the following issues: -

- Staff were shocked at the extent of the savings required and felt this would lead to a fundamental and detrimental change in the service provided.
- There was concern that the decision to increase the level of savings within YSDS was being made before the financial settlement had been received from government and prior to any decision on the budget had been considered by the County Council. In this respect it was felt that the decision was being taken too soon and before the full detail about the budget available for the next year was known.
- It was felt that the intention to cease all open access provision was in conflict with the outcome of the public consultation undertaken in 2011 which established that open access was considered important.
- Staff were disappointed with the assumption that a one-off large budget reduction implemented in one year was perceived as more efficient than a considered process over time.

66. Mr Oxlade declared a personal interest as a Member of the Youth Service Cross Cutting Task and Finish Group.

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

- Felt concerned that young people who they had spoken to about the proposals were unhappy that they had not been given the opportunity to have their voices heard and that staff were disappointed this was the second change to the service since 2011.
- Raised concern about the reduction in assistance to voluntary organisations and the reliance on the voluntary sector to deliver youth provision at a time when capacity was limited and the availability of grant funding was continually reducing. *Mr Burton explained that information to assist organisations who were considering getting involved in youth provision would*

be available via the County Council website along with contact details for organisations which support the voluntary sector. Mr Gallimore explained that based on previous experience and success over the last two years there were voluntary groups more than capable and willing to take on open access provision. Members queried what safeguarding expertise the voluntary groups taking on youth provision had. Mr Gallimore explained that the groups were encouraged to undertake appropriate safeguarding training via an accredited organisation.

- *Were disappointed at the lack of capacity to support minority groups and also the reduction in open access provision, as this was thought to contribute to the reduction in anti-social behaviour. Mr Burton indicated that it was not the intention to directly reduce support to minority groups but that due to the focus of the service there was the risk that this may be an unintended consequence and that mitigation measures were being put in place.*
- *Highlighted the skills of youth workers and the importance of the relationships they built with young people and the value they could add by making them an integral part of the Think Family programme.*
- *Queried whether the decision should be delayed until more was known about the funding position. Peter Evans, Cabinet Member for Children – Start of Life, explained that the proposed savings were calculated based on financial indications from the Treasury which were not expected to change. To provide the most certainty for staff in the long term it would be more appropriate to make the required savings in one process.*

68. The Chairman invited the Leader, who was seated in the public gallery, to speak to the Committee. She emphasised that this was the first of many difficult decisions to be made by the County Council in delivering the required £141 million savings whilst still providing quality services. She commended Mr Evans, Mr Gallimore and Mr Burton for their hard work in trying to effectively shape the service with constrained finances and thanked the Committee for the points they had raised.

69. Mr Cloake proposed that:-

- (1) The Committee support the proposals for the reduction to the budget and consequent reconfiguration of the Youth Support and Development Service.
- (2) The Cabinet Member be asked to take account of the concerns raised by the Committee in implementing his decision.
- (3) The Cabinet Member be asked to explore the capacity for youth workers' input to add value to the Think Family programme.

The proposal was seconded by Mr High.

70. Mr Parsons made an alternative proposal, 'That the Committee asks the Cabinet Member to defer the additional £1.2million savings,' which was seconded by Mr Smith. A vote was held and the alternative proposal was lost.

71. A vote was held on the proposed recommendations, as set out in minute 69, and they were agreed.

72. Resolved that the Committee: -

- (1) Supports the proposals for the reduction to the budget and consequent reconfiguration of the Youth Support and Development Service.
- (2) Asks the Cabinet Member to take account of the concerns raised by the Committee
- (3) Asks the Cabinet Member to explore the capacity for youth workers' input to add value to the Think Family programme.

The Learning Improvement Strategy

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

74. Brin Martin, Strategic Commissioner for Learning introduced the report and highlighting the following points: -

- There was clear direction from Ofsted that the County Council should work closely with Academies and Free Schools to improve outcomes whereas the Department for Education (DfE) guidance indicated that the County Council had no role to intervene at Academies or Free Schools.
- Ofsted had already acknowledged the effectiveness of the County Council when working with schools, particularly those needing improvement.
- It was important for Members to play an active role by monitoring the outcomes of Academies and Free Schools within their Divisions and holding them to account.

75. Mr Burrett declared a personal interest as a Governor at Thomas Bennett Community College.

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

- Requested clarification regarding the responsibility of the governing body in Good and Outstanding settings. *Mr Martin confirmed that if there was a chance that a school could slip from Outstanding to Good or from Good to Requiring Improvement the governing body was responsible for contacting the County Council to initiate the process of identifying the correct support for the setting.*
- Queried how Free Schools and convertor Academies could be encouraged to adhere to the strategy. *Mr Martin acknowledged that there was a risk these settings would not engage with the strategy but that as part of Members' local role to challenge these schools, they could assist with encouraging them to work with the County Council.*
- Queried the discrepancy in data sets used to monitor performance for maintained settings and Academies and Free Schools. *Mr Martin explained that this was due to some data for Academies and Free Schools not being in the public domain.*
- Suggested that the following amendments to the strategy be considered: -
 - the list of characteristics for schools causing concern should be standardised for both maintained schools and Academies and Free Schools
 - the phrase 'duty of the governing body' on page 57 of the report be re-worded to more accurately reflect the requirements of the governing body.
 - the reference to all schools should be altered to all funded schools

Mr Martin agreed to consider amending the strategy to accommodate these requests.

- Highlighted that there should be a consistent approach adopted by schools in making available the contact details of the Chair of Governors.
- Suggested that the Memorandum of Understanding with Academies and Free Schools should also set out the expectation of how these settings should work with other sections of Children's Services not just the Learning Service.
- Highlighted that they were unsure how they should approach schools in their Divisions that were not performing well, to challenge them about steps they were taking to improve.
- Requested that consideration be given to including a parent governor representative on the Select Committee who was on the governing body of an Academy or Free School.
- Queried whether schools were officially acknowledging incidents of bullying at their establishments as it may affect their Ofsted report. *The Cabinet Member explained that schools should be logging reports of bullying and what was being done about it and these logs were examined by Ofsted during inspections. Mr Martin added that parents could also contact Ofsted direct with any concerns about how bullying was dealt with.*

77. Resolved that the Committee: -

- (1) Recognises the approach the strategy advocates in relation to the Learning Service Review
- (2) Supports the proposal to adopt the two elements of the draft policy relating to maintained settings and mainstream Academies and Free Schools as the means of monitoring and intervention.
- (3) Supports the implementation of the strategy, in particular the role of elected members in exercising the democratic mandate in relation to Academies and Free Schools
- (4) Requests that the Cabinet Member consider inclusion of expectations regarding Children's Services in the Memorandum of Understanding with Academies and Free Schools
- (5) Requests that the Cabinet Member approach the West Sussex Governors' Association to highlight the need for all schools to make publicly available a method of contacting the Chair of Governors.
- (6) Refers to the Business Planning Group the need to provide a training session for Members on how to develop relationships with schools in their Divisions.
- (7) Refers to the Governance Committee consideration of including a parent governor representative from Free Schools and Academies on the Children and Young People's Services Select Committee in addition to at least one maintained school parent governor.

Report from the Business Planning Group

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

79. Resolved: that the Committee supports the proposed approach to the agenda items for forthcoming meetings and supports the outline work programme as recommended by the Business Planning Group at its meeting on 25 September 2013.

Forward Plan of Key Decisions

80. The Committee considered the Forward Plan – November 2013- February 2014 (copy appended to the signed minutes).

81. Resolved: that the Forward Plan be noted.

Members' Items

82. None raised.

Date of the Next Meeting

83. The Committee noted that its next scheduled meeting will be held on 27 November 2013 at 10.30am at County Hall, Chichester.

The meeting ended at 2.00pm.

Chairman