

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

9 March 2017 – At a meeting of the Committee held at 10.30am at County Hall, Chichester.

Present: Mr Cloake (Chairman)

Mrs Bennett	Mrs Le Rossignol	Mr Oppler
Mr Blunden	Mrs Jupp	Mr Parsons
Mrs Evans	Mrs Jones	Mr Smith
Mr High	Mrs Mullins	
Dr Holt	Mr R Oakley	

In attendance by invitation: Mrs Field (Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing) and Mr Hillier (Cabinet Member for Children – Start of Life).

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

**Declaration of Interests**

126. Mr High declared a personal interest in item 7 (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities – Report from the Task and Finish Group) as he had a family member with an Education, Health and Care Plan; see also minute 140.

**Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee**

127. Resolved - That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2017 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

**Cabinet Member Responses**

128. The Committee considered responses from the Cabinet Member for Children – Start of Life in relation to:-

- Future Arrangements for Integrated Prevention and Earliest Help Service
- Update on child sexual exploitation & missing and children subject to child protection plans.

129. Resolved that – The Committee notes the responses from the Cabinet Member.

**Arrangements for the provision of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service Assessment Treatment Service for children and young people who pose a risk of sexual harm to others (the Assessment Treatment Service)**

130. The Committee considered a report from the Executive Director Children, Adults, Families, Health and Education (copy appended to the signed minutes). The report was introduced by Alison Nuttall, Head of Children, Families and Working Age Adults Commissioning.

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

- Recognised that the Sussex Partnership Foundation Trust (SPFT) staff had a particular set of skills and knowledge that enabled them to provide the necessary support to this cohort of young people. The improved service integration that seconding these staff to the County Council would provide was welcomed.
- Were reassured that the service already had experience in creating a secondment arrangement with SPFT for the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service for Looked After and Adopted Children contract and that this model was being mirrored for the Assessment Treatment Service (ATS). The seconded staff would have the opportunity to influence future delivery by involvement in design and development of the service model going forward. Arrangements had also been made to ensure that County Council managers had sufficient capacity to take on the line management responsibilities for the SPFT staff.
- Queried what would happen following the secondment arrangement being in place for a year. *Alison Nuttall advised that time was needed to develop the service and, if necessary, there would be the opportunity to extend the secondment arrangement for a further year whilst this development continued.* Members requested that the service provide an update to the Business Planning Group on progress with service development half way through the first year so they were kept informed of proposals for the ATS.
- Were reassured that the number of children who have harmful sexualised behaviour (HSB) was not increasing but that there was now better awareness of this issue, meaning these children could receive the support they needed. There was an open referral process for children who needed to access the ATS; however due to the nature of the service, it was essential that the child was allocated to a social worker prior to receiving treatment from the ATS.
- Queried the scope of the ATS. *Jane Taylor, Commissioning Manager, Children Looked After, explained that 2/3 of the work involved direct provision of support to children in the form of complex assessments and the other 1/3 was offering advice to schools, youth services and other stakeholders regarding actions they should take if they suspected a child was exhibiting HSB.*
- Received clarification that, as part of their role, the Business Planning Group considered the findings of reports produced following a Serious Case Review and had considered the review mentioned in paragraph 1.6 of the report.

132. Resolved that the Committee

Endorse the proposed decision to: -

- (1) Develop an integrated multi agency team within the West Sussex County Council management structure to include staff from the current Child and Adolescent Mental Health Assessment and Treatment service provided by Sussex Partnership Foundation Trust who would be seconded to West Sussex County Council to sit alongside staff in the Adolescent Family Resource Service.
- (2) Enter into a secondment agreement with SPFT for an initial period of one year, commencing on 1 July 2017, with the option to extend the secondment agreement for a further year whilst a new service model is developed.
- (3) Delegate authority to the Executive Director Children, Adults, Families, Health and Education

to agree to the terms of the secondment in accordance with the proposed decision.

Asks the service to:-

- (4) Provide an update to the Business Planning Group during the winter of 2017 so they are kept informed of proposals for the service.

### **Review of Education and Skills Annual Report Summary 2015/16 – Report from the Task and Finish Group**

133. The Committee considered a report from the Chairman of the Task and Finish Group (copy appended to the signed minutes). The report was introduced by the Chairman of the Task and Finish Group.

134. Deborah Myers, Director of Education and Skills, indicated that setting up a Task and Finish Group (TFG) to carry out consideration of the Annual Report Summary had been very effective as it enabled a full, in-depth discussion of the issues. It was acknowledged that results at Key Stage 2 were below national average but there was optimism that the Key Stage 2 action plan, which was an integral part of the School Improvement Strategy, was already having a positive impact. The mid-year data on attainment had started to be compiled and the initial indications were that there had been an improvement in results.

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

- Raised concern that West Sussex was the lowest ranked of the Shire Counties for the proportion of pupils in Good and Outstanding primary schools. *Deborah Myers, explained that the service were working on building relationships with schools across the County to improve their trust in the ability of the Local Authority to assist with school improvement initiatives. However she cautioned that the lack of good classroom practitioners and the poor funding situation for West Sussex schools meant that it would be a challenge to increase the proportion of pupils in Good and Outstanding schools.*
- Queried whether as the County Council promoted school to school support there were sufficient Good and Outstanding schools to provide this support and how the County Council brokered this arrangement. *Deborah Myers advised that there were 4 School Improvement Boards across the County, each chaired by a Headteacher of a Good or Outstanding school who considered the cases of schools in need of assistance. The County Council area advisors provided details to the Boards of schools that were struggling and also helped in brokering the relationship between the school in difficulties and the school that would provide support. If the arrangement was not successful the local authority would assist in finding an alternative source of support for the school.*
- Highlighted the importance of locality groups where primary and secondary schools met together and that these groups could act as a source of support for smaller schools
- Were concerned that it may be difficult for Members to engage with academies in their division particularly as the senior staff at the academy may perceive there was no requirement for a relationship with the County Council or its Members. *Deborah Myers explained that the service were working on developing relationships with academies and encouraging an*

*'open door' policy which included suggesting inviting their local Member to visit. This was proving effective as more academies started to engage with the County Council demonstrated by the fact that more academies were now represented on the Headteachers' Executive.* The Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing highlighted the importance of Members forging links with schools and academies in their division to act as advocates and offer support.

- Were reassured to hear that it was a statutory requirement for schools to publish on their website the level of pupil premium received and how it was spent.
- Were pleased at the work being done to improve results at KS2 but were concerned that this could be undermined by the poor levels of funding received by West Sussex schools which meant redundancies, particularly amongst teaching assistants and support staff, were a real likelihood. Members welcomed the news that the Leader had signed the letter from the f40 group of authorities to the Prime Minister highlighting concerns about the proposed future funding of schools.
- Welcomed the report that the percentage of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) in the County was now below the national average. Members learnt that a strategy was in place to encourage these young people to engage in meaningful education or training or they may consider pursuing an apprenticeship.
- Were concerned about the spike in the number of exclusions for pupils in years 9 and 10. *Simon Lockwood, Head of School Improvement, explained that there appeared to be an anecdotal link between schools seeking to protect their good results and an increase in exclusions of pupils in these year groups and that this was reflected nationally. He also highlighted that years 8-10 contained pupils in an age group who typically experienced an overwhelming range of issues – both personal and developmental that may result in difficult behaviour that was challenging for schools to resolve.*
- Welcomed the fact that teaching staff were offered secondment opportunities to develop their skills and expertise and that teaching assistants could consider progressing to qualified teacher status. It was acknowledged this could assist with improving succession planning.
- Requested that the Committee were kept updated on the issue of school funding and the resulting impacts on a regular basis.

136. Resolved that: - the Committee: accepts the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group and asks the appropriate Cabinet Member to ensure that:

- (1) The induction for new members of the County Council should emphasise the need for all members to engage with and support the schools in their division and should include information to assist them to do this.
- (2) The Education and Skills Service should explore the potential to work with County Local Committees to engage local members in their communities regarding the schools in their division.
- (3) The Education and Skills Service should encourage all schools to proactively engage with their local elected member.

- (4) The amendments to the style and content of the Annual Report Summary outlined in paragraph 2.5 of the TFG report should be adopted for the 2016/17 report.
- (5) The Education and Skills Service should ensure that tackling the gender gap is a priority for advisory staff from the earliest stage in the education system.
- (6) Monitoring progress against the different areas identified for improvement should be a key priority for the Children and Young People's Services Select Committee in the new administration. This should include the following: -
  - the KS1 and KS2 Action plan
  - monitoring progress with the conversion of Special Education Needs Statements to Education Health and Care Plans
  - monitoring the impact of the NEET Strategy
- (7) An explanation of the powers and duties that the County Council has in relation to children who are Electively Home Educated should be included in an information session for all elected members as part of their induction.

### **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities – Report from the Task and Finish Group**

137. The Committee considered a report by the Chairman of the Task and Finish Group (copy appended to the signed minutes). The report was introduced by the Chairman of the TFG.

138. Jon Philpot, Principal Manager (SEN & Inclusion), highlighted that only 35% of West Sussex children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) were in mainstream schools, whereas nationally this figures was over 40%. Therefore there was a need to address this, both to improve the inclusion agenda, enable more children to be educated in their local community and to assist in reducing the additional costs associated with transporting children to special schools outside of West Sussex.

139. The Cabinet Member for Children – Start of Life acknowledged that the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) strategy was ambitious and he would welcome review by the Committee in 12-18 months to assess progress in implementing the strategy.

140. Mr Oppler declared a personal interest as a Foster Carer for a child with SEND.

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

- Acknowledged that some schools were better than others in promoting the inclusion agenda and welcoming children with an EHCP onto their roll and queried what action could be taken to make this more consistent amongst all schools. *Jon Philpot advised that more peer challenge was required between schools encouraging them to question why some schools had such low numbers of pupils with EHCPs. The County Council could direct a school to*

*take a child with an EHCP if this was considered appropriate but this action was only taken as a last resort.*

- Highlighted the need to provide more support for parents of children with SEND and also offer better guidance about the pupil premium as it seemed some parents were unclear about what it could be used for.
- Received clarification that whilst the inclusion agenda was an important part of the strategy there would be instances where specialist provision would be required to meet the individual learning needs of particular children. The County Council were increasing the number of places available in Special Schools from September 2017 and reviewing all Special Support Centres across the County to assess provision and which may be suitable for expansion.
- Welcomed the work of the Parent Carer Forum and asked the service to ensure that parents of those children with SEND were aware of the support that the Forum could provide.
- Highlighted that to succeed with the inclusion agenda it was important to ensure that there was a focus on improving the understanding of parents of children without SEND that having children with EHCPs in the same class as their child was positive and would not adversely impact on learning.

142. Resolved that the Committee: - accepts the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group and: -

- (1) Asks the Cabinet Member for Children – Start of Life to ensure that delivery of the Strategy will continue to be a high priority and that there continues to be strong emphasis on inclusion for children with SEND in mainstream schools, if this is the most appropriate setting. \* \*
- (2) Agree that the Committee will appoint a lead member for SEND.
- (3) Agree to review the recommendations within 12-18 months.

Asks the Member Development Group to consider the following: -

- (4) Make a list of schools by electoral division available on the Members Information Network (MINE).
- (5) A list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about SEND and inclusion should be provided to help members answer questions from constituents.
- (6) A toolkit should be provided to members to provide best practice for engaging with their local schools to support SEND and promote the inclusion agenda.
- (7) Training and support should be provided for members about children with SEND and to facilitate an understanding of inclusion.
- (8) Training and support to be offered to members about how to engage with their local schools to support the inclusion agenda.
- (9) A member day should be held in conjunction with School Leaders, including Governors, and the Early Help Service to highlight SEND issues and promote the inclusion agenda. This should include the story of the child.
- (10) An induction session should be offered to members post-election to provide an understanding of the Education and Skills Directorate.

Asks the SEND and Inclusion Team to: -

- (11) Improve transition planning through all phases information should be made available to parents, children and young people at the earliest opportunity.
- (12) Provide all elected Members with access to the West Sussex Parent Carer Forum Annual Report.

\*\* Mr Oppler requested that it be recorded that he did not agree with the first recommendation.

### **Request for Call-in**

143. Resolved that: The Committee notes the reason for rejecting the call-in request in relation to the decision by the Cabinet Member for Children – Start of Life for the procurement of a service to support Children and Young People at high risk of or experience of Child Sexual Exploitation (Decision reference: CH09 (16/17)).

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

144. The Committee considered a tabled paper which was a new version of the Forward Plan, April– July 2017 (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.

145. Resolved – That the Committee notes the Forward Plan.

### **Possible Items for Future Scrutiny**

146. None raised.

### **Date of next meeting**

147. The Committee noted that the next scheduled meeting will be held on 29 June 2017 at 10.30am at County Hall, Chichester.

The meeting ended at 12.38pm.

Chairman