

MINUTES of the meeting of the **CHILDREN & EDUCATION SELECT COMMITTEE** held at 10.00 am on 31 July 2013 at Ashcombe Suite, County Hall, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT1 2DN.

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Committee at its meeting on Thursday, 19 September 2013.

Elected Members:

- * Mrs Liz Bowes
- * Mr Ben Carasco
- * Mr Robert Evans
- * Mr Denis Fuller (Vice-Chairman)
- * Mr Mike Goodman
- A Dr Zully Grant-Duff (Chairman)
- * Mr Ken Gulati
- * Mr Colin Kemp
- A Mrs Stella Lallement
- * Mrs Mary Lewis
- * Mrs Marsha Moseley
- A Mr Chris Townsend

Ex officio Members:

- * Mrs Sally Ann B Marks, Vice Chairman of the County Council
Mr David Munro, Chairman of the County Council

Co-opted Members:

- A Cecile White, Parent Governor Representative
- A Duncan Hewson, Parent Governor Representative
- A Derek Holbird, Diocesan Representative for the Anglican Church
- A Mary Reynolds, Diocesan Representative for the Catholic Church
- * Marie Ryan, Substitute for Derek Holbird

In attendance:

- Claire Curran (Cabinet Associate for Children, Schools and Learning)
- Mary Angell (Cabinet Member for Children and Families)

1/13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]

Apologies were received from Chris Townsend, Cecile White, Stella Lallement, Derek Holbird and Zully Grant-Duff. Marie Ryan acted as substitute for Derek Holbird.

The Cabinet Member for Schools and Learning, Linda Kemeny, also sent her apologies.

In Zully Grant-Duff's absence Denis Fuller, the Vice-Chairman, acted as Committee Chairman for this meeting.

2/13 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING: 20 MARCH 2013 (CHILDREN & FAMILIES SELECT COMMITTEE) & 28 MARCH 2013 (EDUCATION SELECT COMMITTEE) [Item 2]

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meetings.

3/13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

There were no declarations of interest.

4/13 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]

Declarations of interest: None.

Witnesses:

PJ Wilkinson (Assistant Director for Schools and Learning)

Claire Curran (Cabinet Associate for Children, Schools and Learning)

Mary Angell (Cabinet Member for Children and Families)

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. Three Member questions had been received from Mr Robert Evans. The questions and responses were tabled, and are enclosed with these minutes.
2. The Chairman invited Robert Evans to ask supplementary questions. In response to Question 1 the Member requested further detail on what measures were being used to discourage Surrey schools from moving to academy status. Officers commented that the Local Authority had no power to direct schools in these matters, but did work to discourage and influence where possible. The Committee was informed that the Local Authority maintained healthy partnerships with Surrey academy schools. Officers expressed the view that there were no significant gains for Surrey schools to pursue academy status, other than in their ability to support other schools.
3. The Committee was told that free schools were being actively encouraged by the Local Authority where there was an identified local need.

4. In reference to Question 2, the Member requested further information on what was being done to reduce the number of schools appeals. Officers outlined that there had been significant work to identify Surrey's need and provision of school places, and that this information was published on an annual basis. It was highlighted that there had been a significant commitment of capital funding in the Medium Term Financial Plan towards creating an additional 12,000 school places in the next five years.
5. In reference to Question 3, the Member asked officers to confirm that the under-spend from 2013/13 was being directed towards the provision of additional school places. Officers commented that under-expenditure was not considered a "carry-forward" and had been result of preparing for anticipated cuts in the financial year, the impact of which had been managed. It was confirmed that the under-spend would be used to meet increasing budgetary pressures in 2013/14.

Recommendations:

None.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

Committee Next Steps:

None.

5/13 RESPONSES FROM THE CABINET TO ISSUES REFERRED BY THE SELECT COMMITTEE [Item 5]

There had been no referrals made to Cabinet so there were no responses to report.

6/13 APPOINTMENT OF CO-OPTees TO THE CHILDREN & EDUCATION SELECT COMMITTEE [Item 6]

Declarations of interest: None.

Witnesses: None.

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Committee agreed the appointment of the co-optees as outlined in the report.

Resolved:

- That the individuals detailed in paragraphs 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 of the report be formally co-opted onto the Children & Education Select Committee.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

Committee Next Steps:

None.

**7/13 INCREASING THE EMPLOYABILITY OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN SURREY
[Item 7]**

Declarations of interest: None.

Witnesses:

Session 1

Garath Symonds (Assistant Director for Young People)

Claire Curran (Cabinet Associate for Children, Schools and Learning)
Mary Angell (Cabinet Member for Children and Families)

Session 2

Jenny Smith (Development Manager)
Jayne Dickinson (Principle and Chief Executive of East Surrey College)
Ron Searle (Headmaster at the Warwick School)
Sue Taylor (Network Manager of Association of Learning Providers)
Ben Gately (The Eleven)
Amanda Sims (Education Contracts Manager at U-Explore)
Pete Brayne (Director for Surrey Youth Consortium / Chief Executive of Guildford YMCA)
Garath Symonds (Assistant Director for Young People)

Claire Curran (Cabinet Associate for Children, Schools and Learning)
Mary Angell (Cabinet Member for Children and Families)

Session 3

Sean Rafferty (Head of Family Services)
Ben Byrne (Head of Youth Support Services)
James Beardall (Care Services Manager)
Angela Sargeant (CAMHS Policy & Development Manager)
Phil Doyle (Catch 22 Service Manager)
Pete Brayne (Director for Surrey Youth Consortium / Chief Executive of Guildford YMCA)
Garath Symonds (Assistant Director for Young People)

Claire Curran (Cabinet Associate for Children, Schools and Learning)

Key points raised during the discussion:

Session 1

1. The Committee queried the timescale in which officers intended to deliver their ambition of full participation of all young people in some form of education, employment, or employment and training. Officers commented that the target was to ensure full participation by 2015.
2. Officers commented that there were 936 young people Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET) as of June 2013. The Committee was informed that Services for Young People was working to develop a way of delivering systemic change for all NEET young people, as it was felt that this was the manner in which long-term unemployment and other issues could be tackled.
3. The Chairman invited the two young people present (Ben Hodgeson and Oliver van Koetsveld) to ask their question. Officers were asked to comment on why careers advice was not mandatory in the year students were required to choose their GCSE options. Officers confirmed that all secondary schools had an obligation to deliver some form of careers advice, but that there was no requirement to do so in that specific year. The Committee was informed that there were 56 different agencies delivering careers advice in schools across Surrey. It was also highlighted that the Council provided its own careers advice to young people through the online resource U-explore.
4. The Committee was informed that the National Curriculum placed less emphasis on vocational pathways, but that there was work being undertaken through Surrey's Public Services Transformation programme to develop a clear approach to the provision of careers information and guidance for young people.
5. The Committee asked officers to clarify whether the expected increase in the number of young people with Special Educational Needs (SEN) was attributable to population growth, as opposed to a percentage increase. It was confirmed by officers that this was the case. The Committee was informed that this presented a significant challenge in how the Council responded to the increase in need.
6. The Committee was informed that the proposed changes to SEN arrangements in the Children & Families Bill meant that additional funding for students with School Action and School Action Plus would no longer be available to schools. It was recognised by officers that this presented a significant challenge in terms of young people who were NEET, or at risk of becoming NEET, as a large majority were supported through School Action and School Action Plus arrangements. The Committee was informed that this was likely to present a barrier to participation, as schools would no longer have access to those additional resources.
7. The Committee asked officers to outline the mentor arrangements for those young people who were NEET. It was confirmed that they all had assessment workers that identified the most appropriate pathways for them to access.

8. The Cabinet Member for Children & Families informed the Committee of the opportunity to support Looked After Children (LAC) care leavers by becoming a sponsor, and that there was a need to identify more sponsors to ensure these young people had suitable mentors after leaving care.

Session 2

1. Officers outlined how Services for Young People identified the aspirations of young people and the opportunities available to them, and how this informed the commissioning process. It was highlighted that the recent peer review had praised the service's approach to partnership working, as well as the ambition of its apprenticeship programme. The Committee was informed that there had been a 20% increase in apprenticeships between 2011/12 and 2012/13 with over 100 more young people undertaking apprenticeships.
2. The Committee asked officers to comment on how the service ensured that young people's aspirations matched the opportunities available to them. The Network Manager for the Association of Learning Providers (ALP) commented that Information and Guidance (IAG) in schools was crucial in aligning aspirations and opportunities. The Committee was informed that IAG was important but also had to be tailored to meet the need of the young person, particularly with those at risk of being NEET. It was observed that often this meant a lot of additional resource and spending time to build a relationship with the young person in question.
3. The founder of The Eleven commented that there was a mis-match between the aspirations of young people and the jobs available. The Committee was informed that part of the way in which this could be addressed would be in how careers were being presented to young people.
4. The Headteacher of the Warwick School outlined the IAG arrangements available within his school, and commented that there was close partnership working with other local schools and colleges. Many of the witnesses present commented that partnership working was crucial in supporting young people into employment or further education. The Committee was informed that this had been achieved in part through the use of clear vision statements and compacts between services. Organisations such as the Prince's Trust were identified as being of particular value in supporting young people at risk of becoming NEET.
5. The Committee asked witnesses to comment on how they engaged employers in the process of providing IAG and developing opportunities. The Network Manager of the ALP informed the Committee that they worked closely with Surrey business networks as well as the Chamber of Commerce. It was noted that employers would be attending the 2013 ALPs Opportunities fair. Officers also commented that the Council's procurement relationship with providers was designed to ensure that they were actively supporting young people into employment.

6. The Committee had a discussion about the occasional need to address and challenge family expectations in relation to young people's aspirations. It was acknowledged that there was a need to address families in a holistic fashion when supporting young people into education, employment, or employment and training.
7. A number of witnesses commented on a cultural shift away from young people wanting to pursue traditional academic routes towards developing more vocational skills. The popularity of apprenticeship programmes with both young people and employers was highlighted to support this view. However, the Cabinet Member for Children and Families also commented that it was important to challenge young people to achieve and excel to the best of their ability, and that higher education should still be a consideration.
8. Officers praised the Warwick School for its inclusive approach to education, and the ability to offer a number of different pathways to its students. It was also expressed that this was not indicative of Surrey schools in general, and that there would be a challenge to schools to take a more inclusive approach. The Headteacher of the Warwick School informed the Committee that there was an increasing pressure at a national level to move away from vocational skills and towards a more academic curriculum. It was raised that the hope was that the local authority would support the school in its approach, despite the national trend.
9. A number of witnesses commented to the Committee that the local authority should consider the future trajectory and trends that were emerging in relation to young people in education and employment. Officers commented that there had been a clear rise in the number of young people in employment in Surrey, while the number in education had decreased, and that the service would continue to consider how best to align itself to young people's aspirations.

Session 3

1. The Committee was informed that Services for Young People used a multi-agency and multi-disciplinary approach to helping support young people at risk of becoming NEET. Officers commented that it was the case that there were 1,000 NEET young people at any one time, but that the service engaged with approximately 2,000 over the course of an academic year. This variation in the numbers was a result of young people becoming enrolled or employed through the course of the year.
2. Officers explained that Services for Young People was set up to respond to areas of identified need, with specific criteria, rather than being aimed at purely preventative work. The Committee was informed that many young people at risk of becoming NEET were identified through a Risk Of NEET Indicator (RONI) and that this had proven an effective way of ensuring preventative work was being undertaken at the appropriate time.
3. The Committee asked whether having a wide number of professionals involved with an individual young person could prevent a joined-up

approach to the support offered. Officers commented that often families would have a number of professionals to meet a number of complex needs. It was highlighted that the intention of the Family Support Programme was ensuring that these different agencies provided support in a positive and linked way.

4. The Committee held a discussion about how to embed a more preventative approach within schools, so that young people were confident in what services they could access to support them. It was outlined that the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) delivered a number of training courses to schools about providing support to young people. The Committee was also informed that there were a number of peer mentors and CAMHS youth advisors that were aimed at providing peer-to-peer support for young people.
5. Officers commented that Services for Young People had recently developed an online youth portal that would help signpost support services and resources for young people. It was acknowledged by officers that the implementation of this youth portal had not been as effective as originally hoped, and that efforts were underway to improve young people's engagement with the resource.
6. The Committee raised the recommendations of the Peer Review and asked officers to comment on the identified need to improve local co-ordination of services. Officers stated the complex local arrangements reflected budgetary reductions in recent years, as well the requirement to adapt services to meet the Local Prevention Framework (LPF). The Committee was informed that it was felt that there was a challenge to local Youth Support Services managers to lead local services and the implementation of policy. The Cabinet Associate for Children, Schools & Families commented that Members had a responsibility as individual local councillors to scrutinise what the local offer was in their District & Boroughs, and that this could be achieved in part through Local Committees.
7. The Committee discussed the Peer Review Action Plan, and requested that officers clarify whether it was in the process of being developed. In addition Members asked that consideration be given to how the Committee could be involved in its preparation and implementation.
8. The Director for Surrey Youth Consortium highlighted the issue of homelessness in relation to young people who were NEET, and expressed the view that this was area where significant impacts could be made with the appropriate support.
9. The Chairman thanked the young people in attendance for their contribution to the meeting.

Recommendations:

- a) That the Committee look to further explore the provision of careers advice and information and guidance in Surrey, with a particular focus on consistency.

Action by: Chairman/Democratic Services

- b) That Members of the Council be encouraged to become a care leaver sponsor.

Action by: Chairman/Democratic Services

- c) That Cabinet consider how students who are unlikely to be eligible for a combined plan will be supported following the introduction of Education, Health & Care Plans (EHCP) and the cessation of School Action and School Action Plus, so as not to jeopardise their chances of post-16 participation.

Action by: Cabinet

- d) That the direction of travel detailed in the Employability Plan is supported, and officers and partners congratulated on the work so far, whilst acknowledging the challenges and financial pressures ahead.

Action by: Cabinet

- e) That the Assistant Director for Young People clarify whether the peer review action plan meeting will take place on 4 October 2013 and that the Committee be informed of the steps taken to implement the recommendations of the review.

Action by: Assistant Director for Young People

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

Committee Next Steps:

None.

8/13 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME [Item 8]

Declarations of interest: None.

Witnesses: None.

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. Members requested that January 2014's theme be amended to include the following question: "How does the curriculum provided improve outcomes for young people with Special Education Needs?"

2. There was a brief discussion regarding the format of the meeting and reports. Officers from Democratic Services noted the feedback and agreed to take the suggestions forward.

Recommendations:

None.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

Committee Next Steps:

The Committee will continue to review its Forward Work Programme at each meeting.

9/13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING [Item 9]

The Committee noted that the next meeting of the Children & Education Select Committee would be on 19 September 2013 at 10am. Members were reminded that there would be a private pre-meeting beginning at 9.30am.

Meeting ended at: 1.12 pm

Chairman

Questions to Children & Education Select Committee – 31 July 2013

1. In view of the fact that if existing Surrey schools opt to become Academies, or if new 'Free Schools' are established, this has a negative impact on finances and complicates Surrey's role in providing sufficient school places, what measures is the County taking to counter such moves?
2. How many Surrey parents have appealed against the school places allocated for their child next year? What measures are the County considering to reduce pressures and the consequent numbers of appeals in future?
3. At the committee's last meeting in March 2013, members expressed concern at two areas of major underspend in the budget, namely £3.5 million on the DSG (dedicated schools grant) and £2.4 million on early years. What measures have been taken in the last quarter to ensure that these education funds are actually spent on children and education - not keep in reserves?

Robert Evans (Stanwell and Stanwell Moor)

Response

1. The council's funding is reduced from two different sources as schools convert to academy status:
 - a. Surrey County Council (SCC) receives an annual grant from central government to provide support services to schools - the Education Services Grant (ESG). When a school converts to an academy, this grant is reduced by £116 per pupil. Hence should a school with 1000 pupils convert, then the authority loses £116,000 in ESG and the funding is transferred to the academy. ESG is reduced during the year as further schools convert to academies.
 - b. Schools are funded by Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). There are also some support services funded by DSG which the Local Authority (LA) may provide centrally for maintained schools (if the Schools Forum agrees) but for which funding must be delegated to academies. Such services include behaviour support and specific licenses. In 2013/14 Surrey retained £2.8m from DSG to provide these services on behalf of maintained schools and the 31 academies in existence at 31 March 2013 received £268,000 for these services. The position will change during the year as more schools convert to academies.

Surrey has 33 existing academies and 20 in the process of conversion before the end of 2013. The council and Babcock 4S can trade with academies and have a brochure of services. Most academies purchase some services. However, there is often a mismatch between funding and need. For example, 'Good' or 'Outstanding' schools are unlikely to have been eligible for school improvement funding from the council, as this is targeted to schools based on need. Despite this, they will receive a share of the council's school improvement budget on conversion (via ESG), but are unlikely to purchase this service. If a good or outstanding school opts to transfer to academy status the Local Authority (LA) is not able to prevent this where the Secretary of State (SoS) has approved an Academy Order

In the case of a school that is in an Ofsted category of concern, the SoS can intervene and issue an order for the school to be a sponsored academy as a measure to improve performance. Surrey County Council has been working with the larger successful academies for them to carry the function of sponsoring academy in order to keep an in house solution to school improvement.

Where the council is aware of prospective free school promoters, it is communicating with them to try and manage the provision of school places efficiently. The council may make representations -- as necessary - - to the DfE, if it does not consider there to be a basic need requirement where a free school is proposed to be located.

SCC continues to manage the positive relationships with schools that have already converted to academy status and factor them in to the overall management of school places. If the LA does need to increase the capacity at an academy, it will fall to SCC to provide funding for these additional places via the basic need programme identified in the 5-year Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).

2. Please note that these statistics are in the process of being validated. The council's Schools Appeals Services is set up to organise appeals for all community and voluntary controlled schools across Surrey. They also provide this service to a number of own admission authority schools (trust, foundation, voluntary aided and academies) throughout Surrey. However, a number of these schools organise their own appeals

September 2013 entry

	Lodged	Heard
Community & VC	403	243
Own AA schools	283	184

The appeal figures for schools that are their own admission authorities and organise their appeals (based on figures received to date) are as follows:

	Lodged	Heard
Own AA schools	87	66
Total:	773	493

The Directorate is enabling expansion at a large number of Surrey schools to increase the places available, and therefore hope to improve the percentages of parents receiving their choice of school. When increasing provision at schools we always have regard to school popularity and standards, and, where possible, expand schools that are both popular and highly rated by Ofsted. This is evidenced by our recent success in securing additional basic need funding.

It should also be noted that Surrey is experiencing a significant increase in the primary age population, this has reduced the number of vacant spaces available and as a consequence the ability to have choices between school places has reduced. An increase in appeal rates would be anticipated as a result. It is imperative, therefore, that the provision of additional school places continues to be a priority.

3. Both the DSG and Early Years underspends include provisions we are required to make for 2 and 3 year olds to claim free entitlement to nursery education during the year. This is a growing initiative as the DfE is gradually increasing the percentage of 2 year olds gaining entitlement. This is the point at which children enter the education system and therefore numbers cannot be accurately projected. Also, take-up is dependent on parental choice and is not compulsory. Take-up is monitored and in January 2013, the likely underspend to be carried forward from 2012/13 was built into the 2013/14 budget. This freed up DSG Funding for Early Years in 2013/14 which could be transferred to support SEN pupils. The other main cause of underspending was from temporary vacancies resulting from the restructure of Schools & Learning services, which are not expected to recur.

Dr Zully Grant-Duff
Chairman – Children & Education Select Committee

This page is intentionally left blank