

MINUTES of the meeting of the **CHILDREN & EDUCATION SELECT COMMITTEE** held at 10.30 am on 28 November 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 Monday, 27 January 2014.

Elected Members:

A Mrs Liz Bowes
* Mr Ben Carasco
* Mr Robert Evans
* Mr Denis Fuller (Vice-Chairman)
* Dr Zully Grant-Duff (Chairman)
* Mr Ken Gulati
A Miss Marisa Heath
* Mr Colin Kemp
* 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
A Duncan Hewson
* Derek Holbird
A Mary Reynolds
* Simon Parr

In attendance

Mrs Mary Angell, Cabinet Member for Children and Families
Mrs Clare Curran, Cabinet Associate for Children, Schools and Families
Mrs Linda Kemeny, Cabinet Member for Children and Learning

21/13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]

Apologies were received from Liz Bowes, Marisa Heath, Mary Reynolds, Christopher Townsend and Cecile White. Simon Parr acted as a substitute for Mary Reynolds.

22/13 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING: 19 SEPTEMBER 2013 [Item 2]

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

23/13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

There were no declarations of interest. However, Robert Evans and Stella Lallement requested that it be noted in the minutes that they are both employed part-time as teachers in Surrey.

24/13 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]

There were no questions or petitions.

25/13 RESPONSES FROM THE CABINET TO ISSUES REFERRED BY THE SELECT COMMITTEE [Item 5]

The Committee was asked to note the response from Cabinet to the Select Committee's recommendation concerning the employability of Young People in Surrey. There were no further comments.

26/13 CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION [Item 6]

The Chairman gave a brief outline of the meeting's structure and theme as outlined in the agenda. It was highlighted that the Communities Select Committee had scrutinised the Domestic Abuse Strategy 2013-18 on 31 October 2013.

27/13 SURREY SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD (SSCB) ANNUAL REPORT 2012-2013 [Item 7]

Declarations of interest: None.

Witnesses:

Alex Walters (Chair of the Surrey Safeguarding Children Board)
Julian Gordon-Walker (Head of Safeguarding)
Caroline Budden (Deputy Director for Children, Schools and Families)

Clare Curran (Cabinet Associate for Children, Schools and Families)
Mary Angell (Cabinet Member for Children and Families)
Linda Kemeny (Cabinet Member for Schools and Learning)

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Chair of the Surrey Safeguarding Children Board outlined the Safeguarding Annual Report. The Committee was informed that the Surrey Safeguarding Children Board was a statutory body comprised of the partners involved in children's safeguarding, and that it was not responsible for the delivery of services. The Board was able to

request, inform and make representations but held no powers to direct partners.

2. The Committee queried whether the funding for the Board was adequate for its purpose. It was commented that funding was contributed by all partners through a locally-defined arrangement, as there was no prescribed national model. The Committee was informed that there would be a requirement to consider a greater contribution from partners in the next financial year. However, it was also highlighted that this would be the first time it had been adjusted in three years.
3. The Committee asked whether any trends could be identified in the 20% increase in birth rates cited within the report. It was stated that this might require some investigation, and that the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment would be a suitable mechanism to make this analysis. It was commented that a wide range of factors dictated service demand, and that an increase in birth rates did not always naturally lead to an increase.
4. The Committee discussed the role of the Domestic Abuse Strategy in identifying areas of need in relation to training. It was commented that the strategy would enable partners to work closer together in tackling issues around domestic violence, and that this was a key priority for 2013/14.
5. The Committee expressed concern at the low attendance of GPs at Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPCs). It was clarified that the figures reported in Item 8 were inaccurate, and that GPs provided reports to 20% of Child Protection Conferences (CPCs). However, it was recognised that this was an area of significant concern for all partners. It was outlined by officers that there was work being undertaken with the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) to develop a strategy to improve attendance and reporting to CPCs and ICPCs. It was highlighted that the GP report format was being re-designed in order to improve the process. It was confirmed that the Health & Wellbeing Board would be receiving the Safeguarding Children Annual Report on 12 December 2013.
6. The Committee discussed the potential gaps in supporting young people at risk. It was outlined that the early help agenda was intended to support families through universal services, and to reduce the risk of them meeting a threshold whereby there would be safeguarding concerns. It was highlighted that Early Help assessments were a means by which the appropriate services could be identified for children and their families.
7. The Committee discussed the Ofsted inspection and report from September 2012. Officers outlined the key recommendations; it was commented that the Central Referral Unit recommended by the Ofsted report was now being progressed to developing a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub. The Chair of the Safeguarding Children Board commented that a key area of concern was around developing a better early help offer, and that Ofsted had commented that Children's

Services was accepting some cases that could be managed by partner agencies at a lower threshold.

8. The Committee queried how agencies could ensure greater involvement from fathers and other carers. It was highlighted that a number of action plans were being developed by agencies in response to the priorities outlined in the annual report. The outcomes of these action plans would be measured by monitoring the information collected in assessments. It was also commented that training was being targeted to encourage professionals to be confident in asking about family composition and relationships in the assessment stage.
9. The Committee queried the number of priorities in the report and asked for clarification. The Chair commented that there were four targeted priorities for the Safeguarding Board in 2013/14, however these were in respect to an over-arching priority for the Board to carry out its statutory functions. It was commented that the additional priority around Child Sexual Exploitation was partially in response to the increasing national profile and awareness of the matter.

Recommendations:

- a) That the Surrey Safeguarding Children Board considers developing and agreeing with all partners an accepted funding model, to help determine appropriate partner contributions in future years.

Action by: Chair of the Surrey Safeguarding Children Board

- b) That future Surrey Safeguarding Children Board Annual Reports clearly distinguish between the objectives required to fulfil statutory duties and “targeted” priorities.

Action by: Chair of the Surrey Safeguarding Children Board

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

Committee Next Steps:

None.

28/13 SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL'S SAFEGUARDING ROLE [Item 8]

Declarations of interest: None.

Witnesses:

Julian Gordon-Walker (Head of Safeguarding)
Caroline Budden (Deputy Director for Children, Schools and Families)

Clare Curran (Cabinet Associate for Children, Schools and Families)
Mary Angell (Cabinet Member for Children and Families)
Linda Kemeny (Cabinet Member for Schools and Learning)

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Committee was given a brief outline of the statutory role of the Cabinet Member for Children and Families, and the function of the Safeguarding Unit in scrutinising Child Protection Plans. Officers commented that the involvement of fathers in the Child Protection process had shown improvement, according to an Ofsted thematic inspection undertaken in June 2013.
2. The Committee queried what arrangements were put in place to ensure that young people's views were adequately represented in the Child Protection process. It was outlined that the Safeguarding Unit had involved the Children Care Council. A review had recently been conducted on how Children's Services gathered the views of children and it was recognised by social workers that there was a need to present these at Child Protection Conferences (CPCs). It was also highlighted by officers that young people would be encouraged to attend CPCs where this was considered appropriate.
3. The Committee queried what links Children's Services made with the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector (VCFS) in respect to safeguarding. It was commented by officers that much of the partnership work was defined within the Early Help strategy, and that the Safeguarding Children Board had highlighted the importance of the VCFS in ensuring children were safeguarded against harm.
4. The Committee discussed the implications of the Family Justice Review, and questioned whether the expertise and capacity existed within Children's Services to meet the increased emphasis on presenting evidence to court. It was commented by Members that there was a perceived reliance on expert witnesses in such instances. Officers expressed the view that the need was to encourage social workers to have a greater confidence in the evidence they were required to provide, as well as a consideration of how it was being presented in court. It was recognised that training new staff presented an opportunity to build up wider knowledge and expertise. The Committee was informed that the Family Justice Review marked a culture shift in how assessments were to be conducted, with an earlier emphasis on what factors impacted on a child's wellbeing.
5. The Committee asked what measures the Safeguarding Unit had undertaken to address the poor attendance of GPs at CPCs. Officers confirmed that they were meeting with the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) to identify actions to improve attendance. It was highlighted that Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPCs) were subject to statutory timescales that sometimes meant it was not possible for GPs to attend, but that reports should still be sought in such instances. The Committee queried whether CPCs could be held at GP surgeries to enable GPs to attend. It was clarified that this could be explored by officers, but that they were not always considered a suitable venue, given the nature of the conferences.

Recommendations:

- a) That the Directorate develop working protocols and agreements with the adult services regarding their role in Child Protection Planning: this to be measured by increasing attendance at Child Protection Conferences.

Action by: Head of Safeguarding

- b) That, as part of the work being carried out on raising understanding of neglect, the Quality Assurance audit focuses over the next year on cases subject to CP Plans for 18 months plus, many of whom are subject to plans under the category of Neglect. The purpose will be to identify the services and approaches required by professionals to improve the timeliness achieving change.

Action by: Head of Safeguarding

- c) That the Social Work Reform Board (SWRB), in conjunction with the Social Work Reform Project, have in place by April 2014 a Learning and Development Pathway for staff integrated with the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF), and a robust programme for the development of Assistant Team Managers.

Action by: Head of Safeguarding

- d) That the Child Protection Conference Service increases its efforts in engaging the CCGs in improving the involvement of GPs in Child Protection Conferences and Child Protection Plans.

Action by: Head of Safeguarding

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

Committee Next Steps:

None.

29/13 SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN IN SCHOOLS [Item 9]

Declarations of interest: None.

Witnesses:

Liz Griffiths (Senior Consultant, Babcock 4S)
Ian McGraw (Education Safeguarding Advisor, Surrey County Council)
Caroline Budden (Deputy Director for Children, Schools and Families)

Clare Curran (Cabinet Associate for Children, Schools and Families)

Mary Angell (Cabinet Member for Children and Families)
Linda Kemeny (Cabinet Member for Schools and Learning)

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Committee was provided with a brief outline of the role Babcock 4S played in delivering safeguarding training and quality assurance measures to schools within Surrey. Officers confirmed that Surrey County Council conducted regular monitoring visits where there were specific safeguarding concerns. The local authority also provided advice to all schools, it was highlighted that this included any free schools or academies within the county.
2. The Committee questioned whether experienced staff were required to regularly update their safeguarding training. It was confirmed that all Child Protection Liaison Officers (CPLOs) were required to repeat their Child Protection training every three years, with a further recommendation from Babcock 4S that this should be refreshed every year. It was explained that it was the responsibility of individual school leadership teams to decide whether to set the refresh on an annual basis. The Committee was informed that the CPLOs regularly met to share key topics and would cascade this information to school staff where appropriate.
3. The Committee had a discussion around the national media stories that had recently increased awareness of the risks around safeguarding within institutional environments. Officers commented that there needed to be recognition that it would be impossible to eradicate institutional abuse entirely. However, it was recognised that it was possible to significantly mitigate the risks through creating an environment where professionals and stakeholders were confident in coming forward if they had safeguarding concerns.
4. The Committee discussed whether there were sufficient measures in place to prevent potential allegations being mismanaged within the school environment, particularly within non-maintained Surrey schools. The importance of clear governance and accountability was highlighted in relation to safeguarding. The view was expressed that the role of school governors was vital in relation to ensuring safeguarding remained a priority in individual schools.
5. The Committee challenged the value of safeguarding training delivered as e-learning packages. It was confirmed by officers that neither Babcock 4s nor Surrey County Council would recommend e-learning as the primary way of delivering safeguarding training.
6. The view was expressed by witnesses that the biggest challenge facing Surrey schools was ensuring that young people were supported adequately before they met the threshold for a child protection intervention by Children's Services. Officers commented that the Early Help strategy was intended to put sufficient preventative measures in place to ensure that the needs of vulnerable children were being met. It was highlighted that Children's Services was working to develop the relationship with Surrey schools, this included giving trainee social workers the opportunity to spend time in schools. It was commented

that the size of Surrey presented a barrier to developing a holistic approach to safeguarding across all schools, but the Committee was also asked to note that recent Ofsted inspections of Surrey schools had judged behaviour and safety to be good.

7. The Committee asked what measures were in place to monitor the safeguarding of Surrey children in out-of-county placements. It was confirmed that this was monitored through a monthly report card to the Corporate Parenting Board.
8. The Committee discussed the measures in place to address concerns around child sexual exploitation. The delivery of 'Chelsea's Choice' to Surrey schools was praised by officers and the Cabinet Associate as an example of proactively addressing this requirement, while also increasing awareness and understanding of the issue. It was highlighted that parents and carers could also benefit from Safeguarding training opportunities.

Recommendations:

- a) That Surrey schools consider using a self audit tool to show how they discharge their responsibilities to safeguard and protect children and young people. This would be similar to section 11 audits for key people and bodies .

Action by: Education Safeguarding Advisor

- b) That an E learning package is created for 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' so that everyone who works with children can undergo online training.

Action by: Education Safeguarding Advisor

- c) That the County Council work with the Surrey Governors' Association (SGA), Babcock 4S, Phase Councils and other relevant bodies to ensure that Safeguarding remains a standing item on the agenda of all governing bodies.

Action by: Education Safeguarding Advisor

- d) That the Cabinet Member for Schools and Learning report back to the Committee in due course to update Members on her attempts to engaged with non-maintained schools on the issue of Safeguarding.

Action by: Cabinet Member for Schools and Learning

Actions/ further information to be provided:

None.

Committee Next Steps:

None.

30/13 SURREY CLINICAL COMMISSIONING GROUPS - SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN [Item 10]

Declarations of interest: None.

Witnesses:

Amanda Boodhoo, Designated Safeguarding Nurse

Dr Tara Jones, Surrey Named GP

Caroline Budden, Deputy Director for Children, Schools and Families

Clare Curran, Cabinet Associate for Children, Schools and Families

Michael Gosling, Cabinet Member for Public Health and Health & Wellbeing Board

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Committee queried what work was being undertaken by the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) to address the low attendance of GPs at Child Protection Conferences. Witnesses informed the Committee that they were working closely with Surrey officers to identify actions to improve attendance. It was highlighted that Initial Child Protection Conferences were particularly problematic as they were bound by statutory timescales. However, a specific pro-forma had been devised to ensure that health reports were being considered at conferences even when a GP was unable to attend. The Committee was informed that the requirement to provide adequate reports was being embedded in the safeguarding training.
2. The Committee was informed that the National College of GPs had made a recommendation that every practice had a named GP to lead on children's safeguarding. It was also commented that level 3 safeguarding children training was being extended to all GPs in Surrey in line with recommendations from the National College.
3. The Cabinet Member outlined that the Health & Wellbeing strategy had set out to ensure better integration between health and social care services in Surrey, in order to ensure the best outcome for children and families. It was highlighted that safeguarding was a key priority for the Health & Wellbeing Board and it worked to ensure that the CCGs also reflected this. The Committee was informed that the Cabinet Member for Children & Families also sat on the Health & Wellbeing Board.

Recommendations:

- a) The Committee notes that currently GPs attend only 2% of Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPCs) and provide reports in 20% of the cases, and requests that Guildford & Waverley CCG's Director of Quality and Safeguarding and Clinical Lead for Children consider, without delay, measures to ensure GPs increased attendance and reporting to ICPCs.

Action by: Guildford & Waverley CCG's Director of Quality and Safeguarding/ Clinical Lead for Children

- b) That the Committee re-examine the matter in 6 months time to assess progress.

Action by: Democratic Services

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

Committee Next Steps:

None.

31/13 RECOMMENDATION TRACKER AND FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME [Item 11]

Declarations of interest: None.

Witnesses: None.

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Committee noted its Recommendation Tracker and Forward Work Programme. There were no further comments.

Recommendations:

None.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

Committee Next Steps:

The Committee will continue to review its Recommendation Tracker and Forward Work Programme at every meeting.

32/13 MEMBER REFERENCE GROUP ON PROVISION OF CAREER INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE TO STUDENTS IN SURREY [Item 12]

Declarations of interest: None.

Witnesses: None.

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Committee agreed to set up the Member Reference Group as outlined in the report. The following Members volunteered to join the Member Reference Group: Denis Fuller and Zully Grant-Duff

Resolved:

- That the Committee establish a Member Reference Group of up to 4 Members to input into the development of the Skills for the Future strand of the Public Service Transformation Programme.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

Committee Next Steps:

None.

33/13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING [Item 13]

The Committee noted its next meeting would be held on 27 January 2014 at 10am.

Meeting ended at: 1.35 pm

Chairman