

MINUTES of the meeting of the **CHILDREN & EDUCATION SELECT COMMITTEE** held at 10.30 am on 26 January 2015 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, 26 March 2015.

Elected Members:

- * Dr Zully Grant-Duff (Chairman)
- * Mr Denis Fuller (Vice-Chairman)
- * Mrs Liz Bowes
- * Mr Ben Carasco
- * Mr Robert Evans
- * Mr David Goodwin
- * Mr Ken Gulati
- * Mrs Margaret Hicks
- * Mr Colin Kemp
- * Mrs Mary Lewis
- * Mrs Marsha Moseley
- * Mr Chris Townsend

Ex officio Members:

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

Co-opted Members:

Derek Holbird
Mary Reynolds
Cecile White

Substitute Members:

Simon Parr

In attendance

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

1/15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]

Apologies were received from Cecile White and Colin Kemp, Simon Parr acted as a substitute for Cecile White.

2/15 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING: 27 NOVEMBER 2014 [Item 2]

The minutes from the previous meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

3/15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

Robert Evans asked that it be noted that he lectures at Royal Holloway, Surrey. This was a non-pecuniary interest.

4/15 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]

No questions or petitions were received.

5/15 RESPONSES FROM THE CABINET TO ISSUES REFERRED BY THE SELECT COMMITTEE [Item 5]

Witness: Mary Angell, Cabinet Member for Children and Families

Key points raised during this discussion:

1. The Committee agreed to defer consideration of item 5Biii for discussion alongside item 9 of the agenda.
2. Under Item 5Bi the Committee emphasized the need to raise awareness of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) amongst Surrey's districts and boroughs authorities and communities, at both a strategic and operational level, in order to protect children and young people from the risk of harm. The Committee was of the view that whilst the response from the Cabinet Member for Children and Families covered operational aspects, it did not address the strategic aspects of the Council's work with districts and boroughs authorities.
3. Members also noted the response did not address the second recommendation made in connection with CSE.
4. The Cabinet Member for Children and Families drew the Committee's attention to the thematic report on CSE, *The Sexual Exploitation of Children: It Couldn't Happen Here, Could It?* (Ofsted, November 2014). It was highlighted that it was an area where all local authorities faced challenges, and that the report had set out a number of key recommendations for tackling CSE. The Committee was informed that the Corporate Parenting Board had requested a report on CSE in

Surrey; this would be used to identify possible patterns and trends, in order to agree further actions.

5. Following discussion, the Committee agreed that the recommendations concerning CSE would be referred back to the Cabinet Member for Children and Families for a more detailed response.
6. Under Item 5Bii the Committee noted the response from Cabinet in relation to Schools and Safeguarding. There were no further comments.

Recommendations:

a) That Surrey County Council actively engages with District and Borough councils and Surrey Police to consider how the risk of Child Sexual Exploitation can be reduced through regulatory licensing, in particular taxi licensing and in respect of activities described as "Licensable Activities" by the Licensing Act 2003.

b) That, given the crucial work of the Youth Support Service and Children's Services in supporting young people and children at risk of CSE and in reducing the risk of CSE, any future strategy and financial planning by Cabinet ensures that both services are suitably resourced to address CSE and safeguarding in Surrey.

**6/15 RECOMMENDATION TRACKER AND FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME
[Item 6]**

Witnesses: None

Key points raised during this discussion:

1. The Committee was informed that the Performance and Finance Sub-group had met on three occasions. The summary of the Sub-Group's discussions would be presented to the Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee (COSC), alongside those of other Select Committee Performance and Finance Sub-Groups. The Committee was informed that COSC would collate these findings and produce a final set of recommendations to Cabinet on 3 February 2015, to be considered alongside the Medium Term Financial Plan 2015-2020.
2. Members requested that the item Re-commissioning of Services for Young People – Update scheduled for 13 May 2015 be brought forward to the Committee meeting on 26 March 2015.

Recommendations:

None.

7/15 SCHOOL PLACE PLANNING AND EXPANSION PROGRAMME [Item 7]

Witnesses:

Keith Brown, Schools & Programme Manager, Property; Business Services

Julie Stockdale, Head of Commissioning and Admissions, Schools and Learning

Dominic Forbes, Planning and Development Group Manager, EIA

Peter-John Wilkinson, Assistant Director for Schools and Learning

Key points raised during this discussion:

1. Officers outlined how the demand for school places will be met over the next year as set out within the School Place Planning and Expansion Programme. The Committee was informed that processes had been reviewed and improvements made. Officers were questioned over statistics regarding the importation and exportation of school places between Surrey and neighbouring counties. The Committee was informed that approximately 5,000 places were exported and 8,000 imported during 2014 and that both numbers have shown a downward trend since 2010.
2. The Committee questioned how the Council monitored the impact on local areas where existing schools were being expanded. Officers commented that mitigation measures were put in place as part of the planned expansion where appropriate, but following any expansion work it was the school's responsibility to monitor the impact on the local community. Members questioned whether school head teachers should be expected to take responsibility in this area. Some members expressed the view that the impact of expansion was a school issue that should be resolved within the community and that Local Committees should play a role since they offer a forum where local residents can raise concerns.
3. The Committee commended officers on the success of delivering the school expansion programme within budget during difficult financial times.
4. The Committee was informed that in relation to the School Travel Plan positive steps have been taken in bringing the process in-house with a dedicated School Travel Plan Team. A new officer role had been created in relation to compliance and planning applications. Officers added that the different teams involved within the school planning process were working together in a bid to unify future projects through improved communication and a more holistic approach.
5. The Committee was informed that there is a challenge in creating school places in the Key Stage 2 (KS2) bracket as most infant schools' sites were small and lacked the scope for expansion.

6. The Committee questioned how best they could understand the risks related to the School Expansion Programme and critical points for scrutiny. Officers stated that future reports would include a risk register; the focus would mostly be around central government funding for school places. It was also highlighted that most sites with the potential for expansion had already been developed and there was therefore a future risk due to the higher cost for new developments.
7. The Committee drew attention to the fact that local authorities have no control over the provision of free schools and questioned officers on the potential impact this may have. The Committee was informed that the Council was supportive of free schools where it addressed a need for school places.
8. Officers highlighted the School Travel Plan Team's role in monitoring all travel plans no matter where they were established and ensuring they are implemented effectively, including seeking to enforce when necessary.
9. The Committee asked if there was any correlation between the actual delivery of education and school expansion. Officers commented that the school expansion programme had been well received by head teachers. Linked to this, the Committee was informed that an officer is assigned to interface between head teachers and expansion project managers; the feedback of which has been positive.
10. The Committee questioned whether there was scope for collaborating further with neighbouring counties given Surrey's pressure for pupil places and high net imports. Officers responded by highlighting that the majority of Surrey residents do not live on the border, therefore most planning was done in relation to providing school places for Surrey residents. However, it was noted that significant communication existed between Surrey and its neighbouring counties, especially in relation to special schools where the catchment area was much larger than for mainstream schools.

Recommendations:

The Committee recognises and thanks officers for the work undertaken to improve the processes and delivery of the School Expansion Programme, particularly in light of the increasing pressures to provide school places. It recommends:

- a) That Local Committees promote community engagement in relation to the School Expansion Programme.

- b) That a risk register evaluating the strategic risks connected to the School Expansion Programme is circulated to the Committee, in order to inform its future scrutiny of this item.
- c) That a further update is brought to the committee following the delivery of the September 2015 places.

8/15 JOINT COMMISSIONING STRATEGY FOR SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE [Item 8]

Witnesses:

Zarah Lowe, Provision and Partnership Development Manager
Peter-John Wilkinson, Assistant Director for Schools and Learning

Adrienne Knight, Headteacher, Woodlands School
Anne Breaks, Guildford and Waverley Clinical Commissioning Group
Andrea Collings, Family Voice

Key points raised during this discussion:

1. Officers outlined the realignment of commissioning responsibilities detailed in the proposed joint commissioning strategy. The Committee was informed that Speech and Language Therapy was mainly identified as an educational need rather than a health one in Surrey, and that the current service required improvement due to a disjointed relationship between education services and clinical practice.
2. The Committee was informed that the joint commissioning approach would mean that both health and education provisions would have a single service specification, rather than the two separate specifications in place. The Committee was informed that the joint commissioning strategy would potentially see an increase in cost to the High Needs Block in the short-term, but would improve outcomes for children and families. It was clarified that the speech and language budget quoted in the report included provision to Special Schools.
3. The Committee highlighted that the strategy could mirror that of the Services for Young People, by developing a “hub and spoke” model to share knowledge and training. The view was expressed by some Members that more training for early years teachers was necessary.
4. Witnesses informed the Committee that speech and language therapy across the county is often focussed on delivering support for the individual student, when it would be more beneficial to adopt a whole school approach. The Committee was told that teachers and Learning Support Assistants would need training from qualified practitioners in order to help deliver the support. Witnesses supported the concept of a county-wide, uniform approach which included a “hub and spoke” model. It was further highlighted that it was important that families were involved in the training process.
5. The Committee commented that it would like to see a number of performance indicators linked to the outcomes outlined in the report, in order to measure the impact of the joint commissioning strategy.

6. The Committee was informed that there was a need to improve transition planning between stages of education. Officers highlighted this was particularly the case when moving from school onto college, where it was important to encourage a move away from one-to-one support in order to develop the student's independence.

Recommendations:

The Committee endorses and commends the general principles of the Joint Commissioning Strategy. It asks that officers note the following recommendations:

- a) That a consistent universal offer of speech and language therapy is developed across all Surrey early years settings, education settings and schools through training for staff and carers. It is suggested that a "hub and spoke" model is implemented as part of this, in order to allow schools and therapists to share good practice.
- b) That the strategy outlines how it will support children and young people who transition between stages of education.
- c) That the strategy expands on how it will meet the needs of young people in Further Education colleges, given the new responsibilities as a result of Children and Families Act, 2014.
- d) That the implementation model includes performance indicators linked to the outcomes set out by the Joint Commissioning Strategy.

9/15 SCHOOL GOVERNANCE TASK GROUP [Item 9]

Witnesses: P-J Wilkinson, Assistant Director for Schools and Learning
Linda Kemeny, Cabinet Member for Schools and Learning

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. Under Item 5Biii the Chairman informed the Committee that the task group interim report went to Cabinet on 27 November 2014 and that she had attended the Cabinet meeting. The Chairman had put forward suggestions to Cabinet as to how the local Member could participate in the nomination panel.
2. The Committee discussed the role of Local Authority (LA) governors. Members commented that they were concerned Local Authority governors felt isolated and that a forum for communication and information is important. The Committee was advised that the Department for Education (DfE) set out in guidance that the LA must not attempt to influence an LA governor. Members discussed the potential risk associated with the perception of LA governors as

representatives of the LA. The Cabinet Member for Schools and Learning highlighted the need to engage with and support all Surrey governors and stressed she was happy to meet with all school governors to discuss the Council's priorities. The Committee agreed with the Cabinet response as shown in Item 5Biii.

3. The role of the Clerk to Governors was mentioned by the Cabinet Member for Schools and Learning, in relation to key training offered to clerks and their important role in disseminating support information to governing bodies.
4. The Committee supported engagement with all governors through Local Committees.

Recommendations:

- a) That the Cabinet Member for Schools and Learning engages with local economic and enterprise partners, Phase Council representatives and SGOSS to consider how the Council can best encourage individuals in the business sector to serve as school governors.
- b) That the Cabinet Member and Assistant Director for Schools and Learning use the Council's internal communication network to actively promote the school governor role to all local government staff.
- c) That the Directorate for Children, Schools and Families work with its professional governance partners to develop and strengthen peer to peer support between school governing bodies, and relevant professional associations.
- d) That the Internal Audit Team update the Committee on any themes emerging from the financial audits in schools following the conclusion of the 2015/16 audit plan.
- e) That the Council's Education Finance Team and Internal Audit Team are invited to attend a future meeting of all Surrey governors in order to highlight the skills and expertise of the Internal Audit Team and discuss the role of governing bodies in financial and risk management.
- f) That the Assistant Director for Schools and Learning considers how to involve the Internal Audit Team in future governor training on financial and risk management.

10/15 DATE OF NEXT MEETING [Item 10]

The Committee noted its next meeting would be Thursday 26 March 2015 at 10am.

Meeting ended at: 1.25 pm

Chairman