

MINUTES of the meeting of the **CHILDREN & EDUCATION SELECT COMMITTEE** held at 10.00 am on 26 March 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 Wednesday, 13 May 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:

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

Co-opted Members:

- Cecile White, Parent Governor Representative
- * Derek Holbird, Diocesan Representative for the Anglican Church
- * Simon Parr, Diocesan Representative for the Catholic Church

Substitute Members:

Mrs Liz Bowes
Mr Robert Evans

In attendance

11/13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]

Apologies were received from Robert Evans and Liz Bowes. There were no substitutions.

12/13 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING: MONDAY 26 JANUARY 2015 [Item 2]

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

13/13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

No declarations of interest were received.

14/13 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]

No questions or petitions were received.

15/13 RESPONSES FROM THE CABINET TO ISSUES REFERRED BY THE SELECT COMMITTEE [Item 5]

Witness:

Linda Kemeny, Cabinet Member for Schools and Learning.

Key points raised during this discussion:

1. The Chairman drew the Committee's attention to paragraph 5 on page 14 of the Agenda, informing Members that an update of the financial audit in schools plan 2015/16 would be brought to the Select Committee, and that this had been added to the Forward Work Programme.

Recommendations:

None.

16/13 RECOMMENDATION TRACKER AND FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME [Item 6]

Witnesses: None

Key points raised during this discussion:

1. Members referred to the Surrey Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report, page 19 of the recommendation tracker, asking when a

response might be expected. Officers informed the Committee that a report was expected in July 2015.

Recommendations:

None.

17/13 YOUTH JUSTICE STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2020 [Item 7]

Witnesses:

Nick Wilson, Strategic Director for Children, Schools and Families
Garath Symonds, Assistant Director for Young People
Ben Byrne, Head of Youth Support Services

Meg Webb, Magistrate, South-West Surrey Bench
Gavin Stephens, Assistant Chief Constable, Surrey Police

Key points raised during this discussion:

1. Officers informed the Committee that the Youth Justice Strategic Plan (YJSP) would cover a 5 year period from 2015 – 2020, instead of the usual annual plan, so to help develop a long term approach to tackling youth offending. Officers explained that Surrey's youth justice system had undergone significant developments and had taken a new focus on early intervention.
2. The Committee questioned officers over the level of input from mental health workers in tackling youth offending. The Committee commented that there was a need for greater representation for young carers, and Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). Officers informed the Committee that the Youth Support Service works closely with CAMHS and were working together on re-commissioning services for young people. Officers highlighted the need to further improve joint work with mental health services and young carers.
3. There was a discussion concerning Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), the Committee queried how continuity of support for young people and their carers was ensured in such cases. Officers informed the Committee that 20 social workers were employed by Youth Support Services, but highlighted staff retention was an issue. Officers added that continuity of support around CSE had been a core theme within the Surrey Youth Justice redesign, and stated that the re-commissioning of services for young people had had a positive impact in this area.
4. The Committee raised the issue of cyber crime and asked officers what was being done in connection to prevention of cyber crime in schools. Officers responded by stating that cyber crime represents a great challenge and recent research had shown that children feel most

unsafe online. The Committee was informed that Surrey has a Youth Intervention Officer whose role has a strong focus on tackling cyber crime in a restorative way. It was added that good links and communication between parents, schools and the community were paramount in tackling this, and that there was a need for further analysis on the role of social media in cyber crime.

5. The Committee asked about the resourcing of the strategy in the future, and were informed that there were multiple sources of funding available that had not yet been secured. This made forward planning for resourcing challenging. However, it was highlighted that the analysis contained within the report would support future negotiations for funding, and that a Service Budget would be included in the final report including more detail on future resource requirements.
6. The Committee discussed the provision of joined-up care for young offenders in custody and social services. Members questioned officers on the issue of communication between police and schools when young people have committed offences. Officers informed the Committee that only 5 young people from Surrey were at that time in custody. It was added that the Surrey Youth Support Service worked closely with adult services and that schools receive notification when an offence has been committed.
7. Officers were questioned over the link between anti-social behaviour and crime. The Assistant Chief Constable of Surrey Police informed the Committee that there was a strong link between anti-social behaviour and crime. He stated that the approach had been focused around problem solving and community engagement, for example through borough and district community action groups.
8. The Cabinet Member for Schools and Learning informed the Committee that Surrey County Council was supporting a conference themed on modern threats to young people, such as cyber crime. She added that two new posts have been created for safeguarding officers.

Recommendations:

- A. The Committee endorses the Youth Justice Plan, and commends the Youth Support Service and the Youth Justice Board for their success to date. It recommends:
- B. That the Youth Justice Board undertake evaluations with the probation services to understand what impact early youth justice interventions have on reducing long-term adult offending, and share these findings with the Committee at a later stage.
- C. That officers provide a report on the Reducing Re-offending Plan 2014-17 with details of how Youth Support Service and partners are working to address homelessness, NEET status and mental and

emotional health issues as known factors in relation to re-offending. The Committee requests that this report, along with the progress of the 1 year action plan and relevant performance data is provided 12 months time.

18/13 CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE: COMMISSIONING FOR 2015 - 2020 AND IMPLICATIONS OF BUDGET REDUCTIONS [Item 8]

Witnesses:

Garath Symonds, Assistant Director for Young People
Frank Offer, Head of Commissioning and Development

Clare Curran, Cabinet Associate for Children, Schools and Families

Key points raised during this discussion:

1. The Committee highlighted the transition from primary to secondary as a vulnerable time for young people and questioned whether there was enough early support. Officers stated that the transition from key stage 2 to 3 was a primary area of concern, and that the approach was centred on reducing the number of young people Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEETs). The role of peer-to-peer mentoring was highlighted as an effective tool in early intervention.
2. Members expressed concerns about how the proposed changes to Services for Young People had been communicated to district and boroughs. The Committee discussed how boroughs and districts developed their own youth strategies and the role of the Local Prevention Framework was highlighted in this regard. The Committee was informed about the Resource Allocation System (RAS) and how the RAS formula would allocate resources according to need. Officers explained that a formula was based on figures and factors applicable to each borough and district with each factor being allocated a particular weighting.
3. The Committee was informed that a Youth Commission had been set up to gather evidence on the importance of youth work in improving outcomes for young people. This research would be used to develop a better understanding of the future of youth work provision, as well as to demonstrate its value.
4. The Committee questioned whether the hub and spoke model would result in the closure or relocation of youth centres across Surrey. It was confirmed that there were no plans for the closure or relocation of youth centres, and that the new model would designate one centre in each district and borough as a hub and the other centres as the

spokes. The role of the voluntary and faith sector was highlighted as being important in mitigating any reduction in service provision.

The Committee questioned officers over cuts to Individual Prevention Grants (IPG). It was commented that the IPGs has been identified as being an effective preventative tool. The Committee was informed that Services for Young People would seek to fund the IPGs through potential alternative sources.

5. The proposed recommendations were put to the vote, with four Members voting for it, and two against. There was one abstention. Ken Gulati requested that his abstention be noted in the minutes.

Recommendations:

- A. That Services for Young People explore with schools how peer mentoring for younger children can be developed across Surrey, to provide early support for those transitioning between primary and secondary schools.
- B. That officers report to the Committee on alternative resources identified to mitigate the reductions made to the Individual Prevention Grant in 6 months time.
- C. That the work of the Youth Commission in demonstrating the importance of youth work is accelerated and findings are shared with the Committee in order to support the Cabinet's budget planning for 2016.
- D. That, when re-commissioning, officers assist Local Committee Youth Task Groups in ensuring that there is continuity of support for those young people and their families with previously identified needs.

19/13 CORPORATE PARENTING: FOSTERING & ADOPTION [Item 9]

Witnesses:

Sheila Jones, Head of Countywide Services
Caroline Budden, Deputy Director, Children, Schools and Families

Alison Benjamin, Care Services Team Manager
Cea Francis, Care Service Team Manager
Julie Lee, Foster Carer
Alison Cox, Foster Carer
Cindy Morris, Foster Carer
Mary Angell, Cabinet Member for Children and Families

Key points raised during this discussion:

1. The Committee was joined by three foster carers who outlined the benefits of their training in Social Pedagogy. They highlighted

particular examples where the information and skills provided had enabled them to positively impact the lives of the young people in their care.

2. The Committee was shown a short video that outlined the Foster to Adopt Process, and the changes that had been made. The Committee highlighted that 9.3% of Looked After children went through 3 or more placements each year, as mentioned in the video. Officers informed the Committee that this represented a significant reduction on previous years and that there would be greater focus on placement stability.
3. The Committee asked the foster carers if they could highlight any areas for improvement within the system. Witnesses expressed the opinion that further development in the communication with professionals would help improve the experience for young people.
4. The Committee questioned whether there was any other specialist training available to foster carers. It was confirmed that there was a requirement that foster carers were trained in various topics such as safeguarding, and that Social Pedagogy provided an extra layer of training.
5. Officers informed the Committee that future funding had been allocated from Surrey County Council's budget, to ensure the work continued after the conclusion of the Head, Hands and Hearts pilot. This included employing two part-time social pedagogues, equivalent to one full-time who also worked as Supervising Social Workers within the Fostering Service to ensure the social pedagogy approach is fully integrated.

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned for lunch at 13.15pm, part way through the item on Corporate Parenting: Fostering and Adoption, and resumed at 13.45pm with all those present who had been in attendance in the morning session except for Mr Goodwin, Mr Townsend, Mr Gulati, Mrs Hicks, Mrs Moseley, Mr Holbird, Mrs Reynolds and Mrs White.

Recommendations:

The Committee notes and receives the Fostering and Adoption Statements of Purpose and annual reports. The Committee resolves that:

- The Lead Member annual report is deferred to May 2015.

The Committee thanks the foster carers who attended, and commends them for their exemplary work in supporting the children and young people of Surrey. It notes the achievements made through the work of the Head, Hearts and Hands pilot, and the plans put in place to assure its legacy.

20/13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING [Item 10]

The next meeting of the Committee will be held at 10am on 13 May 2015

Meeting ended at: Time Not Specified

Chairman