

MINUTES of the meeting of the **CHILDREN & EDUCATION SELECT COMMITTEE** held at 10.00 am on 13 May 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, 9 July 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
- * Cecile White
- Duncan Hewson
- Derek Holbird

Ex officio Members:

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

Co-opted Members:

Simon Parr, Diocesan Representative for the Catholic Church

Substitute Members:

In attendance

21/15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]

Apologies were received from Derek Holbird and Chris Townsend.

Michael Hall acted as a substitute for Derek Holbird and Ernest Mallet acted as a substitute for Chris Townsend.

22/15 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING: 26 MARCH 2015 [Item 2]

The Committee noted that there was a mistake in the recorded Membership attendance in the minutes of the last meeting and the minutes did not reflect that the previous meeting concluded at 2.15pm. It was also noted that the Parent Governor Representative had been absent and their name should be deleted from the adjournment description.

Subject to the factual amendments, the minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

23/15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

Robert Evans informed the Committee that he is a part time lecturer at Royal Holloway University, he expressed this may affect his ability to vote.

24/15 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]

No questions or petitions were received.

25/15 RESPONSES FROM THE CABINET TO ISSUES REFERRED BY THE SELECT COMMITTEE [Item 5]

There were no responses to report.

The Chairman informed the Committee that this was Cecile White's last attendance as a co-opted member of the Committee due to the end of her term; she expressed her thanks to Cecile for her four years of service and informed the Committee that two Parent Governor Representative vacancies had been circulated to Surrey governors.

26/15 RECOMMENDATION TRACKER AND FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME [Item 6]

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Committee noted and agreed the Recommendations Tracker and Forward Work Programme.

27/15 CORPORATE PARENTING: LEAD MEMBERS REPORT [Item 7]

Witnesses:

Sheila Jones, Head of County Wide Services, Children, Schools and Families
Caroline Budden, Deputy Director, 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 Cabinet Member for Children and Families introduced the report and informed the Committee that the aim of the Corporate Parenting Board was to achieve permanency for Looked After children by providing the right services for each child; this would ensure stability moving to independency. It was noted that once these were factored in, there would be a better chance of positive outcomes for looked after children.
2. The Committee were informed that extra funds such as the bursary awards and Celebration Fund made a difference to Looked After children by acknowledging achievements, it was added that the savings fund matches any savings made by the child rewarding their dedication.
3. The Committee queried the emphasis of collective responsibility; the view was expressed that the service and Members should ask if they are doing enough to support Corporate Parenting. The Cabinet Member for Children and Families responded that the Corporate Parenting Board offers training on an annual basis for members, this was under three levels of understanding; one for all Members and higher levels for Children and Education Select Committee Members and Cabinet Members. It was expressed that Members had a good level of Corporate Parenting understanding but more engagement could always be undertaken.
4. There was a discussion around safeguarding and the investigation of child sexual exploitation; it was commented that this was constantly changing and that there was a multi-agency approach and a renewed focus on old cases. The Committee were informed that the new Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy Group where arrangements and governance were reviewed at a senior level receives monitoring reports of the numbers of missing children and those causing concern. The Strategy Group, it was noted, is chaired by the Assistant Chief Constable and challenges operational work by determining a level of joint concern. The Strategy Group was currently working on protocols by finding commonalities in areas of concern and offering support to looked after children most at risk. It was added that processes and focus had become considerably more robust in the last 6 months.
5. The Committee were informed that Surrey's children homes offered training on drug misuse and child sexual exploitation. Ofsted reported that the homes effectively assessed and had comprehensive risk monitoring procedures; it was noted that return interviews for missing children were all conducted on time. Historically, the data for young people who ran away was collected differently. The service now had one list of names and information for children who were Looked After which was reviewed each month. It was noted that in the last three to

four months the number of instances where young people had gone missing had fluctuated between 100 and 150. This was inclusive of young people who went missing for short periods of time. Officers added that there was currently a clear baseline that was evaluated for trends and patterns, the service could bring information on trends and patterns back to the Committee later in the year.

6. Officers responded to a query on placement numbers, typically a looked after child should have 2-3 placements from birth. The risk indicator is for more than 3 placements: children who have had more than 3 placements in the year were a cause for concern. It was added however that Surrey was ahead nationally for placement stability with 9% compared with 11% nationally moving three or more times in the year.
7. The Committee were informed that the health of looked after children was a high priority of the Corporate Parenting Board and the need for an increase in clinical support was being addressed. School stability however was the starting point for looked after children and area heads were monitoring school behaviour and attendance; emphasis was placed on the importance of a looked after child remaining in one school.
8. The Committee raised concern regarding children and young people that were 'sofa surfing' and expressed that there needed to be a sense of duty to safeguard these young people. Officers explained that it was to be hoped the re-commissioning of housing options would give young people more permanent housing options. Although the young people in this category were a focus, it was generally difficult to identify people who are living this way. However, once the service is made aware of individuals it would then be possible to give the young person an appropriate assessment.

Recommendations:

The Committee commends the Lead Member for Children's Services for her outstanding dedication and commitment over the last six years and thanks her for her report.

The Committee recommends that:

- The learning from the evaluation of data on CSE risk to children and young people in Surrey and the statistics on the numbers of missing children, including completion of return interviews, are reported to the Committee in six months time.
- The timescales for completion of health checks and the quality of care plans are scrutinised by the service and the improvements reported to the Committee in six months time.
- In recognition that placement stability is crucial to the Corporate Parenting Strategy, the Committee recommends that in future the LMCS annual report on Corporate Parenting includes data on both long and short-term placement stability.

28/15 SCHOOL ATTAINMENT AND OUTCOMES - TRENDS AND THEMES [Item 8]

Witnesses:

Maria Dawes, Head of School Effectiveness, Babcock 4S

Rhona Barnfield, Chair of Secondary Phase Council

Kate Keane, Chair of Primary Phase Council

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Committee were informed that number of schools inspected by Ofsted that achieved a good or outstanding judgement had increased by 4.5% compared to 1.5% nationally.
2. Officers informed the Committee that Central Government measures the level of progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2; two levels of improvement were expected. It was noted that there was a robust reporting system and all authorities were held to account by Central Government. Teacher assessments however could sometimes be inconsistent, so the service was working with Primary and Junior schools to collect robust monitoring data.
3. The Head of School Effectiveness informed the Committee that Surrey County Council had put in £1.9million a year for five years to implement the School Improvement Strategy while analysing the data. It was added that in the last year over 100 schools had been supported in Surrey through the strategy and that they saw attainment improving faster than the national average.
4. Officers explained that the percentage of Surrey children attending a good school had increased due to the extra school improvement funding and an increase in partnership working between schools and the local authority and school-to-school. It was added that academies are included in the School Improvement Strategy and still receive some School Improvement Programme support. It was stated that the service was always trying to make processes more robust and ensure that even 'outstanding' schools did not become complacent.
5. The Committee expressed that too much emphasis over the years had been on the results of SATS and judgements by Ofsted all of which created a pressure for schools to raise results. Less testing and monitoring should be considered to avoid the strain of raising results. Officers commented that the national curriculum had changed and as levels and SATS were taken away, tests would be reported differently. It was noted that Surrey was 1% behind the national average for maths at Key Stage 2 which was a 1% improvement from the previous year.

Liz Bowes left the room at 11:37am.

6. The Committee were informed that academy school improvement accountability sits with the Regional Schools Commissioner. In the case of some free schools, if they do not rapidly improve they would become academies. Twenty Academies had so far opted out of the

first two years of the Surrey wide School Improvement Programme;
two years into the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).

Recommendations:

The Committee noted the report and recommends:

- Acknowledgement of the ambitions and aspirations of Surrey schools and their governing bodies in achieving improvements in attainment for their pupils.
- Commends the Cabinet Member for Schools & Learning for her steadfast support of the Schools Improvement Strategy.

David Goodwin left the room at 11.50am.

29/15 UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF PUPIL PREMIUM IN REDUCING THE ATTAINMENT GAP [Item 9]

Witnesses:

Maria Dawes, Head of School Effectiveness, Babcock 4S
Rhona Barnfield, Chair of Secondary Phase Council
Kate Keane, Chair of Primary Phase Council

Ben Carasco left the room at 11.55am.

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Committee were informed that the service was working with school Heads to ensure children eligible for the Pupil Premium were identified. Currently 1 in 7 children in Surrey were in receipt of the Pupil Premium, compared to 2 in 7 nationally. It was noted that the biggest challenge was identifying eligible children but in recent years identification numbers have improved. However, Surrey is in the bottom three authorities nationally for children claiming free school meals.

Ben Carasco entered the room at 12.04pm.

Robert Evans left the room at 12.04pm.

2. The Committee questioned why the number of disadvantaged children had increased. Officers commented that the number of parents not working had increased but numbers had mainly risen due to the drive to identify eligible children.
3. Officers were asked if the Pupil Premium could be used for teacher training; they explained that it was at the school's discretion how to use the funds and that teacher training would be possible and could be useful. It was clarified that the funds had to be used within the school so it would not be possible to spend on qualifying new teachers. Officers added that the Pupil Premium had minimum restrictions to adapt to each school; schools in deprived areas for example could use Pupil Premium for school trips if this was beneficial to the child. Officers stated that the Virtual School manages the Pupil Premium

funds for Looked After children. This Pupil Premium funding does not go to schools as the Virtual School has responsibility for Looked After children in Surrey wherever they attend school.

4. The Committee were informed that a Primary Vision Group was set up to challenge what schools are doing with the Pupil Premium moving forward.

Recommendations:

The Committee noted the report and thanked the witnesses for their detailed contributions.

- The Committee recommends that in the future reports on the role of the Pupil Premium in reducing the attainment gap include a breakdown of attainment data by district & borough and areas of deprivation.

30/15 DATE OF NEXT MEETING [Item 10]

The next Children and Education Select Committee will be confirmed after the Council Annual General Meeting.

Meeting ended at: 12.30 pm

Chairman