

**MINUTES** of the meeting of the **SOCIAL CARE SERVICES BOARD** held at 10.00 am on 12 May 2016 at Ashcombe, County Hall, Kingston upon Thame, KT1 2DN.

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Committee at its meeting on Thursday, 23 June 2016.

**Elected Members:**

- \* Mr Keith Witham (Chairman)
- \* Mrs Margaret Hicks (Vice-Chairman)
- \* Mr Ramon Gray
- \* Mr Ken Gulati
- Miss Marisa Heath,
- \* Mr Saj Hussain
- \* Mrs Yvonna Lay
- \* Mr Ernest Mallett MBE
- Mr Adrian Page,
- Mrs Dorothy Ross-Tomlin
- \* Mrs Pauline Searle
- \* Ms Barbara Thomson
- Mr Chris Townsend,
- \* Mrs Fiona White

**Ex officio Members:**

Mrs Sally Ann B Marks, Chairman of the County Council  
Mr Nick Skellett CBE, Vice-Chairman of the County Council

**Co-opted Members:**

**Substitute Members:**

Mrs Carol Coleman  
Mr Chris Pitt  
Mr Nick Harrison

**In attendance**

**28/16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]**

Apologies were received from Marisa Heath, Adrian Page and Christopher Townsend. Chris Pitt, Nick Harrison and Carol Coleman attended as substitutes.

**29/16 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING: 4 MARCH 2016 [Item 2]**

The minutes of the meeting on 04/03/16 were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

### **30/16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]**

The following Declarations of Interest were noted:

Nick Harrison asked that it was noted by the Board that he was a member of the Children's Improvement Board.

### **31/16 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]**

There were no questions or petitions.

### **32/16 RESPONSES FROM THE CABINET TO ISSUES REFERRED BY THE SCRUTINY BOARD [Item 5]**

There were no items referred.

### **33/16 REPORT FROM INTERIM HEAD FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES [Item 6]**

#### **Witnesses:**

Kevin Peers, Interim Head of Children's Services

#### **Key points raised during the discussion:**

1. The Board was informed that the Interim Head of Children's Services would work to correct a lack of focus by introducing new Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), and reduce the level of bureaucracy within the service. A particular example was given with regard to reducing documentation length in order to improve expedient decision-making.
2. The Interim Head of Children's Services identified 7 initial key areas of focus:
  - To reduce the processing length of the Child Protection Plan (CCP) to 18 months
  - To ensure that children under 16s assessment is complete within 45 days
  - Pathway Plans made more regular for children
  - To look at Long Distance Services and how best to deliver them
  - To look at proportions of children with disability plans compared with children in need
  - To look at provisions concerning missing children.

The Board queried why these particular priorities had been chosen. Officers explained that previous experience and the information gained regarding the service's procedures had indicated that these priorities were the most fitting for initial work.

3. The Chairman of the Board commended the conciseness of the report and suggested that future reports from the service should be similar in nature. The Board also expressed its appreciation of the Interim Head of Children's Services desire to redress the level of bureaucracy within the Service and provide clear objectives.

4. Officers advised the Board that there were a series of three month audit reports that could be put before the Board for scrutiny. The Board was also informed that the service's improvement plan was being rewritten to reflect this increased focus.
5. The Board asked for clarification on why the service would seek to reduce the time children were on Child Protection Plans, and whether this would increase the risk to the child. Officers advised that 18 months was considered too risk intensive for a child to be on a Child Protection Plan, and that these issues should be tackled earlier. It was also suggested that escalation has been too slow and that an ideal way to combat this was to relaunch the Salford Neglect Checklist.
6. The Interim Head of Children's Service confirmed that, due to the large nature of the Council and high staff turnover, the results of the Ofsted report of June 2015 were not always apparent to these new staff members, however that processes were in place to ensure that all staff in the service were fully aware of the report and the context it provided for improvement.
7. The Cabinet Member for Children and Families' Wellbeing expressed that, in co-ordination with the work of the Interim Head of Children's Service the Public Value Transformation Programme (PVT), Special Education Needs and Disabilities 2020 Strategy (SEND 2020), Early Help (EH) and the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) are all contributing to the improvement of Children's Services. The Council's positive relationship with the Surrey Safeguarding Children's Board (SSCB) and partners including the Scrutiny Board was also highlighted as supporting this improvement.
8. The Cabinet Member for Children and Families' Wellbeing commented that procedures did have room for improvement and that a key objective was to aim for an outstanding service, adding that the close teamwork within the Leadership Team contributes to an improved service and invited the Scrutiny Board to be part of the improvement strategy.
9. The Board highlighted concerns related to the recruitment and retention of staff in Children's Services, particularly social workers. Officers expressed the desire to make the Council an attractive prospect for social workers to improve retention of staff, citing the Safer Surrey scheme as a positive aspect in this and suggested that a greater contribution from the care system would be helpful with this matter..
10. The Interim Head of Children's Services also suggested, in order to combat the difficulty in retaining staff, that more support work could be done at a staff level below social worker. The idea of a concordat with neighbouring Local Authorities not to employ leavers on temporary contracts for 6 months was cited as another possible solution.
11. The Interim Head of Children's Services highlighted the need to improve the service's performance relating to missing children, citing Ofsted judgements.

To resolve this, he suggested that his meeting with the 70 officers who had previous experience with missing children within their caseloads was positive in gaining information on their processes, allowing room for improvement, while also accepting that improvement was most needed with cases placed at a distance.

**Recommendations:**

That the Head of Children's Services report on the progress made on the areas he has identified for improvement using the new key performance data and audit information at the Board's October meeting.

**Further information to be provided:**

That the Head of Children's Services provides the KPIs to be used by Children's Services to the Board.

**Board next steps:**

Organise a meeting of its Performance and Finance sub-group for June to consider Children's Services performance in depth as per the Board's recommendation of 4 March 2016.

**34/16 2015-20 YOUTH JUSTICE STRATEGIC PLAN REVIEW [Item 7]**

**Witnesses:**

Ben Byrne, Head of Youth Support Services

Mary Lewis, Cabinet Associate for Children, Schools and Families

**Key points raised during the discussion:**

1. The Cabinet Associate for Children, Schools and Families introduced the council's work with the Youth Justice System, describing it as a primarily preventative role, and added that children not in employment, education or training (NEET) and children who are displaced are the ones at highest risk of offending. The Board was informed that the low level of NEETs within Surrey, as well as the work that the council has done to prevent youth homelessness, an effort that had been commended by the Department for Education (DfE), has ensured that there were a low level of children who fall within this risk category.
2. The Head of Youth Support Services highlighted the drop in youths within the criminal justice system; the number of youths being within the system 7-8 years ago being approximately 2000 to 127 being within it in 2015; and the number of youths in the prison system being five in the same year. This was commented on as being the lowest number of youths in the criminal justice system for a large authority in the UK.
3. The Board expressed concern about repeat offenders and asked what preventative measures were being used. Officers commented that the rate of repeat offenders was at its lowest point, and that youths convicted once were less likely to reoffend due to the preventative

services provided. The Board was informed that a more integrated local service was the best method for further prevention, as well as ensuring youths were encouraged to be in work, education or employment.

4. The Board highlighted that detection rates of offenses committed were low in Surrey and questioned whether this had any impact upon the figures relating to youths in the youth justice system. Officers commented that, while this was a point that would be best answered by Surrey Police, it was unlikely that this was a primary reason for the low level of youths in the youth justice system.
5. The Board was informed that the Youth Restorative Initiative's (YRI) progress and performance was measured through external evaluations, and that the results were positive, suggesting that this was confirming the Surrey system's approach.
6. The Board was informed that that there had been an optimistic response from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). It was highlighted that a more ambitious CAMHS model with an emphasis on Early Help was being developed, providing a vital preventative resource. The Board was informed that the impact of these changes would be measurable in 12 months time.
7. The Board expressed concern regarding the effects of academisation on school partnerships with the Council and their capability to prevent children becoming NEET. Officers responded that there was a challenge with regard to schools having greater autonomy, but that the council was working to build on and improve these partnerships with schools. The Cabinet Associate for Children, Schools and Families assured the Board that the Fair Access Protocol ensured a working relationship with all schools in Surrey to ensure that all children in difficult circumstances were assigned a suitable school place.

**Recommendations:**

- a) The Board invites the Youth Support Service to present a shared item in six months time with Children's Services on the impact their services are having on Surrey's children and their families.
- b) Surrey's Youth Justice Partnership Board (YJPB) undertake further evaluation with the police and probation service to understand what impact youth justice intervention has on offending in young adulthood and share these findings with the Social Care Services Board in 12-months time.
- b) That officers provide a further update in 12-months on the progress of the Reducing Reoffending Plan 2014-17 with particular reference to how the new CAMHS integrated model, including the YSS subcontracted element, has impacted on mental health and emotional and behavioural issues as a known factor in relation to re-offending.
- c) That officers provide an update in 12-months in relation to progress made against the Youth Justice Strategic Plan in Year 2.

## **35/16 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT: REVIEW OF FOSTER CARE SERVICE ARRANGEMENTS [Item 8]**

### **Witnesses:**

Sheila Jones, Head of Countywide Services  
Sue Lewry Jones, Chief Internal Auditor  
Tasneem Ali, Auditor

### **Key points raised during the discussion:**

1. Officers highlighted that the internal audit report focused on processes and record keeping, and highlighted that there were no specific concerns on the quality of care provided. Officers indicated that they had taken immediate steps to rectify the issues found within the audit report and the result of these changes would be measured in a further audit later in the year, while also assuring the Board that all High Priority recommendations were tracked to ensure that they will be addressed promptly.
2. The Board expressed concern regarding Foster Carer training, citing an example where training was cancelled at the last minute. Officers responded that training was a longstanding issue within Foster Care Services and that there was a challenge concerning accessibility. It was suggested that there was a necessity to balance cost efficiency with necessity, but that it was clear from the audit report that work still needed to be done in this area.
3. Officers confirmed that work was being undertaken with the electronic record keeping systems to improve it and ensure better linkage and user friendliness. It was highlighted that the population of children who are Looked After was subject to frequent changes, and this created difficulties in ensuring that all of these children's data is updated effectively.
4. The Board expressed concern with the results of the audit report, suggesting that it suggested that there was a probability of problems elsewhere in the system. The Board discussed whether input from foster carers themselves might be beneficial to the process of ascertaining and resolving issues. The Cabinet Associate for Children, Schools and Families assured the member that relations between the Fostering Executive and the Foster Care Service had been reinstated, and recommended that the Fostering Executive give the Board their views on this matter.

### **Recommendations:**

- a) The Board notes with concern the Internal Audit recommendations and will review the outcome of the service's actions to improve in the follow-up audit.
- b) The Board recommends that Children's Services organise refresher training for Foster Panel members.

## **36/16 ADULT SOCIAL CARE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR'S UPDATE [Item 9]**

**Witnesses:**

Helen Atkinson, Strategic Director for Adult Social Care and Public Health  
Mel Few, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Wellbeing and Independence

**Key points raised during the discussion:**

1. The Strategic Director for Adult Social Care and Public Health began by providing an update on the on the subject of the six older people's care home closures, stating that phase one of three had been completed and that phase two was nearing completion with 31 July the date for final closure with residents supported to move by 30 June.
2. It was confirmed by the Strategic Director for Adult Social Care and Public Health that there were provisions in place to provide better accommodation to replace the closed locations, and that, while the residents and their families had not agreed with the closures they had been positive about the support they had received from Adult Social Care.
3. The Board asked for further information on the future of the buildings following closure. Officers responded that the Accommodation for Care and Support Team would be looking at all available options. Officers and the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Wellbeing and Independence assured the Board that they would be kept updated regarding any decision made relating to this issue.
4. The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Wellbeing and Independence explained the budget situation to the Board, and that the council has ended the financial year in a better budgetary position than forecast. It was clarified that the 2% council tax increase, at a total of around £12 million, would be spent to meet the increased demand on Adult Social Care though this would not cover the gap in funding.
5. The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Wellbeing and Independence highlighted the role of health and social integration in the year ahead, and commented on the benefit of a single point of contact for the patient as well as the possibility for savings but advised that this was the single biggest area of risk. Officers highlighted that there was a video explaining the benefits of health and social care integration and suggested the Board reviewed this. The topic of hospital discharge was discussed and how this was difficult but Surrey hospitals benefited from the council's seven day working rota.

**Action/Further information to be shared:**

Film on the benefits of health and social care integration in Surrey provided to the Board.

**37/16 THE TRANSITION TEAM [Item 10]**

**Witnesses:**

Helen Atkinson, Strategic Director for Adult Social Care and Public Health  
Liz Uliasz, Deputy Director of Adult Social Care  
Mel Few, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Wellbeing and Independence

**Key points raised during the discussion:**

1. Officers outlined that the small learning disabilities team had expanded to all young people in the 18-25 year old transition period between childhood and adulthood. It was explained that this team is working with the relevant children's team to prepare young people for adulthood, this includes young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The team works closely with colleges and other appropriate providers. The Board was informed that the numbers of young people moving into the Transition Team was increasing, resulting in individual officers carrying higher caseloads. This has led to an increasing number of young people with SEND provisions under the care of the Transition Team.
2. The Board was informed that officers were taking steps to streamline the transition process. This involved the offering of support to children with SEND at an earlier stage in partnership with health groups and CAMHS to develop a local offer. It was outlined that the team was building their business case around difficult to place children, in order to streamline the overall process.
3. The Board asked what gaps there were in current service provisions, and were informed that there was a difficulty in the current system of meeting the requirements of high need cases including children with autism and challenging behaviours. Officers outlined that this was particularly in the case of children who had dual needs. The Board was informed that in order to meet this demand, the team was working with voluntary groups.
4. The Board asked for clarification regarding SEND transport and the mechanism that was in place for transition age children. The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Wellbeing and Independence answered that there was an inclusion program in place to increase community links with children with SEND. This would allow a SEND child to build their own links with transport, both reducing costs and also enabling the child to gain greater knowledge of the environment and improve inclusion.
5. The Board asked for details about housing provision for people with SEND, and its relation to the housing shortage in the Surrey region. Officers responded that there was a supported living arrangement in place for some young people with SEND and that the council had a number of providers to assist with this provision. It was noted that more work needed to be done with relation to provision for SEND children who are homeless, have challenging behavioural attitudes or are within the youth justice system.

**Recommendations:**

The Board supports the plans outlined to meet the transition challenges. Recommends that officers return to the Board with a report that reviews the impact these plans have had on:

- the number of out-of-county placements and residential packages
- timeliness of reviews; and
- Adult Social Care and Children's Services spending.

### **38/16 LEARNING DISABILITY COMMISSIONING STRATEGY AND TRANSFORMING CARE [Item 11]**

#### **Witnesses:**

Jo Poynter, Strategic Lead for People with Learning Disabilities and Transforming Care

Tim Evans, Cabinet Associate for Adult Social Care, Wellbeing and Independence

#### **Key points raised during the discussion:**

1. The Strategic Lead for People with Learning Disabilities and Transforming Care outlined how the Surrey Learning Disability and Autism Commissioning Strategy (SLDACS) and the Transforming Care in Surrey Strategy (TCSS) were progressing and the reasoning behind current successes. Officers noted that a good understanding of the demographic trends of SEND children had allowed the service to target its funding more effectively in order to improve the quality of service. However, it was noted that the service needed improvement with regard to ensuring people have settled accommodation and officers recommended that the Board view scrutiny of this as a priority.
2. The Board asked whether there was a programme of provision for SEND housing within this strategy. Officers responded that NHS England would be releasing capital funding for this provision and that £21 million of NHS granted property that was currently not currently being used effectively was being made available, suggesting that both of these items being utilised in conjunction with one another would be adequate to support the housing provision required. The Board was informed that there was a need to speed up work with this provision, and officers recommended that, due to a new strategic plan and focus, that they were confident that partners were willing to work with the council to fulfil this.
3. The Board queried the risks associated with future budgetary cuts to the service. Officers replied that the cap on housing benefit may prove to be a major concern for the future as the council could struggle to help people move from residential to supported housing. There was also mentioned the issue of closures of homes that offered publically funded places but the Board were informed that Adult Social Care was working with the care sector to design and cost a realistic solution to

Surrey residents' needs.

**Recommendations:**

The Board notes and supports the work programme and will welcome a progress update in the future.

**39/16 RECOMMENDATIONS TRACKER AND FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME  
[Item 12]**

The Board approved the current recommendations tracker and forward work programme.

**40/16 DATE OF NEXT MEETING [Item 13]**

The next meeting of the Board will be held at 10.00am on 23 June 2016.

Meeting ended at: 12.52 pm

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**Chairman**