

MINUTES of the meeting of the **CHILDREN AND EDUCATION SELECT COMMITTEE** held at 10.00 am on 7 September 2018 at Ashcombe Suite, County Hall, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT1 2DN.

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Committee at its meeting on Friday, 16 November 2018.

Elected Members:

- * Mr Chris Botten (Vice-Chairman)
- Mrs Liz Bowes
- Mr Robert Evans
- * Mr Tim Evans
- * Mrs Kay Hammond (Chairman)
- * Mrs Julie Iles
- * Mrs Yvonna Lay
- * Mrs Lesley Steeds
- * Mr Chris Townsend
- * Mrs Victoria Young

Co-opted Members:

- * Mr Simon Parr, Diocesan Representative for the Catholic Church
- Mrs Tanya Quddus, Parent Governor Representative
- Mr Alex Tear, Diocesan Representative for the Anglican Church, Diocese of Guildford
- Mr Mike Wainhouse, Parent Governor's Association

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]

Apologies were received from Committee Members Liz Bowes, Robert Evans, Simon Parr, Alex Tear, Mike Wainhouse and from the Cabinet Member for All-Age Learning Mary Lewis.

2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING: 20 FEBRUARY 2018 [Item 2]

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

There were no declarations of interest received.

4 QUESTIONS & PETITIONS [Item 4]

1. A question was received from Cllr Chris Townsend. The question is attached to the minutes as Annex A. There was a response received from the Cabinet Member which is attached as Annex B.
2. Cllr Chris Townsend asked a supplementary question, expressing concern that this was still a significant issue and questioning whether the current supply of educational psychiatrists was being utilised in the most effective manner. Officers explained that there was a struggle to recruit to these posts, but that those that were in post was of good

quality and were being utilised well. Members asked whether there was a potential for this issue to be looked at in greater detail in the next year.

Recommendations:

1. That an item of Educational Psychologists (EP) and the issues facing the service regarding recruitment and utilisation of these be brought to the Committee in early 2019.

5 RESPONSE OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES TO OFSTED (2018) [Item 7]

Witnesses:

Dave Hill, Executive Director of Children, Families and Learning
Jacquie Burke, Interim Director for Change Safeguarding and Early Help
Claire Burgess, Chair of the Surrey Safeguarding Children Board
Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children

Key points raised in the discussion:

1. Officers highlighted the headlines of the report and noted that the Children, Families and Learning Directorate was undertaking a comprehensive response to the challenges faced in Children's Services following the report of Ofsted (2018). It was noted that the Department for Education (DfE) had appointed a Commissioner to determine Surrey County Council's capability to improve. It was also explained that draft feedback had endorsed the current plan of improvement, but stressed that the challenges of longstanding and severe deficits of services remained high.
2. Officers stressed that the service was taking a whole system approach, including partners in the redesign. It was explained that the service was too risk adverse and that the universal level of service was too incoherent. Officers gave evidence of planned improvement in this area with the introduction of the "windscreen" levels of need model which would create a clear, system-wide understanding of thresholds. It was stressed that the service wanted to ensure a clear, single practice model which could be followed by the service and partners.
3. Officers highlighted that they were introducing the "Family Safeguarding," "No Wrong Door" and "Mockingbird" models across respective services to help improve current practice. It was stressed that these models had been employed successfully to improve in other comparable local authorities.
4. Officers noted the significant changes in leadership structure and the requirement to introduce high level strategic value in the service.
5. Members questioned how the service was planning to improve working relationships with partners and what the potential barriers to good partnership working would be. Officers explained that they would be working closely with statutory partners on the plans for service transformation. It was also noted that the service was including children and young people in the service redesign proposals to ensure

that they are engaged in the process.

6. The Director of Children, Families and Learning stressed that Early Help transformation and the better utilisation of Early Help to reduce reliance on statutory services was essential to reducing cost and improving outcomes for children. It was also highlighted that this work could only be undertaken with partners and that it was important for the service to closely work with them.
7. The Chairman of the Surrey Safeguarding Children Board noted that there had been significant engagement with partners and that statutory partners were keen to be involved in the change process. It was noted that previous barriers to partnership work were that individual services had worked in silos and that this needed to be improved.
8. Members questioned the importance of partners understanding of thresholds in Children's Services, which was an issue highlighted by the Ofsted report as a key area of concern, and how the service was planning to improve upon this. Officers explained that the Directorate had revisited the levels of need approach and had worked with partners to determine these levels for children.
9. Members stressed the capacity of partners, particularly teaching staff, to undertake the level of safeguarding work that was required. Officers noted that there was an impetus from teaching staff to undertake this work and engage with safeguarding services. However, it was stressed that the service was not expecting teachers to act as social workers. It was also noted that there was the need for a support network to ensure that there was adequate support for partners.
10. It was noted by the Executive Director of Children, Families and Learning that there was a need for significant improvement in Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and that there was a requirement for fundamental change in how the service is delivered. It was also noted that the CAMHS service would need to become more active in schools to be effective.
11. Officers explained that they had undertaken a review of performance management within the Directorate and would work to develop a small list of key indicators to help monitor progress of improvement. Members questioned whether it would be feasible to provide these figures to the Committee so that it can work to determine whether the service has improved.
12. Members questioned how the Directorate was planning to deliver upon performance improvement in the climate of savings requirements. Officers clarified that the Directorate intended to invest more into the universal services, rather than into high intensity statutory services, which was considered to be more cost efficient. It was also stressed that children currently in statutory services would be worked with better, as a result of improved management grip and ensure that there would be less need for resource in this area over time.
13. The Executive Director of Children, Families and Learning noted that the service needed to be more open to challenge from scrutiny and

that it would work to help provide the information to question the quality of improvement work underway. It was also stressed that Members would need to be critical of the service and ensure constant challenge to help maintain improvement.

14. The Chairman offered her apologies to the children in need of services in Surrey and stressed that the Children and Education Select Committee would be focussing on the need to improve standards of delivery in the service.
15. The Cabinet Member for Children stressed the need for Members to take responsibility and that the improvement journey required the aid of the Select Committee to ensure that it is succeeding.

Recommendations:

1. That the Cabinet Member ensures that the service provides a suite of performance indicators as of the current date (7 September 2018), to inform future scrutiny of service performance, which is to be presented on a regular basis to the committee as of its next meeting in November 2018.
2. That officers provide an updated draft improvement plan which is Red-Amber-Green rated, includes date of delivery and highlights leads responsible as soon as feasible.

6 SURREY CHILDREN'S SERVICES ACADEMY [Item 6]

Witnesses:

Sheila Norris, Consultant on the Surrey Children's Services Academy Design
Dave Hill, Director of Children, Families and Learning
Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children

Key points raised in the discussion:

1. Officers explained that the scope of the proposed Academy was to work with the core and wider workforce and was designed to be ambitious in its scope. It was explained that the creation of the academy would develop the workforce and ensure:
 - a. that it is confident and successful;
 - b. that it would create a single unified model for the workforce and partners;
 - c. and that it would aim to change the culture of working.

It was noted that the Academy was in its early stages of development and concept design.

2. It was explained that the service was looking to redesign the current learning and development offer and were working alongside partners and staff to aid in shaping the design of this model. Officers noted that

there were plans to include common areas of induction with partners and potential shared leadership training.

3. Officers noted that the new Academy would, when active in early 2019, fit into the Children, Families and Learning Quality Assurance Directorate.
4. The Committee questioned whether it would be possible to explain the role of Members and how they can be utilised as a means of improving the support network for frontline workers as part of the proposed learning and development programme.
5. Members questioned retention figures and asked how the Academy would work to resolve the current issue of retention of social workers. It was noted that there was a trend of a drop off in retention after two years of employment. Officers noted that there was the current Newly Qualified Social Worker (NQSW) Academy and that this was designed for NQSW's only, with a drop off in support after two years. While it was noted that the NQSW Academy had received praise in the Ofsted report (2018), it was explained that the new proposals hoped to expand upon this success. It was explained that the new Academy was aimed to provide support for staff and partners on a longer term basis, which aimed to improve morale and long term retention.
6. Members questioned the performance indicators of the new Academy; including the success criteria and potential response to the proposals not meeting these criteria. It was noted that success could be measured by retention of social care staff and management improvement evidenced through audit. It was suggested that these could be built into the launch of the Academy.
7. It was noted that officers had been looking at best practice across similar models in other authorities, such as Essex County Council, where a similar model had been implemented for social workers only. It was noted that best practice in implementing support and progression for staff and partners had been looked at to help develop this project.
8. Officers noted that there was a potential for future provision for the recruitment of apprentice social workers, noting that the service was keen to explore this as a potential future option for improving retention and increased numbers of "home-grown" social workers.
9. Officers clarified that the design model and budget for the proposed Academy was being formulated and would be shared with the Committee before implementation. It was noted that there would be a need for a short term investment but that the Directorate would look to streamline the current learning and development offer to reduce costs

and also that improved retention would over time reduce agency costs.

10. Officers stressed that the Academy could not be viewed in isolation as a “fix-all” but must be seen as a part of the overall transformation programme of the Children, Families and Learning Directorate.
11. Officers highlighted that the Academy would begin initial operation in early 2019, with the launch of its learning and development offer. It was stressed that the Academy would continue to be developed over the long term.
12. The Cabinet Member for Children stressed the need for professional development to ensure that the service undertakes its rapid improvement, and that the development of the Academy was a key component of this.

Recommendations:

1. That the Cabinet Member ensures that the service works with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Children and Education Select Committee to embed into the development of the business case for the Children’s Academy measureable success criteria, including:
 - a. Incremental improvement upon the rates of retention of social care staff;
 - b. Improvement and maintenance of professional standards in Children’s Services;

Which can be used as key performance indicators for the Academy upon start of its operation in early 2019.

2. That the proposed model for the Children’s Service Academy be circulated to the Committee before its start of operation in January 2019.

7 MEMBER PRACTICE CONVERSATIONS FEEDBACK AND PROCEDURE [Item 5]

Witnesses:

Kay Hammond, Chairman of the Children and Education Select Committee
Chris Botten, Vice Chairman of the Children and Education Select Committee
Lesley Steeds, Member of the Children and Education Select Committee

Key points raised in the discussion:

1. Members noted that taking part in the practice conversations was an interesting and informative experience.

2. Members highlighted that there were several common concerns raised by social workers, including caseloads, management oversight and administrative issues. Members suggested that there could be several quality of life improvements that could be made, such as recruitment of administrative staff to help social workers undertake administrative duties that they do not have the capacity to undertake.
3. The Committee endorsed the idea of implementing Member Practice Conversations on a regular basis, and asked whether conversations could be held sooner than was scheduled. Officers noted that this was possible and could be arranged for Committee Members.

Recommendations:

It was agreed:

1. That Members endorsed the proposed plan to implement Member Practice Conversations for the Committee,
2. That actions and findings are reported quarterly to the Committee; and
3. The proposal for a programme of Member practice conversations for 2018/19.

8 OUT OF COUNTY PLACEMENTS TASK AND FINISH GROUP [Item 8]

Witnesses:

Dave Hill, Executive Director of Children, Families and Learning
Richard Plummer, Democratic Services Officer

Key points raised in the discussion:

1. Members endorsed the idea and scoping plan of the Out of County Placements Task Group. Members stressed that this was a key area of concern for the Council.
2. The Executive Director noted that this was an ideal opportunity for the Committee to feed into work that was going in within the Directorate on this issue and that work should start on this Task Group as soon as feasible.
3. The Committee agreed the Membership of the task group to be the following:
 - a. Chris Botten (spokesman)
 - b. Lesley Steeds
 - c. Victoria Young
 - d. Chris Townsend

9 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME [Item 9]

Key points raised in the discussion:

1. Members had no additional comments on the forward work programme.
2. Members agreed the proposal for future work on the Transition Task and Finish Group in the forward plan and agreed that the Chairman would represent the Committee in any future work.

10 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING [Item 10]

The next public meeting of the Committee will be held at County Hall on 16 November 2018.

Meeting ended at: 12.31 pm

Chairman

ANNEX A

Cllr Clare Curran
C/o Members' Room
County Hall
Penrhyn Road
Kingston upon Thames
KT1 2DN

8th May 2018

Dear Councillor Curran,

Educational Psychology (EP) Service

Like all Surrey primary schools we have a number of children who have learning difficulties. We do all we can to support them to ensure their rate of progress matches that of their peers. Sometimes though we need a bit of help and at those times we rely on the County's Educational Psychologists. Actually, that is not quite true; the reality is that we *used to* rely on them but alas no longer because for the past 18 months there has been no EP service available to Mole Valley schools, except for statutory and emergency work. For a time we were very generously offered the chance to hire a Surrey EP for around £560 a day, however so many schools chose that option that the system collapsed as demand swamped supply. It has now been withdrawn.

Meanwhile we have Paediatricians at Epsom Hospital telling parents that their child needs an EP assessment and those parents then asking why we have done nothing about it. The choice facing us is to find our own EP and pay for an assessment ourselves or recommend to parents that they do this themselves. Not many of our families can afford to do that. What makes this really galling is that just a few miles down the road in Elmbridge, schools are offered two days of EP support each term and these schools regard the EP service as one of the best they receive from Surrey.

We appreciate that there is a shortage of Educational Psychologists wishing to work in the public sector currently and Surrey County Council is facing extreme financial pressures. However we cannot understand why those EPs working for Surrey cannot be used across the whole county rather than only in one quadrant. This situation is completely unacceptable to us as this inability or refusal of officers to deploy the available EPs across the whole county has created a postcode lottery in which the children of South East Surrey in general and those in Mole Valley in particular are missing out.

As Cabinet Member for children and a Mole Valley County Councillor we would be very grateful if you could use your influence to address this unsatisfactory situation before more of our children, for whom learning is already far from straightforward, fail to be assessed formally and receive the additional support the need.

Yours sincerely,

Cc Dave Hill Executive Director for Children, Families and Learning
Cllr Chris Townsend, County Councillor for Ashted and member of the children and education select committee.

ANNEX B

Cabinet Member for Children

County Hall, Penrhyn Road, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT1 2DN

Telephone: 020 8541 9020

Email: Clare.Curran@surreycc.gov.uk

Thursday, 06 September 2018

Dear Chris

RE: Concerns raised regarding Education Psychology Service

Thank you for sharing these concerns in relation to the availability of Surrey County Council's Education Psychology Service. I understand that you received this correspondence in May 2018, although I do not have a record of receiving these concerns.

I can confirm that I have recently responded to very similar correspondence from a Surrey resident. I have since made some additional enquiries into the situation which has informed my response. I understand that all of the maintained schools and academies in South East Surrey have access to Surrey County Council education psychologists (EP). The Service has maintained (where possible) a system of linking each educational psychologist with a fixed group of schools. This is in order to support a detailed knowledge of schools and their pupils.

Educational psychologists do work across all areas of Surrey in order to ensure a fair distribution of the EP time available. The service also provides locum or agency EPs to support areas with a very high demand, and work is regularly shared between areas should one be particularly stretched.

You will be aware of the increase in the number of children requiring Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP). In order to meet this demand, the EP service has had to focus on assessments for children and young people that the local authority has agreed to assess (and likely to lead to an EHCP). Unfortunately, this has impacted upon the

EP resource available for non-statutory assessments. I can assure you that the service is working continuously to recruit both permanent and temporary staff and will be letting schools know in September what range and level of service their staffing will support.

I understand that in order to support schools seeking educational psychology advice, the South East Team operates a telephone advice line for schools, Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCo) as well as parents and carers. The school can also refer to the local authority's specialist teaching services, which include specialist outreach services from Surrey special schools with expertise in meeting the needs of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability.

In the interim, you may wish to remind parent/carers of students in your setting of the availability drop-in appointment with our specialist children's workers – including EPs. These are for parent/carers or young people with worries or concerns at local youth centres and are taking place over the summer. For ease of reference, I have included the remaining dates below.

Additionally, the Principal Educational Psychologist, Beverley Clarke is most happy to discuss your concerns with you directly. Beverley can be contacted on 0208 541 8667.

I am grateful for the opportunity to respond to your concerns.

Yours sincerely

Clare Curran
Cabinet Member for Children

County Councillor - Bookham and Fetcham West

4th September 2018

11th September 2018

18th September 2018

25th September 2018

Mole Valley

Tuesday: 3.45pm - 5.15pm

Malthouse Youth Centre, Mill Lane, Dorking RH4 1DU