

MINUTES of the meeting of the **CHILDREN AND EDUCATION SELECT COMMITTEE** held at 10.00 am on 16 November 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 Wednesday, 6 March 2019.

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
- * Dr Andrew Povey
- * Mrs Lesley Steeds
- * Mr Chris Townsend
- Mrs Victoria Young

Ex officio Members:

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

Substitute Members:

Mr Tim Evans
Mrs Yvonna Lay
Mrs Victoria Young

In attendance

11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]

Apologies were received from Yvonna Lay, Time Evans and Victoria Young. Andrew Povey Substituted for Yvonna Lay.

12 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING: 7 SEPTEMBER 2018 [Item 2]

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

13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

Chris Botten declared an interest as the Chairman of the Council of Governors of Hurst Green Infant and Nursery School

Kay Hammond declared an interest as Chair of the Interim Executive Board of Chart Wood School.

14 QUESTIONS & PETITIONS [Item 4]

There were no questions or petitions received.

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

There were no responses from Cabinet.

16 CHILDREN'S IMPROVEMENT PLAN [Item 6]

Witnesses:

Mark Barratt, Director of Quality Assurance

Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children

Key points raised in the discussion:

1. Officers explained that the report outlined performance in Children's Services in Surrey. It was highlighted that there was now a robust usage of performance data, and that this was as a result of a modified system which enabled clear data entry and recollection. It was also noted that usage of this had changed and that it was used to challenge behaviour on both a strategic level to an operational level.
2. Officers recognised that there had been significant challenges regarding data quality. It was stressed that the service was looking to address key areas of vulnerability and ensure that data is inputted in a single and streamlined way, explaining that systems were changing to make this possible.

Robert Evans entered the meeting at 10.10am

3. Members questioned what work was being undertaken to reduce indicators rated as high risk, highlighting those high risk indicators that were on a downwards trajectory, and questioned whether the service was taking priority action to address these. Officers stressed that there was a plan of activity to rectify indicators which were on a downwards trend, and noted that with an understanding of the data, there was an opportunity to understand the underlying root cause of key issues were.
4. The Cabinet Member for Children stressed that there was rapid improvement work underway and that the implementation of the Transformation Business Cases that were approved by Council were critical to the improvement of the service. The Cabinet Member noted that the acceptance of the high risk indicators demonstrated that the

service was aware of its deficiencies and need to improve. It was explained that improvement was underway, but that there was significant work needed to ensure that this improvement was embedded within the service.

5. Officers noted that the remodel the management tier of services had provided organisational clarity and that this was improving accountability and ownership of performance within the service. It was noted that this was part of the change of culture in performance management within the service.
6. Members noted that they appreciated the improved evidence of performance monitoring and noted that they would like to see evidence of continued and regular performance monitoring presented to the Committee and that any indicators that had a consistent downward trend should be highlighted to the Committee.
7. Members questioned whether there would be any projected impact on reductions in spend in the service, particularly the proposals to reduce the number of Children's Centres in the County, and how the service planned to mitigate this. The Cabinet Member stressed that this should be viewed as part of the wider transformation programme and there would be more resource put into early intervention, which should improve performance measures in the long term, due to the targeted nature of earlier intervention and concentration of resource. The Cabinet Member emphasised that it was not the intent to remove services that residents depended on, but that it would re-evaluate how the service utilises assets. Members noted their concerns and noted that they would like to see the results of the Family Resilience Consultation to understand the impact the residents feel that this will have in future.
8. Members questioned how the service rated their performance measures and whether these were internal guidelines or national guides. Officers noted that there were comparisons published by the Department for Education which detailed Children's Services performance which the service would be using to benchmark with good and outstanding authorities.
9. Members questioned staffing numbers and stressed that there was a need to retain staff, ensure that they understand the need to change to improve performance and that this can be done in the programme of change. It was noted by officers that change was needed on a cultural level to ensure practice improvement, rather than looking solely at staffing levels.
10. The Cabinet Member noted that the performance compendium was a relatively new process and that this had helped significantly to analyse

the performance and underlying issues in the service. It was stressed that this was a good mechanism for the Cabinet Member to challenge and analyse performance information and that they were provided to the Cabinet Member for regular analysis. Members questioned whether this regular analysis could be undertaken by the Committee as a means of improving scrutiny of practice improvement.

Recommendations:

1. That the key indicators are supplied by the Cabinet Member for Children and continue to be regularly reviewed each month and assessed against national performance and quarterly regional benchmarking to assess Surrey in the national and regional context, and:
 - a. That the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee receive this monthly update, with the Cabinet Member for Children, to consider the detailed performance indicators used.
 - b. That the Committee receive a quarterly update of key performance measures, and also highlights areas of sustained downwards trend with a narrative of the service's response to this.

17 SURREY ALTERNATIVE LEARNING PROVISION [Item 7]

Witnesses:

Mary Burguieres, Continuous Improvement & Change Strategic Lead
Anne Halliday, Assistant Head Teacher (Inclusion)
Paul Jackson, Headteacher of North West Surrey Short Stay School
Sarah Stokes, Head Teacher of Dormansland Primary School
Mark Heath, Principle Lead for Inclusion

Mary Lewis, Cabinet Member for All Age Learning

Key points raised in the discussion:

1. Officers explained that the service worked with some of the most vulnerable children in the County. It was also noted that issues facing schools regarding permanent exclusions were under intense scrutiny in national and local government and that this issue was timely and linked to reviews undertaken elsewhere. It was also noted that the Surrey High Sheriff had undertaken significant work on this issue and that this had helped analyse the effect that permanent exclusion had on the child.

2. Members questioned the inspection and regulation of alternative education provision providers. The Headteacher noted that Short Stay Schools are inspected under the same regulatory framework and inspection rules as mainstream schools. It was stressed that there was a need to demonstrate progress with students, and that Ofsted did not only focus on results, as would be more the case in a mainstream school, and considered the progress of children to determine success.
3. Officers noted that children in alternative provision were monitored by both the school that commissioned the alternative provision and by the local authority to ensure that their outcomes were monitored.
4. Officers noted that frameworks were in place to determine how network funding could be utilised to commission alternative education provision. It was noted, however, that this framework was designed in 2011 and was in need of refreshing.
5. Members questioned how Short Stay Schools measured the progress of children. The Head of the Short Stay School noted that exam results were a difficult quantitative analysis to utilise for children in alternative provision, due to the different levels of qualification and behavioural models of children in this environment. It was explained that progress was measured in terms of behavioural improvements and other non-attainment based measures. The Head of the Mainstream School noted that there was a need to monitor a child's outcome and work closely with the Short Stay School to ensure improvement.
6. Members noted that, as a result of increases in numbers of children with behaviour issues, there was a potential for more exclusions from mainstream school. Members questioned whether there was enough provision available to help support these children, capacity to take the demand, and if anything was being undertaken to reduce demand. Officers noted that the plans for SEND Transformation included the option to increase capacity of specialist places by approximately 350. It was stressed however, that there was a risk in increasing numbers of Short Stay School places, noting that increased numbers could potentially encourage greater utilisation of these places.
7. Officers stressed that they would be working with schools and Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinators (SENCOs) in schools to help improve the capability of schools to be inclusive as possible.
8. The Head of the Mainstream School suggested that it could be explored whether the service could create a delivery model that was between permanent exclusion and inclusion in mainstream schools that would help with inclusion and reduce pressure of alternative provision. It was suggested that support to set this up and maintain it could provide mainstream schools the opportunity to be proactive and

flexible in their approach and prevent children from being permanently excluded.

9. Members stressed that there needed to be more work undertaken to support early intervention in Key Stage One to ensure that there are better supported and are able to be integrated into a mainstream setting from as young as possible.
10. Members congratulated all of Surrey's Short Stay Schools for their good work and noted that they were all rated as Good or Outstanding by Ofsted.
11. Members questioned the rates of re-integration into mainstream schools from Short Stay Schools. The Head of the Short Stay School noted that there was a 75% reintegration rate in the south west of the County. Members asked whether reintegration rates could be better measured in future and provide evidence of reintegration to parents going through this process to reassure that there is a potential for reintegration to reduce distress. Officers noted that there was research underway to allow for the better tracking of reintegration.

Recommendations:

1. That the Cabinet Member ensures that the service carefully considers the Primary Sector and Early Intervention as part of its SEND Transformation Programme and;
2. That the Cabinet Member it is mindful of the impact on children and that it considers how best to work with partners, and that this is reported as part of the Transformation Programme Update in Spring 2019.

18 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT INITIAL HEALTH ASSESSMENTS 17/18 [Item 8]

Witnesses:

David John, Audit Manager

Richard Abigail, Senior Auditor

Carol Douch, Head of Countywide Services

Key points raised in the discussion:

1. Internal Audit Officers explained that they had been invited by the service to review their performance in delivering Initial Health Assessments (IHA) within statutory timescales in order to help in their performance improvement process. It was explained that this work had

been undertaken during Spring 2018.

2. Internal Audit Officers noted that statutory timescales had not been met with regard to Initial Health Assessments and that audit could only provide Minimal Assurance. It was noted that four key stages were observed:
 - a. Collection of form of consent and referral to provider
 - b. Date provider offers an appointment
 - c. Date of the appointment
 - d. Return of report to Children's Services.Officers noted that there were delays to all of these stages.
3. It was noted that a follow up audit was scheduled for next year to monitor implementation of the agreed Management Action Plan.
4. Officers noted that the Children, Families and Learning Directorate accepted the audit assessment of Minimal Assurance.
5. Members questioned datasets and noted that there had been a reduction of assessments not completed on time and queried how the service had undertaken this. Officers noted that there had been significantly more senior officer oversight of this process in order to drive practice improvement which had led to changes in Surrey County Council's improvement. It was also noted that senior leaders were in regular weekly contact with the provider to ensure that practice improvement is holistic, which had also led to improvements since this audit was initially conducted.
6. The Cabinet Member for Children noted that there had been longstanding evidence of poor performance in delivery of Initial Health Assessments within statutory timescales. It was explained that this issue was part of the systemic problems within the service that the improvement and transformation of the service was looking to improve upon.
7. Officers noted that there had been work undertaken to look at alternative models of delivering this service and best practice across other local authorities. It was stressed that alternative contract models were being looked at to ensure that the service delivered in the best way.
8. Internal Audit Officers noted that, in the case of a high priority agreed action, audit would monitor progress to ensure that it has been successfully delivered. Audit noted that it would be expecting to conduct its follow up in quarter one of 2019/20 and that the results of this would be circulated to the Committee upon its conclusion.

9. Internal Audit Officers noted that they had good working relations with Children, Families and Learning and that the new Directors were receptive to change and that audit was undertaking reviews of other areas of change within the service.

Recommendations:

Members noted that they were encouraged by evidence of improvement. It was recommended that:

1. The Committee receive an update from internal audit on the completion of the follow-up audit in 2019 to assure itself that progress has been made on the Management Action Plan agreed to improve IHA quality.

19 CHILDREN AND EDUCATION SELECT COMMITTEE (2017-2018) SEND TASK AND FINISH GROUP CONCLUSION REPORT [Item 9]

Witnesses:

None

Key points raised in the discussion:

1. The Vice-Chairman noted the conclusion report of the SEND Task and Finish Group and stressed to the Committee that future work would be undertaken in subsequent Task and Finish Groups and in items that will be submitted to the Committee in the next year.
2. It was noted that there was a consultation underway regarding SEND which was underway as of the meeting of the Committee.

Recommendations:

That the Committee noted the work of the Task and Finish Group and noted that future work would be undertaken on SEND Transformation in Spring 2019.

20 RECOMMENDATIONS TRACKER AND FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME [Item 10]

Witnesses:

None

Key points raised in the discussion:

1. Members noted that they would welcome the opportunity to undertake visits to alternative education provision as part of the Member Practice Conversations that were agreed at the last meeting.

2. It was noted that Members had an interest in looking at the impact of the changes to the schools led system and when that could be scheduled and developed.

Recommendations:

1. None

21 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING [Item 11]

Meeting ended at: 12.12 pm

Chairman