

MINUTES of the meeting of the **CHILDREN, FAMILIES, LIFELONG LEARNING & CULTURE SELECT COMMITTEE** held at 10.00 am on 11 March 2021 at REMOTE MEETING.

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Committee at its meeting on Monday, 18 October 2021.

Elected Members:

- * Amanda Boote
- * Mr Chris Botten (Vice-Chairman)
- * Liz Bowes
- * Robert Evans
- * Mrs Kay Hammond (Chairman)
- * Mrs Yvonna Lay
- * Peter Martin
- * Andrew Povey
- * Lesley Steeds (Vice-Chairman)
- * Barbara Thomson
- * Chris Townsend
- * Mr Richard Walsh

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

In attendance:

Julie Iles, Cabinet Member for All-Age Learning
Mary Lewis, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families
Mark Nuti, Cabinet Member for Communities

10/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]

Apologies were received from Simon Parr.

11/21 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS: WEDNESDAY, 20 JANUARY 2021 [Item 2]

The minutes were agreed as a true record of the meeting.

12/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

Chris Botten and Richard Walsh declared a personal interest in relation to Item 5. This interest did not prevent the Members from participating in the discussion.
Declaration: Members of the Corporate Parenting Board

13/21 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]

None received.

14/21 CORPORATE PARENTING ANNUAL REPORT [Item 5]

Witnesses:

Mary Lewis, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families

Tina Benjamin, Director – Corporate Parenting

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Director – Corporate Parenting presented local and national key performance data, for the year ending March 2020, relating to children who had been looked after for 12 months or more. The Cabinet Member reminded the Committee that this was an Annual Report that needed to compare with other Local Authorities and more up to date data was available and provided. For example, the Corporate Parenting Board (CPB) received and reviewed up-to-date performance data every six weeks, whilst the Chairman and Vice-Chairmen of the Select Committee received the performance compendium every month and met with officers four times a year to discuss service performance.
2. The Cabinet Member stated that during the COVID-19 pandemic, Corporate Parenting was more outward facing to partners and endeavoured to improve joint working. The Cabinet Member thanked officers for their dedication over the past year and the Director added that she was proud of the way that staff had worked throughout the pandemic.
3. The Director summarised the data on the rate of Children in Care. There was a small increase in the number of Children in Care in Surrey between 2019 and 2020, which reflected the national trend. The rate of Children in Care per 10,000 0-17-year olds in Surrey (37/10000) was considered low and did not change between 2019 and 2020. Due to Department for Education reporting timescales, the data presented included only the first two weeks of the pandemic; thus, the impact of COVID-19 was not evident therein. The Director expected significant changes to be highlighted in the 2021 annual report.
4. The percentage of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) decreased (by 5.3%) between 2019 and 2020 which, again, reflected national decreases.
5. As of 31 March 2020, the majority of Children in Care in Surrey were placed with Foster Carers (70% as of March 2020). From 2019-2020, those placed in Children's Homes increased by 3% (to 21%) whilst those in Adoptive Placements decreased (from 31 children to 28). The Director stated the importance of having a care plan in place for all Children in Care. There had been a greater decrease in the number Children in Care placed in adoption in Surrey than nationally.
6. Placing children in county or within 20 miles of their home was a priority for the Service that presented significant challenges. It was important that children stayed close to their friends and families and attended Surrey schools. It was important to report both of the measures - children

placed within Surrey, and children placed within 20 miles - because a child placed, for example, two miles into Hampshire could still attend a Surrey school and remain in contact with their support network. The proportion of children placed within 20 miles of their home increased between 2019 and 2020 (51% to 53%). The proportion of children placed within Surrey increased (from 48% to 51%) between 2019 and 2020.

7. Surrey typically performed well in terms of dental checks and Review Health Assessments for Children in Care. Dental checks were an issue during the pandemic due to practices closing or operating reduced services. However, between 2019 and 2020, there had been an increase (91%-92%) for Children Looked After for 12 or more months. The proportion of Review Health Assessments completed for Children in Care also increased between 2019 and 2020 (90% - 91%).
8. A Member asked for a description of the actual and anticipated impacts of Covid-19 on the Corporate Parenting Service and children and young people. The Director responded that key issues would be related to children's placements. Placement of a child and the relationship formed with their foster carers was intrinsic to development and outcomes. Recruitment of foster carers was challenging during the pandemic, nevertheless a net increase was still achieved and there was a robust recruitment plan in place. A number of foster carers were unable to care for additional children during the pandemic due to shielding, illness and other issues related to COVID-19, but children's homes remained open and had accepted some new children. Government guidance stated that care leavers should not be moved on during the pandemic, thus there were some 18-year olds still residing in children's homes. Overall, placements had been difficult so it was unlikely that there would be an improvement in performance data in the next annual report, particularly for children placed within 20 miles of their home. The next iteration of data would also reflect the difficulties with arranging dental care for Children in Care during the pandemic and the Cabinet Member had raised this as a national issue. The Service had performed well, nationally, as regards the attendance of Children in Care at school during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, there were a number of Children in Care who had missed significant periods of school due to the clinical vulnerability of themselves or their foster carers.
9. The Cabinet Member, who was Chairman of the Corporate Parenting Board, informed Members that the Board met with children and young people via Zoom prior to every Board meeting to ensure that the voices of young people were heard and considered within the discussion at meetings. The Cabinet Member thanked the Director – Corporate Parenting for advocating vaccination prioritisation for Foster Carers.
10. A Member asked what Board Members had learned about Corporate Parenting and its service users over the past year. The Cabinet Member responded that the Board learned that it was important to focus on individual children and individual experiences rather than seeing children as a homogenous cohort. The Board also learnt that more buy-in across the council and partnerships in Surrey was needed to ensure that the county was a welcoming place for all Children in Care and Care Leavers. It was also important to make continual representations to secure care leaver council tax exemptions and prioritise Children in Care with dental

care after lockdown. The Cabinet Member stated the importance of acting as a voice for children and her endeavour to improve how the CPB challenged others to do better for Children in Care and Care Leavers.

11. The Corporate Parenting Annual Report described changes to how services were delivered during the COVID-19 pandemic and Members asked whether any of the adapted ways of working would be beneficial for the Service to continue with after the pandemic. Legislation enacted following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic enabled flexibility to deliver services differently during lockdowns – for example, statutorily required periodic visits to looked-after children could be undertaken virtually during lockdown. Children were RAG (Red/Amber/Green) rated and the Service prioritised face-to-face visits for children who were of highest concern. Some children enjoyed the virtual meetings and novel social media-based contact with social workers, which had increased contact. The Director believed that these virtual meetings should be continued post COVID-19; however, it would be important to identify for which children and types of meetings it would be appropriate to do so, and which circumstances required that meetings be carried out face-to-face. Thus, it was important to amend individual care plans to reflect what worked for each individual child within legal boundaries.
12. The Cabinet Member explained that during the pandemic there was a greater impetus to introduce the No Wrong Door (NWD) policy because it was clear that more teenagers and families were struggling. The Service secured additional funding from the capital budget to provide three new children's residential care homes, two of which were to house NWD hubs.
13. It was noted that the primary aim of the Surrey Corporate Parenting Operational Group (CPOG) was to implement the Corporate Parenting Strategy and a Member queried how well the Strategy was embedded in the Service's partners. The Director responded that CPOG was a well-attended group that included representatives from the police, the Designated Doctor for LAC and Designated Nurse. Addressing issues for children placed out of county was done through their six-monthly statutory reviews with an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO). If an aspect of a child's care plan was not being addressed, it would be escalated by an IRO through the care plan. The Virtual School had oversight of all children's education issues and the Surrey Virtual School Headteacher was responsible for contacting their counterpart in the other Local Authority if there was an issue with a child's plan. A summary of escalations and alerts was received at each meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board, and Members would check that they were appropriately resolved within the correct timescales.
14. £30k remaining from Members' Community Allocations was to be transferred to the Celebration Fund. The CPB had explored options to ensure that the funding was used to 'enhance its support to children and young people' and it was decided that the Board should advocate for introduction of a bike policy. Some of the money was to be used for a

trial of offering bikes to children in care and care leavers, and Active Surrey donated £5k for this. Bikes were a priority for older young people, providing them with more independence and a means to travel to education or work, and an important life skill for younger children

15. A Member noted the increased demand for services and asked how well prepared the Service was for further increases in demand. The Director stated that there were likely to be increased pressures the following year on the family safeguarding and assessment services due to increased referrals during the Covid-19 period. It would take time for this pressure to move from Assessment and Family Safeguarding into Looked After Teams. This anticipated shift would depend on how many children remained at home after they entered the safeguarding service and assessment service. This was a national pressure and the Director did not expect it to be resolved within the next six to nine months. The Cabinet Member stated that, in September 2021, the People, Performance and Development Committee agreed a social worker recruitment and retention package, with enhanced incentives for retention. Having a stable and permanent workforce would improve the quality of social work.

16. In April 2020, the Council joined the regional adoption agency, Adoption South East, also comprising Brighton and Hove Council, East Sussex County Council, and West Sussex County Council. The shift from a local adoption agency to a regional one was undertaken to bring together best practice and experience from each of the local authorities, to make more adoptive placements available for children with placement orders, and to enable adopters, children and families to use the four Authorities' combined service. Adoption rates were falling owing to low numbers of placement orders being made by the courts in accordance with the national drive to keep children with their families where possible. The Director agreed to provide data on adoption rates and how many placement orders were given in the year ending March 2021.

Actions

- i. The Director to provide data on adoption rates and the number of placement orders made in the 12-month period ending March 2021.

Recommendations

- I. The Select Committee notes the Corporate Parenting Annual Report.

- II. The Select Committee receive a report in 2022 which will include an update on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the development of both the work of the Corporate Parenting Board and the key performance data for looked after children as compared with statistical neighbours and nationally.

15/21 SURREY ADULT LEARNING [Item 6]

Witnesses

Julie Iles, Cabinet Member for All-Age Learning

Liz Mills, Director – Education, Learning and Culture

Francis Lawlor, Interim Head of Surrey Adult Learning Service/ Service Manager, Surrey Adult Learning

Jayne Dickinson, Chief Executive Officer (College Group) and Principal (East Surrey College)

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. A Member asked what barriers typically made it more difficult for adults to participate in education and training and how adult learners were supported to overcome those barriers. The Director explained that adult learning offered a range of benefits to participants, including skills development, enhanced productivity, career progression and improved health and wellbeing. There were a broad range of barriers to adults engaging in education and learning, such as language, disabilities, disadvantaged backgrounds, ability to travel, access to technology, anxiety, and knowing what was available. The Service was constantly looking at the feedback from learners to try and understand how to make the offer as impactful and accessible as possible.
2. The COVID-19 pandemic provided the Adult Learning Service with an opportunity to remodel and rethink the operation and delivery of its services across the county to better connect with skills development, increase participation, and ensure that economic changes were well understood and linked to employment opportunities.
3. During the pandemic, Surrey Adult Learning (SAL) was required to cease face-to-face teaching and the Service diversified its offer quickly to successfully deliver remote learning and improve digital skills. Finding alternative ways of delivering adult learning provision was a big learning curve that generated new ways of working and presented a wide range of opportunities for the Service by increasing accessibility and reach into communities. The Principal – East Surrey College (ESC) agreed that remote learning brought more people into education and encouraged those who had previously not considered upskilling or who were worried about their employment status. ESC was involved in two youth hubs for 19-24 year olds, and was working with local district and borough councils and the Department of Work and Pensions to ensure that this cohort was not left behind. Digital skills developed significantly for students and teachers during the pandemic and more people than ever had enrolled in teacher training courses. The Service Manager added that during COVID-19 an increasing number of learners wanted to have more involvement in the teaching of the curriculum and pushed their teacher more, and those with learning difficulties and vulnerabilities had also started to shape and provide input into the curriculum.
4. ESC was a vocational college that focused on employability and skills development, career progression and retention, and entry into jobs. The

college also focused on social engagement and many students undertook a range of volunteering and leisure courses. The majority of adult learners at ESC were enrolled on skills or basic skills programmes to help them get into work or progress onto the next stage of education. There were 300 adult learners studying four programmes over two years, adult apprentices, students studying for their Higher National Certificate and professional courses, and a large number of students engaged in Community Learning.

5. East Surrey College's provision and funding differed from that of Surrey Adult Learning. The Principal of ESC explained that the College engaged in partnership bidding to secure funding from educational and skills grants, the Greater London Authority (GLA), the National Skills Fund, and other grant funding (including research funding). Some adults did fully fund their studies and some courses were part funded. ESC designed its provision in accordance with available funding and had received an Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) grant of over £1m, which was the source of most adult skills funding. Money from the National Skills Fund was used to provide free tuition to adults on a range of level three courses (subject to availability and eligibility) and was intended to upskill and qualify adults in priority sectors, such as construction, engineering, and healthcare.
6. The Service Manager - SAL stated that SAL was funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency, in small part by the GLA, and by learner's tuition fees. The budget was split between Adult Skills and Community Learning: around 95% of the 9,000 students at SAL attended Community Learning courses, with approximately 500 studying Adult Skills and working towards an accredited qualification. Adult Skills provision enabled learners to complete accredited qualifications such as English and Maths GCSEs and functional skills. The Community Learning offer was intended to improve health and wellbeing, generate an interest in learning, and help those who wanted to improve their language skills, fitness, and other aspects of their lives. SAL was aiming to increase the proportion of Adult Skills provision to meet the economic and skills priority agenda, reduce the skills gap, and meet the labour needs of certain sectors.
7. The Cabinet Member stated that the Adult Learning Service would play an integral role in post-COVID-19 recovery. Prior to the pandemic, the Service had around 11,000 learners generating approximately £2m of fee income, which was the best performance nationally.
8. ESC delivered wide-ranging adult education in the East of the county. ESC worked with hundreds of employers, many of which input into the Community Learning offer, co-delivered courses, or provided masterclasses and other things to make ESC's adult learners more employable. The College was also working with sectors that were experiencing a downturn, such as hospitality, and its Care Academy was working with local hospitals and health centres to help target a new series of programmes. Over the past few years and particularly since COVID-19, the College focused more on reskilling, upskilling, career changes, entry into qualifications and return to learning. ESC was also working to mitigate digital poverty and improve digital literacy for adults who lacked basic digital literacy skills or did not have access to laptops.

The College was considering what courses people wanted, and reviewed its provision and curriculum and devised programmes to widen opportunities and meet identified demand. The offer changed significantly over the previous five years, and there was a whole Service approach to re-planning provision post COVID-19.

9. SAL developed a 'new online Information, Guidance and Advice process' during the first lockdown in March 2020 and the Service worked hard to communicate and market it to as many individuals as possible. Positive feedback was received, and any issues raised were quickly resolved. Feedback showed that users had clarity and were placed on the right courses for their level of education/skills and aspirations. Further work was needed with those who had not yet engaged, and analysis was underway to ascertain how engagement could be widened. This process was increasing participation and was a more advanced offer than that of other local authorities.
10. SAL was aiming to widen the reach of adult learning opportunities and advisors in Independent Guidance and Advice and Higher Education ensured that grants for all learners were accessible and well-known by employers. Opportunities could change on a daily basis, so it was important that advisors and the Service were up to date and good at analysing opportunities to assist employers. In particular, there had been many changes in Adult Skills, the skills funding agenda, and the Level 3 lifetime skills guarantee.
11. A Member asked whether officers were content that the current configuration of learning sites provided convenient and equitable access to provision for Surrey's communities which stood to benefit the most from adult education. The Principal - ESC explained that much of ESC provision depended on machinery, workshops and salons, and was therefore based on site. The college did use other centres and worked with the Workers' Education Association, which delivered in the community, in care homes and local centres. The Principal stated that she would like to see delivery expanded into schools in the future. The Director added that the Service was adopting more of a community-based focus and was working with partners across the council to ensure that opportunities and services were provided to areas where they were needed in the county.
12. A Member asked whether employers could input into the design of adult education and training programmes and how the Service encouraged employers to provide opportunities for staff to undertake training or education. The Principal - ESC explained that qualifications were generally organised by awarding bodies, but ESC worked with hundreds of businesses and there was some scope for employers to have input, particularly on vocational projects and masterclasses. ESC also invited employers to review provision and provide suggestions for new projects and comment on those under development. The construction and digital sector were particularly involved and gave general support to show people how they could adapt and grow their skills. Before the pandemic, ESC worked with East Surrey Hospital to redesign part of the curriculum on care of the elderly and dementia awareness. The Director added that it was important to take a lifelong learning approach to creating

opportunities for children and young people with SEND and young people who did not engage mainstream education to enter into internships and apprenticeships and create pathways into employment. The Service would work with the business community to identify opportunities and help develop skills in young people and adults and connect them to opportunities.

13. The Chairman was encouraged by the report and discussion and commended the work being done to improve outcomes for the residents of Surrey.

Recommendations

- I. Work with partners, within and external to SCC and with the Surrey Economy and Growth Team to develop a coordinated plan for the future, to ensure that the Adult Learning Service remains responsive to changing health, social and economic needs.
- II. Continuously review the Service delivery model to ensure sustainability and that the Service meets the needs and aspirations of the local community.

16/21 UPDATE ON CULTURAL SERVICES [Item 7]

Mark Nuti, Cabinet Member for Communities

Marie Snelling, Executive Director – Communities and Transformation
Susan Wills, Acting Assistant Director – Culture, Libraries & Registration

1. The Chairman welcomed the recently appointed Cabinet Member for Communities to the meeting and asked what his aspirations were for Cultural Services. The Cabinet Member was excited about the work being done to improve, evolve and expand the cultural experience for residents of Surrey.
2. The report referred to income lost due to the COVID-19 pandemic and Members asked about the short- and medium-term implications of this for the Service and whether there were any planned savings. The Executive Director stated that the pandemic had and continued to have a major impact on the delivery of frontline Cultural Services. A loss of £1.5m over the year was largely due to the closure of many of the Service's income generating services (for example music tuition in schools). Covid grants from central government substituted some of this loss and the Service estimated that it would need to recover approximately £800k through efficiencies the following year. This deficit was subject to change as many of the Directorate's services depended on customer behaviour and how individuals accessed services after lockdown. Therefore, close monitoring and flexibility was important, and the Service worked with the Finance department to ensure that scenario planning could evolve with the easing of lockdown restrictions and as patterns of resident behaviour could be discerned. The Service had put in place a range of mitigating actions to recover income, if needed, and

was looking at how it could diversify and increase income across a number of services. It was also looking at measures to reduce back office costs whilst increasing efficiency to ensure that front line delivery was not impacted.

3. The Service ambition was not just focused on recovery but on growing and securing additional funding for services. The Assistant Director informed Members that the Service was looking at and learning from good practice in other parts of the country by working and building relationships with colleagues from other Local Authorities and organisations such as the British Library. Overall, the plan was ambitious, but the Executive Director and Assistant Director were confident that it could be achieved. It was difficult to estimate how many years it would take to recover losses as it would depend on future public interaction with services. The Executive Director reiterated Members that comprehensive scenario planning had been undertaken.
4. The delivery of Cultural Services was flexible during the COVID-19 pandemic, with the use of digital and technology increasing choice, accessibility and efficiency, reducing costs and improving the offer and customer usage. The Service was committed to incorporating this new, virtual way of service delivery post-pandemic and wanted to build on the online events that were quickly developed from scratch during the first lockdown. The online services enabled the Service to continue its support of children's learning and reading in a fun and interactive way, and provided an extra resource accessible to children throughout the school day. The Service was also planning a new learning offer, which included a homework club and study spaces, and was working with the British Library Living Knowledge Network to livestream cultural events and host touring exhibitions, and with the Libraries Consortium to provide access to libraries in Essex and London with residents' library cards.
5. The Director stated that there was a clear role that Cultural Services should play in supporting Surrey's post-COVID-19 recovery. The Service was to focus on promoting and strengthening the cultural offer across the county to enable post-Covid recovery of local economies. For Cultural Services to play a key role in the inclusion agenda, it needed to be more strategic, purposeful, and aligned to a focus on health and wellbeing and economic recovery. The Service had an excellent working relationship with the Arts Council and Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. The Executive Director invited Members to provide their ideas and view of the future role of Cultural Services by email.
6. There were a range of challenges that would continue to require close management, particularly COVID-19 recovery and mitigation of lost income. There was still a lot of uncertainty as the Service was reliant on guidance from central government. The Assistant Director summarised the post-COVID-19 roadmap for Cultural Services: from 12th April, the Heritage Centre and libraries would fully open, however the resumption of face-to-face events was to be delayed until they could be delivered in a Covid-secure manner. On 8th March, registration and wedding services with up to six people resumed, with up to 30 people from the 17th May, and a lift on all limits on numbers from the 21st June. Music tuition classes also restarted on 8th March and, from 12th April, group activities

for the arts service, out-of-school activities and ensembles could restart, and live performances from 17th May. The Assistant Director stressed the importance of the Service recovering well from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and fully reopening in a safe, Covid-secure way as soon as permissible.

Recommendations:

- I. The Select Committee notes the positive response to the current pandemic from Cultural Services to continue to provide services and support to Surrey residents.
- II. The Select Committee notes the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, the risks highlighted in this report as a result of these challenges and the actions being taken to continue focussing on delivery of frontline services.

17/21 LIBRARIES TRANSFORMATION [Item 8]

Mark Nuti, Cabinet Member for Communities

Marie Snelling, Executive Director – Communities and Transformation
Susan Wills, Assistant Director – Culture, Libraries & Registration

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Executive Director introduced the report and explained that the Libraries Transformation Programme ('the Programme') aligned with the council's wider commitment to transform services for the benefit of residents, whilst supporting the council's 'empowering communities' agenda which sought to stimulate local engagement and put residents at the heart of designing and delivery local services. The ambition of the programme was to develop modern, inclusive libraries that had strong community relationships and supported the local economy and skills agenda. The Programme sought to achieve a number of key outcomes: improved user experience of a positive, welcoming, accessible service; increased and improved service offer and initiatives; a more inclusive and relevant service; increased partnership-working; a greener library model; improved service efficiency and innovation; and a stronger and more diverse workforce. Due to COVID-19, some of the transformation work had slowed down, such as the co-design work with residents. Nevertheless, a great number of achievements were still made during the pandemic and the Service delivered £2.3m of efficiencies across the programme whilst improving frontline services. The Programme was complex and would take a number of years to deliver, but the Executive Director was confident that transformation would provide residents with excellent spaces to work and learn.
2. A Member requested further information regarding the funding of the Transformation Programme. The Director explained that the Service delivered £2.3m of efficiencies and there was an additional £600k built in for 2021/22, with £4m being delivered over the lifetime of the programme through to 2025.

3. The Programme was intended to provide users with better value for money and efficiencies were being delivered through a number of means, for example reduction in staffing costs due to a new workforce model. To date, the Service spent £800k on the Programme and investment for 2021/22 was projected to be £650k. The Executive Director was confident that financial savings and returns on investment would be made and would increase moving into the next phase of the programme, which focussed on codesigning services within the local community. The Executive Director stressed that this was not a savings programme, rather savings were a consequence of transformation.
4. A Member noted that the three categories of library proposed in the 2020-2025 Strategy were not mentioned in the report and asked whether the introduction of those categories would proceed. The Assistant Director responded that the Service was committed to the delivery of 52 libraries and the three categories as stated in the report. Larger libraries were to be co-located with partners where possible and flagship libraries would accommodate additional services and functions. The approach still needed refining, but the Assistant Director stated the importance of taking a tailored approach for each place and community.
5. The types of services, facilities and built environments that residents could expect of libraries following the transformation were not all predetermined and depended on the location of the library and feedback received from the engagement and codesign stages. The Assistant Director agreed to provide detail where possible after the meeting and stated that libraries would be modernised and transformed into cultural centres with social spaces.
6. To increase accessibility for residents who did not live near to a library, the Service was exploring the idea of pop up libraries and investing and promoting a broader range of online events. The Service was also engaging with community centres regarding hosting cultural events livestreamed by the Living Knowledge Network and the British Library. The Assistant Director was working to enhance an existing but underutilised agreement with neighbouring authorities to provide reciprocal library access to increase service user choice.
7. A Member asked how the transformation would be used as an opportunity to increase library use by disadvantaged residents and enable libraries to better meet their needs. The Assistant Director responded that creating modern, fit for purpose libraries that were co-located with other services would lead to an increase in their use. The Service was working to provide broader access to a range of free-to-use services to improve learning and wellbeing and support independence and ensure inclusivity. There was a particular focus on digital exclusion and digital support for more people get online and, during the pandemic, the home library service visited 400 housebound residents. The Service was establishing a team of 'digital buddies' and 'digital angels' to provide over-the-phone advice and was working to develop key internal and

external partnerships to broaden its reach to all demographics to provide more targeted services. The Assistant Director wanted to bring jobs clubs and organisations such as Citizens Advice and the Money Advice Service into libraries, and was organising volunteering opportunities to help residents gain new skills and grow their CVs. The Service was working collaboratively with library services across the country to work out what was working well and how to ensure that libraries were accessible to all.

8. The Executive Director stated that co-design of services was a priority of the Strategy as it was important to understand an area's needs and opportunities. Engaging with local stakeholders, learning about people in the local area, inviting communities to participate to find out what mattered was an important element of the co-design approach and would help explore a range of ideas and options and collectively create proposals. Codesign was about ongoing dialogue with communities about how things could be refreshed and continually evolved to improve the local offer.
9. A Member asked what opportunities there would be for increased collaboration between libraries, schools, and the Council's Education Service, and how the transformation would be used to achieve joined-up working. The Assistant Director informed the Committee that she was working closely with officers from the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Directorate on how to improve library services for children and young people. Development of exciting, accessible and inclusive environments in libraries and adoption of the Arts Council's 'Children's Promise' to Surrey libraries would extend and refresh the library experience for children. The Executive Director added that the Service had looked at how Surrey History Centre could join with Surrey Youth Focus to better understand the experiences of students who had been out of education during the previous year.
10. Members discussed the Select Committee receiving an update on the transformation in six months' time.

Action:

- i. Assistant Director to share the intended services, facilities, built environments of new libraries with the Select Committee
- ii. Assistant Director to share the Art Council's Children's Promise with the Select Committee.

Recommendations:

- I. The Select Committee notes the progress of the Libraries Transformation programme and future direction.

18/21 ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TRACKER AND FORWARD WORK PLAN [Item 9]

1. The Chairman noted outstanding actions and requested that the officers responsible provide their responses to the Democratic Services Assistant in a timely manner.
2. The Forward Work Plan was noted.

19/21 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING: THURSDAY, 15 JULY 2021 [Item 10]

The Committee noted its next meeting would be held on Thursday, 11 July 2021.

Meeting ended at: 12.50 pm

Chairman