

Notice of Meeting

Children, Families, Lifelong Learning & Culture Select Committee

**Date & time**

Thursday, 7 April
2022 at 10.00 am

Place

Woodhatch Place, 11
Cockshot Hill, Reigate,
RH2 8EF

Contact

Benjamin Awkal, Scrutiny
Officer
Democratic Services
Tel 07816 091463

Chief Executive

Joanna Killian

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If you would like a copy of this agenda or the attached papers in another format, e.g. large print or braille, or another language please either call 07816 091463 or email benjamin.awkal@surreycc.gov.uk.

This meeting will be held in public. If you would like to attend and you have any special requirements, please contact Benjamin Awkal, Scrutiny Officer on 07816 091463.

Elected Members

Ayesha Azad (Vice-Chairman), Liz Bowes (Chairman), Fiona Davidson, Jonathan Essex, Rachael Lake, Michaela Martin, Mark Sugden, Alison Todd, Liz Townsend, Chris Townsend (Vice-Chairman), Jeremy Webster and Fiona White

Independent Representatives:

Mr Simon Parr (Diocesan Representative for the Catholic Church), Mrs Tanya Quddus (Parent Governor Representative) and Mr Alex Tear (Diocesan Representative for the Anglican Church, Diocese of Guildford)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee is responsible for the following areas:

- Children's Services (including safeguarding)
- Early Help
- Corporate Parenting
- Education
- Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities
- Adult Learning
- Apprenticeships
- Libraries, Arts and Heritage
- Voluntary Sector

AGENDA

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

To report any absences and substitutions.

2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS: 18 OCTOBER 2021, 13 DECEMBER 2021 AND 17 JANUARY 2022

(Pages 5
- 62)

To agree the minutes of the previous three meetings of the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee as true and accurate records of proceedings.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

All Members present are required to declare, at this point in the meeting or as soon as possible thereafter:

- I. Any disclosable pecuniary interests and / or
- II. Other interests arising under the Code of Conduct in respect of any item(s) of business being considered at this meeting

NOTES:

- Members are reminded that they must not participate in any item where they have a disclosable pecuniary interest
- As well as an interest of the Member, this includes any interest, of which the Member is aware, that relates to the Member's spouse or civil partner (or any person with whom the Member is living as a spouse or civil partner)
- Members with a significant personal interest may participate in the discussion and vote on that matter unless that interest could be reasonably regarded as prejudicial.

4 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

To receive any questions or petitions.

Notes:

1. The deadline for Member's questions is 12.00pm four working days before the meeting (*1 April 2022*).
2. The deadline for public questions is seven days before the meeting (*31 March 2022*).
3. The deadline for petitions was 14 days before the meeting, and no petitions have been received.

The public retain their right to submit questions for written response, with such answers recorded in the minutes of the meeting; questioners may participate in meetings to ask a supplementary question. Petitioners may

address the Committee on their petition for up to three minutes. Guidance will be made available to any member of the public wishing to speak at a meeting.

5 CARE LEAVERS SERVICE REPORT

(Pages
63 - 82)

Purpose of the report:

To provide an overview of the service provided to care leavers with particular regard to support around transitions, educational attainment including post 16 destinations, the impact of out of area placements and accommodation quality and stability.

6 PROPOSED CHANGES TO HOME TO SCHOOL TRAVEL ASSISTANCE POLICY

(Pages
83 - 94)

Purpose of the report:

To outline the proposed changes to the Home to School Travel Assistance (H2S TA) policy for children and young people in mainstream schools and pupils with additional needs (SEND). This report sets out the rationale for, the objectives of the changes, the changes being consulted on and the intended outcome.

7 ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TRACKER AND FORWARD WORK PLAN

(Pages
95 - 114)

For the Select Committee to review the attached actions and recommendations tracker and forward work programme, making suggestions or amendments as appropriate.

8 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next public meeting of the Select Committee will be held on Wednesday, 6 July 2022.

**Joanna Killian
Chief Executive**

Published: Wednesday, 30 March 2022

MOBILE TECHNOLOGY AND FILMING – ACCEPTABLE USE

Those attending for the purpose of reporting on the meeting may use social media or mobile devices in silent mode to send electronic messages about the progress of the public parts of the meeting. To support this, Woodhatch Place has wifi available for visitors – please ask at reception for details.

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Thank you for your co-operation

MINUTES of the meeting of the **CHILDREN, FAMILIES, LIFELONG LEARNING & CULTURE SELECT COMMITTEE** held at 10.30 am on 18 October 2021 at Woodhatch Place, 11 Cockshot Hill, Reigate, RH2 8EF.

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Committee at its meeting on Monday, 13 December 2021.

Elected Members:

- * Ayesha Azad (Vice-Chairman)
- * Liz Bowes (Chairman)
- * Fiona Davidson
- * Jonathan Essex
- * Rachael Lake
- Andy Lynch
- * Michaela Martin
- * Mark Sugden
- Alison Todd
- * Liz Townsend
- * Chris Townsend (Vice-Chairman)
- * Jeremy Webster
- * Fiona White

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

28/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]

Apologies were received from Alex Tear, Tanya Quddus and Alison Todd.

28/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]

Apologies were received from Alex Tear and Tanya Quddus.

29/21 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS: 11 MARCH 2021 AND 15 JULY 2021 [Item 2]

Minutes dated 11 March 2021 and 15 July 2021 were agreed as true records of the meetings.

30/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

None received.

31/21 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]

1. A question had been received from Fiona Davidson.
2. Asking a supplementary question, the Member asked what was now being done differently to accommodate more LAC within Surrey, highlighting that the proportion of looked after children (LAC) placed within the county had been increasing incrementally from a low point of 47.1% in April 2019 to 54.2% in October 2021.
3. The Director – Corporate Parenting explained that the Service had a comprehensive sufficiency strategy and aimed to significantly increase the number of foster placements available within the county, as they wanted the majority of children to live within families, and whilst they had been successful at recruiting more foster carers during the COVID-19 pandemic, many had also left for reasons such as ill-health or retirement. Additionally, there were two frameworks used to commission third-party placements including foster carers, children's homes and supported accommodation. The Director agreed that the rate of change was slower than she would like and cautioned that it was unlikely that 100 per cent of LAC would be placed within the county as, for some children, the best placement would be outside of Surrey, such as when living with extended family. Eighty per cent of LAC living within the county was described as an ambitious but realistic target. There was a balance to strike between accommodating more LAC in Surrey and moving them at a time which met their care needs.

32/21 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND) TRANSFORMATION UPDATE [Item 5]

Witnesses:

Denise Turner-Stewart, Cabinet Member for Education and Learning

Liz Mills, Director – Education and Lifelong Learning

Mary Burguieres, Assistant Director – Systems and Transformation

Benedicte Symcox, Chief Executive Officer – Family Voice Surrey

Kate Goode, Participation Manager – Family Voice Surrey

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Cabinet Member explained that the report built upon previous updates to the Committee and Cabinet in December 2020 and February 2021 respectively. It outlined further progress in the year to date and highlighted the next phase of delivery – building system wide momentum and cultural change and securing financial trajectories over the next five years.
2. The Director added that 290 additional school places for children with SEND had been delivered – a mixture of expansions of existing schools and new specialist units and centres, plus one entirely new school. There was a focus on operational improvements: the Service was seeking to improve the timeliness and quality of Education and Health and Care (EHC) planning and communication with families. They wanted to make sure all children received the right support without necessarily relying on a statutory plan. There had been a reduction in requests for statutory plans, attributed to recent investment in early intervention – Surrey had a high number of statutory plans compared to regional and statistical neighbours. The Service was working with education, health and care partners to ensure children’s needs were met more holistically. From early years, the Service was focused on preparing children for adulthood and was creating additional pathways into adulthood – 70% of young people were on a pathway to independence or employment, a 13% increase on the previous year.
3. The Vice-Chairman asked what the Programme’s key risks were and asked whether it had been affected by ongoing disruption within the construction industry. The capital programme had delivered 23 schemes in year and there had been a six-week delay to occupying the new school, but temporary provision was accommodating pupils in the meantime. The Land and Property Service’s approach to capital delivery was to secure a longer-term delivery partner to facilitate smoother delivery. The delivery of one free school, Betchwood Vale, had been delayed for a year for planning reasons and the Service was working with partners to ensure delivery and provide interim places.
4. A Vice-Chairman asked how the Programme reflected the SEND Code of Practice and Partnership Strategy and the Written Statement of Action’s four key focus areas and would support children to attain better outcomes. The Director explained that the Transformation Programme was outcome focused and everything the Service did was centred on relevant statutory provisions and the SEND Code of Practice. The Strategy reflected local consultation and ran from 2019 to 2022 and the Service was to co-produce a new strategy for 2022 onwards, for which the development of the All-Age Autism Strategy provided an improved model of co-production. The

key focus areas were borne out of the original Code of Practice and were reflected in the now more-joined-up SEND system and increasingly holistic approach to SEND support; however, the Director acknowledged that those changes would not have been felt by all families yet. Elements of the Strategy relating to community also reflected the Community Vision for Surrey in 2030 principle of 'no one is left behind' by aiming for children to be educated and supported closer to home wherever possible. The SEND Code of Practice required the efficient, effective and equitable use of resources and the Director highlighted this was an area of focus where further work was required; increasing the sufficiency of local provision under the Transformation Programme would support the implementation of that principle as well as better outcomes for children and their families.

5. The Vice-Chairman asked what improvements would be achieved through the introduction of an assistant director in each quadrant and why this was an effective use of resource. The Director explained that the posts were funded from the General Fund, rather than the High Needs Block. The appointment of assistant directors to quadrants mirrored the structure used in social care and they were to galvanise cultural change by developing and maintaining relationships with early years providers, schools and health and social care partners. They were also driving cultural change in relation to safeguarding and emotional wellbeing and mental health.
6. The Vice-Chairman asked whether there had been any significant change to the SEND level of need during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Director explained that children's mental health needs had been flagged to her and colleagues when they had visited educational settings and the Service was working with the mental health alliance. The Director explained that the Service was concerned that some children with additional needs may have had too little educational input and thus development during the pandemic; however, she cautioned it was too early to know the extent to which this was true, and that increased need would likely occur in relation to specific places or individual children, rather than across the board.
7. A Member asked how educational support for children with SEND was aligned with social care needs and placements. The Cabinet Member explained that the Service had a close relationship with children's social care, with which they shared a Director of commissioning, and that the new mental health alliance contract took into account sufficiency planning for social care and education. The Director added that education and social care colleagues worked together closely at all levels and further training and development initiatives were to be provided to new starters on such joined-up working. Joined-up care planning was highly important as few children would have either social or educational needs alone. The introduction of the single view of a

child system would further enhance joint working. The implementation of the Early Years and Education Management System (EYES) Liquidlogic module was progressing well and was to be fully implemented by the 2022/23 academic year.

8. A Member asked why the development and reviews of a significant proportion of EHC plans still took longer than the targeted timescales, how long overdue plans took to complete/review on average, what was being done to address plan lateness and whether timeliness varied between quadrants. The SEND Code of Practice required that EHC plans should be developed within 20 weeks with few, rarely used exceptions, which the Service did not account for in performance reporting. Overdue plans were typically one to two weeks so but could be as late as four weeks. The EHC plan monitoring system enabled strong management oversight of plan timeliness, down to individual plan level. The timeliness of advice from health and care services, which had been under significant pressure during the pandemic, could impact plan timeliness and the Service worked flexibly with families when specific advice was outstanding. Caseworker turnover and vacancies could lead to delays and the Service was taking steps to stabilise the workforce; the Director aimed for the Service to be fully resourced in Autumn 2021. Changes to the irregular pattern of requests for plans could impact timeliness and there had been unusually high demand for plans in the 2021 Summer Term, which was challenging as children's needs could not be evaluated during the summer. Some quadrants had achieved 100 per cent timeliness in recent months and the quadrants in which poor timeliness periodically arose differed. There was monthly oversight of the reasons for plan lateness at senior officer level.

9. A Member asked how the council's ability to effectively support children with SEND was affected by the continuing shortfall of High Needs Block (HNB) funding, how this impacted Directorate and council finances, and how confident the Service was that it would be able to deliver effective SEND support without overspending on the High Needs Block within five years' time. The Cabinet Member explained that recently, externally reviewed demand modelling and financial analysis confirmed that SEND services would be delivered to budget within five years' time. The Director explained that the council's maintenance of a financial reserve to offset HNB overspends presented an opportunity cost as those funds could not be invested in other services. The Service was building capacity in the SEND system through its inclusion agenda and culture and practice improvements to ensure that children's needs were met at an early stage before they increased. There was a large degree of inconsistency between the size of different school's cohorts of children with SEND and EHC plans, and an objective of ongoing schools-led work was to increase the number of children with SEND educated at their local schools.

10. A Member asked how children with SEND who were not eligible for EHC plans were supported, how often their support was reviewed, and who was involved in those reviews. The Director explained that 'SEND Support Arrangements' were set out in the SEND Code of Practice and schools, which published the SEND support they provide on their websites, were responsible for documenting needs and agreeing support plans with parents/carers, and were expected to regularly review support, usually on a termly or half-termly basis. All the help and support available to children with SEND was recorded in the Graduated Response and the Service was providing relevant training and support to staff. The Service was piloting a 'team around the school' model which brought council and partnership resources together around individual schools and was focused on providing non-statutory SEND support, a benefit of which was that council would be aware of children with additional needs and the support they had been receiving if requests for ECH plans were made for them.
11. A Member asked how funding for early intervention made available to early years settings from April 2020 had been utilised and what its impact was. The Director explained that following a series of termly evaluations which showed a positive impact, the Schools Forum had agreed to extend the provision of that funding. The funding was often used to deliver skills training, capacity building and SEND support planning and arrangements in early years settings, enabling young children with SEND to be included in settings closer to home. Meeting young children's needs earlier also enabled settings to close gaps in respect of speech, learning and communication development and better prepare them for school.
12. The Member asked for an overview of the post-18 destinations for young people with SEND. Seventy per cent of young people with SEND were in education, employment or training (EET), and approximately 11 per cent of the cohort would move into adult social care. The Service was exploring how to provide pathways into EET for the remaining nine per cent of young people with SEND; the Service was delivering informative events outlining the wide range of options available to young people and supported similar work by Family Voice Surrey. Six apprenticeships had been provided for young people with SEND and the Service was to provide a further 25 going forward; the Service was encouraging employers to consider how they could provide apprenticeships for young people with SEND. The Cabinet Member added that, in connection with the council's strategy for economic growth, the Service was exploring further employment opportunities for young people with SEND with the council, partners and industry.

13. The Chairman invited the representatives of Family Voice Surrey (FVS) to introduce themselves and the organisation. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) explained that FVS was the official parent carer forum for Surrey, which provided a voice for parent carers of children with additional needs aged 0-25. The CEO welcomed improvements made in recent years, particularly the shift to coproduction and partnership working, but highlighted that those improvements were not reflected in the experiences of all families yet.
14. The Chairman invited the CEO to outline FVS's key focus areas. The CEO emphasised that the work of FVS was grounded in listening to the lived experience of children and parent carers. The feedback shared with FVS was both positive and negative. The CEO said that FVS repeatedly heard that communication needed to improve. The CEO welcomed the council's work to improve post-16 outcomes for children with additional needs. There was a focus on the Preparation for Adulthood Programme and FVS was promoting the council's message that preparation for adulthood starts from the beginning of children's lives. FVS had received highly positive feedback regarding supported internships. However, feedback from those who attended college was less consistent – the transition into the second year of college could be particularly challenging. The CEO noted the increase in co-production within the system; however, there was a desire for more co-production at individual level and at transitions into post-16 education and adulthood – the CEO shared the view of the Director that greater consistency at school level was required. The biggest problem parents raised with FVS was that they were not heard or believed by professionals such as, GPs, school staff and health visitors.
15. The Director recognised that the council's relationship with FVS was vitally important and highlighted that the council had invested in how it worked with the organisation. She agreed it was important that improvements were apparent at, and coproduction conducted, at individual level.
16. Improving communication remained a focus and the Director submitted that the Service had a good understanding of where improvement was required. The Service was to continue providing training and development initiatives to staff in a number of areas, including ensuring families were aware of handovers in advance and handovers were managed well, avoiding vacancies within teams, and improving the culture and ethos of collaborative working.
17. The Cabinet Member thanked the CEO for FVS's advocacy and collaboration with the council.

18. A Vice-Chairman asked about the challenges that children, young people, and their families experienced when seeking SEND support and at the transition from primary to secondary school, and how the placement of SEND children within or outside of the county affected them. The CEO explained that FVS worked closely with Surrey's User Voice and Participation team, which ensured that young people's voices were heard. She reiterated that the biggest challenge faced was for professionals to believe parent carers when they sought support. There were also challenges getting the different parts of the system to communicate with one another and services still seemed to families to be siloed. Finding the right information was often challenging for parents due to the number of single points of access available; the CEO described the Learner's and Children's Single Points of Access as helpful, and the Director later confirmed they were being merged. The CEO described how professionals would sometimes recommend certain support for children and then decision-making panels in the EHC plan process would take a different view – this could be confusing and upsetting for families and was described as potentially harmful to codesign/collaboration.
19. The CEO explained that it was difficult to see the improvement of incounty residential placements currently, but FVS had received positive feedback from parents whose children were receiving specialist provision close to home. FVS heard that families whose adolescent children could not live at home full time due to their highly complex needs would prefer their children to receive a residential placement close to home, rather than receive packages of respite care, which were described as less stable. The CEO highlighted a gap in local provision for girls and young women with autism who had experienced trauma and had learning needs.
20. The CEO explained that, in respect of transitions from primary to secondary school, schools and families often believed children needed additional hours of support but, in her view, the focus should instead be on how schools and families communicate, why transitions are difficult and what can be done to make a them easier, such as making support plans clearer and ensuring teachers had strong understandings of children's needs.
21. The Director highlighted the importance of FVS as a constructive and critical friend to the council.

Action:

- i. Director – Education and Lifelong Learning to share average times for overdue EHC plan development and reviews by quadrant; and any actions taken to respond to increase demand for EHC plans in the 2021 Summer Term.

Recommendations:

1. At an appropriate time, the Select Committee visit educational settings supporting children with special educational needs and disabilities.
2. The Director – Education and Lifelong Learning share the findings of the SEND Self-Evaluation and any actions to be taken in response to it with the Chairman of the Select Committee for circulation to the Committee once available.
3. The Cabinet Member for Education and Learning provide an update on the SEND Transformation Programme and other work relating to the support for children and young people with additional needs, including support at transitions, at the April 2022 meeting of the Select Committee.

33/21 THE IMPACTS OF COVID-19 ON EDUCATION AND LEARNERS IN SURREY [Item 6]**Witnesses:**

Denise Turner-Stewart, Cabinet Member for Education and Learning

Liz Mills, Director – Education and Lifelong Learning

Tina Benjamin, Director – Corporate Parenting

Mary Burguieres, Assistant Director – Systems and Transformation

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. A Member highlighted that, in the absence of council funding for mental health support, some schools were using education catch-up funding to support pupil's mental health needs, which had increased during the COVID-19 pandemic, and asked what the overall findings of the literacy and early language undertaken by schools were. The Assistant Director explained that from the pandemic's outset the Education Service had adopted a preventative approach to minimising the impact of the pandemic on children's learning. Vulnerable children and children of key workers received in-person teaching and support throughout the pandemic, where it had been in their best interest. Schools, the council and partners had sought to ensure children received high-quality education, and laptops had been distributed to children who needed them. National research showed that a learning gap of approximately three months in the areas of numeracy and literacy had emerged during the pandemic, particularly in Key Stage 1 – this was even larger for disadvantaged

students. The Service continued to deliver campaigns to help families support their young children's speech and language development. National and local research showed there had been a COVID-19-related impact on children at transition stages – Government guidance had prevented settings from providing inperson support at transitions. The Service's focus for the 2021/22 school year remained on supporting schools to deliver high-quality curriculum and teaching via the Schools Alliance for Excellence (SAfE). The Department for Education (DfE) strongly advised schools to use catch-up funding to provide tutoring for those most in need and to increase teaching capacity to deliver catch-up learning. The council had commissioned continuing mental health support throughout the pandemic, elements of which were focused on parents and carers, children and young people and teaching staff.

2. A Member asked how educational catch-up support related to child poverty and asked how the council was addressing those issues, particularly in early years. The Assistant Director stated that the Service had supported economically disadvantaged families by allocating supermarket vouchers for school- and college-age children in receipt of free school meals, early years pupil premium children and Care Leavers during school holidays. The Surrey Crisis Fund, food banks and relevant charities had also received financial contributions from the council.
3. The Member welcomed those financial contributions and asked what additional support was in place for the future, particularly to support disadvantaged children's education and infants' development. The Director – Education and Lifelong Learning explained that the Service's strategy and work around disadvantaged learners included children from economically disadvantaged families and connected with the emerging child poverty strategy – support led by SAfE and delivered by schools included subject matter networks, an increased universal offer and Quality First Teaching approaches. Targeted programmes had been put in place to support children in early years, especially those living in more disadvantaged areas. The Cabinet Member added that partnership working during the pandemic had enabled the council to more accurately identify vulnerable families and children, which would enable it to more effectively target support going forward.
4. Members asked why levels of post-16 participation and attainment in education varied between groups from different disadvantaged backgrounds and how the Service could learn from the groups of disadvantaged young people who exceeded regional and national averages to better support learners whose participation and attainment was relatively low. A team monitored post-16 outcomes for

young people, with a specific focus on vulnerable cohorts. Further analysis had been initiated to understand decreases in participation by young people from certain minority backgrounds to enable the Service to identify how best to respond.

5. The Director – Corporate Parenting explained that the council's Virtual School tracked the progress of young people in care and supported their career aspirations. The Virtual School had established an exam centre to support looked after children's completion of maths and English qualifications to enable them to participate in post-16 education. The Assistant Director added that lacking a qualification in maths or English also presented a barrier to participation in post-16 education for other young people, such as the wider disadvantaged cohort. The Director – Education and Lifelong Learning said that the gap in participation and attainment by disadvantaged learners could in part be attributed to the small number of disadvantaged children in any one class, which could make it harder for them to be engaged by the wider support strategy; through SAfE, the Service was making support more targeted and seeking to increase staff's skills and knowledge to help them with their Quality First Teaching approaches. A partnership was being formed to develop a lifelong learning strategy connected to the council's skills agenda and reflective of the skills needed by the labour market then and in the future, to support people of all ages to return to further education.
6. The Chairman and Cabinet Member thanked the education system and those involved in it for their response to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, during which they had continued to educate and safeguard children and young people.

Resolved:

The Select Committee noted the report.

34/21 CHILDREN'S HOMES TRANSFORMATION [Item 7]

Witnesses:

Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children and Families

Tina Benjamin, Director – Corporate Parenting

Jo Rabbitte, Assistant Director – Children's Resources

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Chairman noted that the reports for Items 7 and 7a had been received late and published under a supplementary agenda as the detail of the proposed decision being scrutinising had not been finalised at the time the meeting's agenda was published.

2. The Assistant Director introduced the report, explaining that the council had reviewed its children's residential homes and that the recommended changes were to develop its children's homes' management and workforce to enable the accommodation of the looked after children ('LAC') with the most complex needs within the council's residential homes. Under the Sufficiency Strategy, the preferred placement for any LAC was within the community with their family or in foster care; however, there were a small number of children for whom residential care was necessary. The change to the model of practice would make residential care a specific intervention to address identified needs. The Assistant Director submitted that this would improve outcomes for children and young people and would be a more effective use of 'scarce and valuable' residential provision. It was hoped that the existing children's homes would form the basis of an extension to residential provision under the existing capital development programme.
3. A Vice-Chairman asked for the background to the recommended decision and what the key risks were in respect of the proposals. The Director explained that the improvement of residential provision was not initially prioritised as the council's children's homes were of a good standard, being mostly rated Good or Outstanding by Ofsted. As the Corporate Parenting Service ('the Service') had developed a better understanding of the LAC placed out of county and what it could ask of its staff, it had identified the need to develop its residential provision to make interventions more purposive and timelier. The proposed model would also support the No Wrong Door service.
4. The alternatives considered were to continue with the existing model or place LAC in external residential provision, but this was undesirable as, when children were placed in the council's homes, they were cared for by employees managed by Service, providing greater assurance of care quality. Part of the rationale for increasing the management capacity in residential homes was to provide management cover on weekends: due to the complexity of the needs of children in residential provision, behavioural issues often arose on weekends, straining the on-call system. The introduction of further assistant managers, considering significant regional workforce development issues, would improve succession by enabling the Service to provide structured career pathways which would help attract and retain high-quality staff and develop registered managers locally.
5. The key risks in not implementing the restructure were maintaining Good and Outstanding Ofsted ratings and not being able to support the children with the most complex needs in house and within the county.

6. The key risks in implementing the restructure were the challenges of recruiting to the new staffing structure and co-locating children with complex behavioural needs, which could have led to homes' capacity being underutilised.
7. A Member asked why the Service was forecasting an increase of 169 looked after children in the next five years but not anticipating a consequential increase in children requiring residential placements. The Director explained that the Service aimed to increase the availability of foster provision, having implemented the Mockingbird scheme which promoted placement stability by supporting foster carers to manage the behaviours of the children in their care; the Service was aiming for a placement strategy which would not increase the number of children in residential care. The SEND Transformation Programme was also expected to increase the stability of foster care placements by providing children with more appropriate educational placements.
8. A Member asked what the short-term impact of the changes might be, highlighting a reduction in longer-term placement capacity with the introduction of No Wrong Door short-term placements, and sought assurance that the changes would not result in more children being placed out of county while the capital programme was being implemented. The Director responded that the proposed changes built upon the expertise of residential staff and reflected the needs of the LAC supported by the Service by providing residential placements for those who were most difficult to place within the county. It was important to maintain respite provision and develop short-term No Wrong Door provision to prevent children from entering care for longer periods.
9. The Service had more children placed in private and third-sector provision than in the council's. Some of those children could be accommodated by the council following the proposed transformation, and the Service would subsequently seek to reduce the total number of children in residential provision. The Director highlighted that there was a shortage of external provision in Surrey and, under the Sufficiency Strategy, the Service was to engage with external providers regarding them increasing their provision in Surrey, as the transformation would not meet the demand for residential placements entirely.
10. A Member asked how the need for two autism placements was identified and whether that was sufficient. With health colleagues, the Service had identified that there was a lack of provision for children in crisis detained under the Mental Health Act 1983; the proposals would provide crisis beds linked with the Children's Crisis Intensive Support

Service to accommodate children in crisis for up to a month before they returned home with a care package, preventing them being detained in hospital or placed out of county.

- 11.A Member asked what was being done to improve standards in homes requiring improvement. Each had an improvement plan in place and would be subject to Ofsted quality assurance visits as well as additional internal assurance and scrutiny.

Actions:

- i. Director – Corporate Parenting to provide the numbers of children placed in in-house and external residential provision.
- ii. Director – Corporate Parenting to submit to the Committee the most recent report on children’s residential provision submitted to the Corporate Parenting Board.

35/21 CHILDREN'S HOMES TRANSFORMATION - PART TWO [Item 7a]

RESOLVED:

That under section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the Item 7a on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information under the paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

The Select Committee considered the financial implications of the proposed changes and asked relevant questions.

Recommendation:

Cabinet agree the proposed transformation of Surrey’s Children’s Residential Services provided there are no material changes to the recommended decision or supporting information as reported to the Select Committee.

36/21 PUBLICITY FOR PART 2 ITEM [Item 7b]

Resolved:

That the recommendation agreed under Item 7a be published in the minutes of the meeting.

37/21 BREAK [Item 8]

The Committee recessed at 1.34pm and resumed at 2.02pm.

38/21 EMOTIONAL WELLBEING AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES [Item 9]

Witnesses:

Maureen Attewell, Deputy Cabinet Member for Children and Lifelong Learning

Hayley Connor, Director – Commissioning

Jessica Thom, Children’s Emotional Health Alliance Programme
Director (Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust)

Kerry Clarke, Children and Young People Head of Emotional Mental Health and Wellbeing Commissioning (Surrey Heartlands Clinical Commissioning Group)

Kate Scribbins, Chief Executive Officer, Healthwatch Surrey

Katharine Newman, Intelligence Officer, Healthwatch Surrey

Also in attendance:

Bernadette Muir, Chairman of the Adults and Health Select Committee

Angela Goodwin, Vice-Chairman of the Adults and Health Select Committee

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. A Vice-Chairman asked what the level of mental health need was for children and young people in Surrey and how new Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health (EWMH) services would meet that need, what the key risks were and why the contract had been awarded for seven years with an option to extend for a further three.
2. The Director – Commissioning explained that, following the COVID19 pandemic, one in seven children nationally had an emotional or mental health need and the acuity of children and young people’s needs had also increased. The new service model did not assume that all children with such a need required a medical or therapeutic intervention; the alliance approach, focus on early intervention and THRIVE model were adopted to mobilise the entire system to respond to demand.
3. Key risks included demand for services, staff recruitment and retention and managing the transition to the new way of working. A longer-term contract provided Alliance partners adequate time to implement new systems and ways of working and to recruit to services.

4. The Chairman of the Adults and Health Select Committee ('the A&H Chairman') asked how the different members of the Alliance – which included organisations who were involved in Surrey's previous Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services – would work together and for an overview of the Alliance's governance arrangements.
5. The Director – Commissioning explained that new leadership and enhanced accountability were provided through the introduction of the role of the Children's Emotional Health Alliance Programme Director ('the Programme Director') to lead the Alliance's partnership work and to ensure partners had an equal voice, the introduction of the role of the Children and Young People Head of Emotional Mental Health and Wellbeing Commissioning ('the Head of EMHW Commissioning') to focus on emotional wellbeing and mental health commissioning, and the council becoming the lead commissioner for emotional wellbeing and mental health services. The Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust ('SaBP') had also introduced the new role of Executive Director for Children's Community Services.
6. The Executive Finance, Contracts, Quality and Performance Accountability Committee led on contract monitoring and delivery and was attended by the Director – Commissioning and Head of EMHW Commissioning, amongst others. The Director – Commissioning stated that with the introduction of a user voice and participation team, the voice of children and young people was 'hardwired' into the Alliance, which aimed to prioritise improving the experience of children and families as well as service performance. A young person with experience of service use had been recruited and was forming a shadow Alliance Board of young people and families to contribute to service delivery and development. The Alliance was open to changing and improving over the course of the contract. There were also a number of reference groups with key strategic partners. The Head of EMHW liaised with the Deputy Cabinet Member on a monthly basis and the Alliance reported to the Health and Wellbeing Board. The Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership and the system-wide Strategic Mental Health Improvement Group received regular updates on the work of Alliance also.
7. The A&H Chairman asked whether a performance dashboard was to be produced and whether a representative of a Select Committee could become involved in one of the reference groups. Performance dashboards were being developed and the A&H Chairman was invited to contact the Head of EMHW Commissioning regarding becoming involved in a reference group.

Liz Townsend left the meeting at 14.26

8. A Vice-Chairman asked whether the work of third sector partners within the Alliance was fully funded or whether they were also reliant on other funding sources. The work of all partners was fully funded under the contract, but third sector partners did have access to other funding streams.
9. The Vice-Chairman asked how confident the witnesses were that a resilient model of partnership working had been developed. The Director – Commissioning explained that the Alliance was based on a model first developed in Plymouth and related research; officers had experience of alliance/partnership working and were working to develop the partnership but cautioned that the contract was being mobilised in the context of a global pandemic and workforce and demand issues. She believed that the achievements made so far were a testament to the developing partnership, highlighting that 45 peer mentors were in place, nearly all of Surrey's District and Borough Councils had a coordinator, and ten mental health support teams were to come online soon. The Programme Director added that the Alliance was building its relationships effectively and was supported by an external organisation in doing so.
10. A Member asked whether the witnesses could provide a clear overview of the structure of the Alliance and the responsibilities, accountability and relationships of its members. The Director – Commissioning responded that, in order to meet the level of demand in Surrey, it was necessary for a range of partners with a range of expertise to be involved in the delivery of EWMH services. The Alliance's 'robustly structured' contract set out the accountability of partners and expectations in terms of their performance, including clear specifications, budget allocations, activity and outcomes. The Alliance's vision and strategy, which were to be refreshed, drew the partnership together. Further, the Alliance was accountable to NHS England. Monitoring performance was connected with the governance structure. Supporting third sector partners to report to the NHS's expectations had been a challenge.
11. The A&H Chairman asked how the Alliance would manage performance issues resulting from changes to demand and whether partner's budgets could be revised in the future. The Director – Commissioning explained that the contract was constructed so as to enable funding to be allocated where required; over the course of the contract, the Alliance expected funding for more-intensive interventions to be redistributed to early intervention as the latter reduced demand for the former; however, this was made more challenging by the increase in children's needs due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Alliance was developing its collection of quality data to enable it to identify any bottlenecks and how demand in certain service areas could affect other services in the future. The

Programme Director added that the THRIVE model not only related to how frontline services were delivered but also how professionals operated at all levels: for example, in light of significant pressures in the neurodevelopmental service area, the Alliance had convened to review the entire system to identify how capacity within it could be used to ameliorate those pressures. The Alliance was mindful that it was to deliver its contract within a financial envelope and that with time it would be able to better model future demand and subsequently reallocate funding or request further funding as necessary.

12. The A&H Chairman asked whether third sector members of the Alliance would receive additional funding if demand for their services increased significantly. The Director – Commissioning explained that there was a set amount of funding (circa £4m) for early intervention and an expectation that more funding would flow to early intervention over time. The Director emphasised the position of third sector providers as partners at the heart of the Alliance and explained that through data and demand monitoring, the Alliance would be able to make decisions in respect of resource allocation.
13. A Member asked how the Alliance would ensure that funding for early intervention would be used for that purpose. The Director – Commissioning explained that the Executive Finance, Contracts, Quality and Performance Accountability Committee would ensure funding was distributed appropriately. She highlighted significant progress in reducing some backlogs through improvements to how contacts were received and cases progressed under the new model. The Programme Director added that third sector partners had entered into a contractual agreement to form the Surrey Wellbeing Partnership within the Alliance and it was important to allow that partnership to make their case for additional funding if that was required and stated that how such conversations were handled and how priority areas requiring additional focus or resource, such as backlogs for assessment, were identified. The Head of EMHW Commissioning added that since the new services had become operational there has been a focus on backlog, the children with the greatest needs were seen in a timely way and the children who were waiting longer had less-severe needs and were at lower risk and were being supported by third sector partners.
14. The Member asked what independent external monitoring of the Alliance was undertaken. The Director – Commissioning stated that monitoring was improving under the new contract and would provide clearer understandings of progress and that the NHS had regional and national oversight of the Alliance and Ofsted had scrutinised services during focused visits.

15. A Vice-Chairman asked how third sector partners with differing practices would be supported to work together effectively, how the views and needs of stakeholders would be given due regard over the course of the contract, how members of the shadow Alliance Board would be recruited and how it would be ensured that shadow Board members represented the views of all relevant children and young people. The Director – Commissioning explained that the Surrey Wellbeing Partnership had recruited a chairperson and an executive director and resources were being invested to achieve consistency. There was a system convener for children, whose remit included ensuring the views and needs of children were at the heart of services and considered during codesign. The Programme Director commented that the Alliance needed to be cautious and ensure that young people's contributions did reflect the whole population, including by supporting young people and providing them with structure and proactively engaging with them; an experienced participation lead was to be recruited to ensure engagement captured the views and needs of all of Surrey's children and young people.
16. A Member asked how the Alliance worked with external organisations, such as public health partners, to support the maintenance of children and young people's emotional wellbeing and mental health. The Director – Commissioning explained that such work formed part of the Health and Wellbeing Board's agenda, the Assistant Director – Commissioning was a public health specialist, and the Alliance was to integrate further with the health system. The Alliance was able to connect with other organisations – the district and borough-based early intervention coordinators and reference groups would have good understandings of localities and relevant organisations.
17. The A&H Vice-Chairman asked how the Alliance interacted with the General Practice integrated Mental Health Service (GPiMHS) and primary care networks (PCNs) and how the Alliance's work around transitions from children's services to adult's services connected with that of the council and NHS. The Director – Commissioning explained that the link with GPiMHS and PCNs was through the Alliance's development of a transition service, which children and young people would be involved in codesigning; and the Alliance was connected with the council's Preparation for Adulthood Programme.
18. The Chairman invited the representatives of Healthwatch Surrey to introduce themselves and their organisation. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) explained that Healthwatch was an independent, statutory organisation with responsibility and statutory powers to ensure that the voices of both adult and child service users were heard across the NHS and social care by collecting feedback and

insights to share with commissioners and providers. By acting as a critical friend, Healthwatch ensured that commissioners and providers had their own robust and inclusive user involvement and feedback mechanisms in place. The CEO explained that most of Healthwatch's insights relevant to the topic related to the former Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. The CEO recognised that Healthwatch was usually contacted when service users' experience had been negative and, thus, that feedback was not entirely representative.

19. A Member asked if the witnesses had any initial reflections on the new EWMH services, what the key issues were for users of EWMH services, and if any risks were apparent to them. The CEO explained that Healthwatch was most interested in how user feedback mechanisms were structured, how user voice would be represented at every level, and how young people in advocacy roles would be supported to represent their peers. Looking ahead, Healthwatch was interested to observe how issues with the previous provision – including fragmented services, long waiting times, and thresholds for support – improved under the new services.
20. A Member asked if Healthwatch provided its feedback under a formal system. Healthwatch was connected with other user voice organisations and the CEO explained that Healthwatch was empowered by statute to require providers to respond to the issues it escalated, had certain expectations when escalating a 'concerning case' and monitored how providers responded to, and learnt from, such cases.
21. A Member asked how well the partnership alliance was communicating with children, young people, and their families regarding changes to service provision and the impact for them. The Intelligence Officer explained that families were concerned whether the service provision would change or if it was just a 'rebadging exercise'. It was acknowledged that there were some people who had negative associations with the name CAMHs, and thus it was the appropriate time to change both the name and the approach from the services. The Deputy Cabinet Member explained that the name CAMHs had been maintained for the clinical aspect of services.
22. The Chairman asked whether Healthwatch had been informed of the top-line performance measures put in place. The CEO explained that Healthwatch held a seat on the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Quality and Performance Board for Surrey Heartlands and, therefore, were sighted of performance measures.

23. A Member asked if there were any particular areas Healthwatch thought it would be useful for the council's Select Committees to scrutinise. The CEO offered to provide a response after the meeting.

Action:

- i. Chief Executive Officer of Healthwatch Surrey to suggest to the Select Committee priorities for future scrutiny of children and young people's Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health services.

Recommendations:

1. The Select Committee agree an approach to future scrutiny of Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health services with the Adults and Health Select Committee.
2. That the Director – Commissioning arrange the development of a dashboard of key performance information and make it available to the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture and Adults and Health Select Committees.
3. That the Director – Commissioning provide the Select Committee with a report containing a clear overview of the Alliance Partnership's governance including further detail on the specific role of each organisation within the Partnership Alliance, the associated performance measures and targets and the resources allocated to them by April 2022.

39/21 ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATION TRACKER AND FORWARD WORK PLAN [Item 10]

Resolved:

Select Committee support officers to follow up all the outstanding recommendations by the next meeting and where possible agree deadlines for all future actions and recommendations at the time of making.

40/21 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING [Item 11]

The Select Committee noted that its next meeting would be held on Monday, 13 December 2021.

Meeting ended at: 3.40pm

Chairman

Question to Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee – 18 October 2021

Following the Member Briefing in response to the Good Law Project challenge,

- what is Surrey County Council doing to reduce the number of looked after children placed outside Surrey?

The briefing cited the statistics as 47.4% outside county, and 35.2% outside county and more than 20 miles from their home location. Surrey County Council performs worse than CIPFA neighbours and worse than national averages.

- What targets and timescales placed out of county have been set for the reduction of looked after children?
- Which senior officers are responsible for reducing the number of looked after children placed outside of the county and how is the Cabinet Member for Children for Families holding them to account for doing so?
- How many children living inside and how many living outside Surrey are in unregulated and unregistered accommodation?

Fiona Davidson

Response

In response to the point regards targets and timescales, Surrey County Council remains committed to improving the sufficiency of provision for looked after children in Surrey, as we think it is an essential part of our job as corporate parents and something that we know will make a real difference to children and young people. The concrete steps we are taking in terms of our practice, processes and provision continue to have an impact on the current position. This can be seen in our current data: as at 1 October 2021, 54.2% of our children are living within Surrey. In real terms, this means 45 more looked after children placed in Surrey when compared to 1 April 2021.

Tina Benjamin, Director of Corporate Parenting and Hayley Connor, Director of Commissioning, are the responsible senior officers for improving this outcome. They are also the senior officers who sponsor a Transformation programme called Placements, Values and Outcomes. This programme is supporting the development of the resources, practice and changes required to deliver the Sufficiency Strategy. This programme reports outcomes to both the Transformation unit and the Children's Leadership team.

Clare Curran, the lead member for children, regularly discusses the performance in this area in addition to other KPIs where targets are not met, in regular performance meetings with the Executive Director.

Additionally, Sufficiency is on the annual plan for the Corporate Parenting Board, this affords all board members to both understand and challenge officers with regard to performance in this area. It is actually the theme of the next meeting which is on 21/10/21.

The current position is that we do not have any children under the age of 16 years who are in unregulated provision. This has consistently been the case since the 9th September when it became unlawful to make use of unregulated provision for children under the age of 16 years.

As at 1 October 2021 there were 86 looked after children over the age of 16 placed within Surrey in unregulated supported accommodation and supported lodgings provision, with a further 54 placed in this provision out of county. Children over sixteen are only moved to such accommodation when it is deemed an appropriate care plan by the Social Worker team. This needs to be agreed by the Independent Reviewing Officer. Many young people request such placements when they reach sixteen. They are not agreed if it is felt it is not within their best interests and they do not have the emotional and independent skills to live in such accommodation. Supported accommodation includes key working hours which for many children are individually commissioned and reduced as they gain skills and confidence. Whilst this provision is sometimes referred to as unregulated, this does not mean it is not quality assured, rather that it is not regulated by Ofsted. Surrey County Council takes a robust approach to ensure the quality of both its in-house supported lodgings service and externally commissioned services from third party providers.

**Liz Bowes, Chairman – Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture
Select Committee**

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MINUTES of the meeting of the **CHILDREN, FAMILIES, LIFELONG LEARNING & CULTURE SELECT COMMITTEE** held at 10.00 am on 13 December 2021 as a REMOTE & INFORMAL MEETING.

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Committee at its meeting on Monday, 17 January 2022.

Elected Members:

- * Ayesha Azad (Vice-Chairman)
- * Liz Bowes (Chairman)
- * Fiona Davidson
- * Jonathan Essex
- * Rachael Lake
- Andy Lynch
- * Michaela Martin
- * Mark Sugden
- * Alison Todd
- * Liz Townsend
- Chris Townsend (Vice-Chairman)
- * Jeremy Webster
- * Fiona White

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

41/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]

Apologies were received from Chris Townsend.

42/21 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING: MONDAY, 18 OCTOBER 2021 [Item 2]

Minutes to be agreed at the next public meeting.

43/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

Fiona White declared a personal interest in relation to an aspect of Item 5. The Member was to leave during the discussion of that aspect of the Item.

Declaration: Surrey County Council representative on the Limnerslease Management Committee, part of the Artist Village at Watts Gallery.

44/21 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]

Witness:

Tina Benjamin, Director – Corporate Parenting

1. A question had been received from Fiona Davidson.
2. As a supplementary question, the Member asked whether the same data could be provided with reference to full-time equivalent social workers, rather than based on the number of social workers.
3. The Director – Corporate Parenting replied that the data could be provided at a later date.
4. A Member asked whether there was guidance for part-time social workers regarding caseload numbers. The Director highlighted that experience of social workers was a greater factor when distributing the caseload, which was also dependent on the varied demands of each child. Social worker caseloads was closely managed by managers.

Action:

- i. The Director of Corporate Parenting to provide data, including commentary on caseload, on the number of full-time social workers by the next public meeting, in January 2022.

45/21 SCRUTINY OF 2022/23 DRAFT BUDGET AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY TO 2026/27 [Item 5]

Witnesses:

Becky Rush, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources

Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children and Families

Denise Turner-Stewart, Cabinet Member for Education and Learning

Mark Nuti, Cabinet Member for Communities

Rachael Wardell, Executive Director for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning

Marie Snelling, Executive Director for Customer and Communities

Susan Wills, Assistant Director for Cultural Services and Registrations

Rachel Wigley, Director – Finance Insights and Performance

Daniel Peattie, Strategic Finance Business Partner – Children, Families and Lifelong Learning

Nikki O'Connor, Strategic Finance Business Partner – Improvement and TPP/Resources

Mark Hak-Sanders, Strategic Finance Business Partner – Corporate

Key points raised in the discussion:

1. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources explained that the council's draft Budget for 2022/23 contained a gap of £19.5 million, including a £2.2 million gap in the Children, Families and Lifelong Learning (CFLL) Directorate and a £8.6 million gap in the High Needs Block. There was a focus on self-funding opportunities within the Capital Programme, as well as those which would deliver revenue savings in the future.
2. The Strategic Finance Business Partner – Corporate explained that the budget setting process was underpinned by core planning assumptions developed under the PESTLE Framework (political, environmental, social, technological, legal and economic factors). Funding projections were based on expected council tax, business rate and government grant income. The Local Government Finance Settlement was expected later in the week, which would establish central government funding and provide clarity on the council's funding position. Each directorate had been asked to identify efficiencies to contribute towards closing the gap for 2022/23 and the medium-term. The Capital Programme was described as being at the limit of what the council could afford. Consultation with residents and stakeholders on draft proposals and Equality Impact

Assessments would conclude at the end of December. The final budget was to be presented to Cabinet in January 2022 and approved by Cabinet in February 2022.

3. The Strategic Finance Business Partner highlighted that the budget setting process was built around the Community Vision 2030 and the council's priority objectives. The draft corporate budgetary position presented net pressures of £71.1 million, which was expected to be offset by an assumed funding increase of £2.4 million and efficiencies of £49.8 million, leaving a net gap of £19.5 million to close. The pressures were largely associated with pay and contract inflation and increased demand for services. Efficiencies which had been rated as red (achievable but challenging and/or complex to deliver) accounted for £11.1 million of the overall efficiencies, similar to the £10.8 million in the 2021/22 budget.
4. At month seven of 2021/22, an overspend of £17 million for the directorate budget envelope was forecast. The overspend was largely across Adult Social Care (£3 million), CFLL (£7.1 million), and the DSG High Needs Block offset (£8.8 million). These were offset largely by an underspend in Environment, Transport and Infrastructure due to an improvement in waste prices. The overall council position at the end of the 2021/22 financial year was expected to be balanced, with reserves supplemented with unused contingency.
5. The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2022-27 was based on the same core planning assumptions. The assumed funding gap over the 5-year MTFS was £157.4 million, which reflected the anticipated budget requirement and spending pressures and the expected funding reduction from 2023/34.
6. The Select Committee was informed that the total contingency available for 2022/23 was approximately £58 million, which would be supplemented by any used amounts from the 2021/22 budget.
7. Consultation had found that protection of funding for services that support vulnerable residents, including adult social care and services for children, was of high importance to residents, as were joining-up services to improve outcomes, putting vulnerable people at the heart of decision-making, and greater involvement of residents in decision-making and delivery affecting local places. Residents also supported the shift to early

intervention/prevention, wanted guidance on how they could make a difference in their areas and wanted the council to lobby Government for support for the county to transition to a greener future. A call for evidence which was open to all stakeholders would run until the 28 December and its findings would be included in the final budget report.

8. The Director – Finance Insights and Performance outlined the Twin Track approach to budget setting to be used by the council going forward.
9. A Member asked how much of the current financial year's red ragged efficiencies were in the CFLAG Directorate Budget and how much of that sum was likely to be saved. The Strategic Finance Business Partner – Corporate stated that there was a correlation in the distribution of the red-rated efficiencies between the two financial years, as in 2021/22 they were also predominantly found in adult social care and the CFLAG Directorate. It was highlighted that a lot of the in-year overspend pertained to the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which had not been anticipated when that Budget was agreed – adequate contingency was available to meet that pressure. The Strategic Finance Business Partner – CFLAG stated that £3.6 million of undelivered efficiencies were expected within the Directorate in the 2021/22 financial year, mostly associated with levels of social care demand.
10. A Member queried how much of the adult social care precept had been levied already and how much remained. The Strategic Finance Business Partner – Corporate stated that the 2022/23 draft Budget assumed no use of the adult social care precept. In the 2021/22 Budget, of the available 3%, a precept of 0.5% was used; the Spending Review earlier in 2021 provided a further flexibility of 1% per year over the course of the three-year Spending Review period, making an adult social care precept of 3.5% available for the 2022/23 Budget.
11. The Member asked to what extent a reduction of the government grant funding over the medium term had been factored into the budgets for 2022/23 and 2023/24. The Strategic Finance Business Partner explained that for the 2022/23 budget there was no such funding reduction expected, but from 2023/24 onwards there was a high-level assumption that government funding for the council would disappear altogether over the

course of a five-year transitional period. This was suspected to be somewhat offset by an increase in the council tax base.

12. A Member asked how the council-wide draft Budget and MTFs would affect the delivery of the Community Vision 2030 and the council's four priority objectives. The Strategic Finance Business Partner – Corporate stated that the council set its budget with regard to the Community Vision 2030 and the four priority objectives. This was shown through decisions regarding whether directorates were required to close budget gaps in their entirety or whether additional funding could be directed to those services. Thus, it was unlikely that the budget gaps for 2022/23 for Adult Social Care, CFLL and DSG High Needs Block would be closed through further efficiencies. The Member queried how the draft Budget and the MTFs took account of the resident's priorities. The Strategic Finance Business Partner stated that the consultation with residents which took place prior to the draft Budget being presented to Cabinet reflected resident's key priority of protecting the services that delivered to the most vulnerable residents. The total investment into such services had increased at a higher rate than the council's total funding.
13. The Member asked how the future funding had been estimated in the draft Budget, the level of confidence in those estimates, the accuracy of previous estimates and whether any further clarity around the Local Government Finance Settlement had been received since publication of the draft Budget report pack. The Strategic Finance Business Partner said that the final funding position of the previous financial year was as had been assumed, the one exception was the additional COVID-19 funding included in the Settlement. The current financial year was difficult to predict due to the varied mechanisms central government could utilise to distribute the £1.6 billion of additional local government funding included in the Chancellor's Autumn budget.
14. The Executive Director for Customer and Communities introduced the Customer and Communities draft Budget for 2022/23. The net budget for the Directorate was £10.8 million, including income in excess of £10 million. Directorate pressures, largely associated with pay inflation, were £0.7 million, adding this to the Directorate's share of the corporate funding gap resulted in an overall gap of £0.9 million. The Directorate had, as a result, identified £0.8 million of efficiencies, which left £0.1 million of the overall gap left to close. The draft Budget assumed

service income was to return to pre-COVID levels, this remained a risk and challenge which would be closely monitored. The draft Capital Programme contained £34 million of investment into the Libraries Transformation Programme – a five-year programme to modernise libraries had been agreed at Cabinet in November 2021.

15. A Member enquired about the basis of the assumption that service income would return to pre-COVID levels and the degree of confidence in that assumption. The Strategic Finance Business Partner – Improvement and TPP/Resources highlighted the challenge of this assumption and highlighted that there had already been positive movements in the latter half of the 2021/22 financial year, especially in the Registration service, although £500,000 of COVID funding had been used to support the Directorate in the 2021/22 financial year due to a sustained loss of income.

16. The Member asked about the terms, methodology and the objectives of the comprehensive review of the Heritage Service. The Assistant Director for Cultural Services Libraries and Registration explained that the review was based on ensuring value for money within the service whilst improving the offer, such as through digitalisation.

Fiona White left the meeting at 11:15.

17. A Member raised the issue of a broken lift at Weybridge Library that had been out of order for over a year, preventing hire income. The Cabinet Member for Communities told the Member this would be followed up and he would respond to the Member directly. There had been a similar issue with a lift in Guildford Library and there was great difficulty obtaining the correct parts in order to fix the lifts. The Executive Director for Customer and Communities added that there had been a backlog of maintenance issues at the council's libraries, which were being addressed with Land and Property colleagues. A Member asked for an update on the broken lift in Guildford Library. The Cabinet Member for Communities explained that there had been a number of issues associated with fixing this lift and in the longterm, it would need to be replaced. The Cabinet Member agreed to provide an update to the Member later that day, which would include an estimated timeline.

Fiona White rejoined the meeting 11:22.

18. The Cabinet Member for Children and Families introduced the CFLL directorate pack by highlighting the increased demand for the Directorate's services. Significant pressures arose from staffing costs, recruitment and retention of social workers and children's placements in the 2021/22 year, which had been factored into the 2022/23 draft Budget. The Cabinet Member for Education and Learning explained that there was rigorous monitoring of the progress of the transformation programme aiming to bring High Needs Block spending back into balance within the next five years. There had been discussions with the Department of Education (DfE) regarding a Safety Valve agreement. A review was underway to reduce home to school transport spending and increase independence for young people and was to be taken to Cabinet on 14 December 2021.
19. A Member asked what impact government's SEND review could have on the assumptions around funding for the 2022/23 budget and the MTFS. The Strategic Finance Business Partner – CFLL explained that the current assumptions around ongoing funding for the High Needs Block included an 8% year on year increase in funding, which was based on previous years and was likely to be broadly correct for the next couple of years. Following this, the indications suggest that it could then reduce from the current level.
20. A Member brought attention to a number of cases where eligible children were still yet to have been provided with home to school transport for the current academic year, which has resulted in children missing their education. The Executive Director for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning acknowledged the situation and recognised the impact this was having on some families. The number of eligible children without transport was lower than in previous years and the commissioning team continued to work hard to try and resolve the issue on a case-by-case basis. The issues were usually due to negotiations with providers or families about suitable provision. The Cabinet Member for Education and Learning added that the review was considering the council delivering some provision itself and utilising community vehicles and was to ensure parents were well informed about the home to school transport offer.
21. A Member asked how the draft Budget and MTFS would meet the needs of the Directorate's service users by improving outcomes whilst addressing its key financial challenges and the

council's strategic priorities. The Executive Director highlighted that the approach taken was about working differently to better meet families' needs at a lower cost, such as through the prior introduction of the new Family Safeguarding Model and the creation of more in-county placements. The Member asked officers to explain the main drivers of pressures in the draft Budget and MTFs. The Executive Director stated that children's services were yet to witness the reduction in demand expected as a result of practice changes implemented prior to the pandemic, although they had mitigated demand; during the pandemic, the council had more children in care, as well as an increase in the number of children with additional needs supported in education and with Educational Health and Care plans. The Member highlighted the challenge of the high number of agency social workers and the financial pressure this created. The Executive Director stated that agency workers cost around £23,000 more than permanent staff and some of the planned efficiencies aimed to reduce this pressure in a number of ways. An improved OFSTED rating would likely improve the recruitment and retention of permanent staff. The Member asked what changes to the level of need and demand were expected in the next financial year and MTFs. The Executive Director explained that the Directorate had experienced an increase in the level of need and demand as a result of the pandemic.

22. A Member sought further clarity and context around the efficiencies rated red and amber and which would result in service reductions. The Member questioned the Service's readiness of delivering the substantial efficiency related to the No Wrong Door programme, as well as many other efficiencies related to looked after children. The Executive Director explained that efficiencies had been focused on areas where the Service was facing the greatest financial pressures. The Director – Corporate Parenting shared that through the shadow-form/pilot No Wrong Door service, a significant number of children had been diverted from entering care. The planned efficiencies were described as challenging and ambitious, but there were some which were more likely to be achieved than the table suggested, such as quality and performance staffing. The Executive Director shared that the placement costs for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) were covered by the Home Office, but the increased demand on social workers was unmet.

23. A Member asked about the numbers of children who had secured placements in non-maintained independent school settings and the resulting cost to the Education Service. The Executive Director stated that there was a significant cost difference between a non-maintained independent setting and a maintained special school of around £30,000 per placement. At the pre-16 stage, the Education Service had over 1,000 children in non-maintained independent settings and a further 277 young people at post-16. The Cabinet Member for Adult and Learning added that the Service had a stepping down policy to move children into Surrey schools where appropriate.
24. A Member asked how many 18-25 year olds could be impacted by the planned efficiency of no longer funding housing provision which had originally been commissioned for care leavers but was not being allocated accordingly by District and Borough Councils, and in what way they might be impacted. The Executive Director explained that this would reduce the housing options for some young adults, but these were young adults to whom the council did not such duties as it did care leavers.
25. The Member asked how the planned efficiencies related to the home to school transport review might adversely affect learners. The Executive Director explained there were statutory requirements, such as in respect of the length of journeys, which were always complied with. The planned efficiency was focused on exploring alternative transport options for these children which could reduce costs, whilst ensuring suitability and building independence.
26. A Member asked which of the efficiencies directly impacted on areas of delivery where performance was significantly below target. The Executive Director stated that performance should not be impacted in any of those areas, as there would be no reduction in staffing. The Member questioned whether there was a need for additional staffing in these areas, especially Educational Health and Care plan caseworkers. The Executive Director stated that stability and training of staffing was more important than an increase in the number of staff.

Actions:

- i. Strategic Finance Business Partner – Children, Families and Lifelong Learning to share the number of children with SEND

placed in non-maintained independent settings with the Select Committee.

- ii. The Executive Director for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning to provide the number of 18-25 year olds with no prior Surrey County Council contact that would be affected by the planned efficiency.

Recommendation:

1. After the meeting, the Committee shall agree wording for inclusion in a joint report from the council's Select Committees to the Cabinet in respect of the draft Budget 2022/23 and Medium term Financial Strategy to 2026/27. That wording shall be drafted under the oversight of the Chairman and Vice-Chairmen and then shared with the Committee for agreement.

46/21 ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TRACKER AND FORWARD WORK PLAN [Item 6]

1. A Member brought attention to a number of actions and recommendations which had been on the tracker for an extensive period of time without a clear indication as to when responses would be provided and sought clarification regarding the progress of outstanding actions. The Executive Director stated that these outstanding actions had been chased. A Member proposed that a response to all outstanding actions would be provided by the next public meeting of the Select Committee, unless there were significant reasons why it could not be possible. The Chairman noted the views of the Members and the Executive Director and stated that an appropriate approach would be established moving forward.
2. The Cabinet Member for Families and Children shared that she had suggested at Cabinet that a cross-party task group of the Select Committee could be a helpful way to monitor the implementation of the Child Poverty Action Plan. The Scrutiny Officer explained that a sub-group comprising Members from across the Select Committees had been discussed with the Committee's Chairman and Vice-Chairmen and scrutiny officer colleagues.

47/21 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING [Item 7]

The Select Committee noted that its next meeting would be held on Tuesday, 18 January 2022.

Meeting ended at: 12.35 pm

Chairman

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Question to Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee – 13 December 2021

In the light of the recent appalling death of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes there has been a great deal of focus on the workload and inexperience of many front line children’s social workers. Can you please advise:

- How many cases an ordinary level children’s social worker at Surrey County Council is dealing with at any one time?
- What is the maximum children’s social worker caseload that Surrey County Council sets?
- If and how Surrey County Council is ensuring that senior children’s social workers with significant experience accompany less experienced workers on family visits to provide on-the-job training to spot parental deception and ensure that the child is spoken to directly, without parental involvement?

Response

- We are able to monitor the caseloads of all practitioners supporting children, young people and families. As of 7 December 2021, the average caseloads for our social workers and other practitioners are as follows:

Team	Cases	Case Holders	Average Caseload*
Assessment Teams	1,192	72	16.6
Children with Disabilities	803	49	16.4
Family Safeguarding	1,917	119	16.1
Fostering & Adoption	133	26	5.1
Leaving Care	783	51	15.4
Looked After Children	768	62	12.4
Other	11	4	2.8
Safeguarding Adolescent	642	42	15.3
Overall	6,249	425	14.7

*(*Caseload is based on headcount, not FTE)*

- There is no fixed ‘maximum’ caseload for social workers or other case holding practitioners within children’s services. We do however have an aspiration for no social worker to hold more than 15 cases at any one time. This does differ depending on the complexity and nature of the social work cases and

managers are routinely assessing the workload of practitioners to ensure it is suitable and manageable.

ITEM 4

- Regarding the support we provide to Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSWs):
 - In terms of induction NQSWs have a two week induction which covers Motivational Interviewing, Emotional Resilience and SelfCare, Personal Safety, Abuse & Neglect, Social Work Law, Genograms/Ecomaps/Chronologies, Home Visits and Chairing Meetings, Safeguarding Approach- Social Work Practice Model, What does 'Good Practice' look like and speakers from Health, Police, Children's Single Point of Access, Fostering, User Participation.
 - Then in their Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE), the NQSWs are supported by their Team Managers who provide them with reflective supervision on a weekly basis for the first six weeks, then fortnightly from six weeks to six months and thereafter on a monthly basis. In addition, the quadrant based ASYE Assessor facilitates monthly ASYE Learning Events which incorporate Action Learning Sets and provides the NQSW with monthly supervision on an individual or group basis.
 - NQSWs are provided with two days each month of protected time; one day to attend the monthly ASYE Learning Events and one day to work on their ASYE portfolio.
 - The caseload for NQSWs is 25% of a 'standard' caseload at three months, 50% at six months and then from six to twelve months in the role, this increases steadily (to 90% of a normal caseload) and complexity.
 - The quadrant based ASYE Assessor undertakes the assessment of the NQSW at the review stages of three, six and eleven months, in partnership with the NQSW and their Team Manager.
 - NQSWs also have a 12-month probation period.

Liz Bowes, Chairman – Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee

MINUTES of the meeting of the **CHILDREN, FAMILIES, LIFELONG LEARNING & CULTURE SELECT COMMITTEE** held at 10.00 am on 17 January 2022 at REMOTE & INFORMAL MEETING.

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Committee at its meeting on Thursday, 7 April 2022.

Elected Members:

- * Ayesha Azad (Vice-Chairman)
- * Liz Bowes (Chairman)
- * Fiona Davidson
- * Jonathan Essex
- * Rachael Lake
- Andy Lynch
- * Michaela Martin
- * Mark Sugden
- * Alison Todd
- * Liz Townsend
- * Chris Townsend (Vice-Chairman)
- * Jeremy Webster
- Fiona White

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

1/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]

Apologies were received from Fiona White.

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2/22 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING: 13 DECEMBER 2021 [Item 2]

It was noted that a Member had requested that the Cabinet Member for Communities' commitment to email her regarding the lift in Guildford Library be added to the minutes.

3/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

None received.

4/22 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]

Witnesses:

Tina Benjamin, Director – Corporate Parenting

Matt Ansell, Director – Family Resilience and Safeguarding

Liz Mills, Director – Education and Lifelong Learning

1. A question had been received from a resident, Maria Esposito.
2. As a supplementary question, the questioner asked what happened when there the systems in place failed. She added that systems were prone to failure and that the boundaries of services were not joined up.
3. The Director for Corporate Parenting responded that there was little that could be added to the written response as it described the systems in place. She apologised for the occasions where failures had occurred.
4. A question had been received from Fiona Davidson.
5. Asking a supplementary question, the Member queried whether November 2020 was the latest data available.
6. The Director for Family Resilience and Safeguarding apologised for the typographical error and explained that the data was from November 2021.
7. A second question had been received from Fiona Davidson.
8. The Member, as a supplementary question, highlighted that data provided in response to an action from the October 2021 meeting of the Select Committee showed that approximately 51% of Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans were completed in the south west quadrant, whereas data in the answer to her current question showed a decline in timeliness. The Member asked whether improvement had occurred, as the narrative in the response to her question stated.

9. The Director for Education and Lifelong Learning replied that improvement had taken place, although there was a dip in performance in the autumn term, which was explained in the answer. The Director added that a report on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) was to come to the Select Committee in April 2022, when further information could be provided on performance improvements.
10. The Member highlighted that data had been requested as part of a supplementary question at the meeting of the Select Committee in December 2021 and had not yet been provided. The Chairman noted this and requested that it be followed up by officers.

**5/22 INCLUSION, POST-16 DESTINATIONS AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT
[Item 6]**

Witnesses:

Denise Turner-Stewart, Cabinet Member for Education and Learning

Liz Mills, Director – Education and Lifelong Learning

Tina Benjamin, Director – Corporate Parenting

Jane Winterbone, Assistant Director – Education

Sandra Morrison, Assistant Director – Inclusion and Additional Needs

Maria Dawes, Chief Executive Officer, Schools Alliance for Excellence

Key points raised in the discussion:

1. The Cabinet Member for Education and Learning introduced the report and highlighted that the work described therein was underpinned by the council's corporate priority that 'no one is left behind'.
2. A Member sought clarity between the classifications of 'children missing education' and 'children missing full-time education'. The Director for Education and Lifelong Learning explained that a child missing education would not be on the roll of any school, for example if they had moved into the county and were awaiting enrolment. A child missing full-time education would be on the roll of a school but receiving less than 25 hours of education per

week; mechanisms were in place to support such children and help them return to school when appropriate. The Assistant Director for Inclusion and Additional Needs added that children with medical needs may be supported by a medical Pupil Referral Unit (PRU). Other children could be supported by the Access to Education Service if, for example, they had a mental health issue. On occasion, as agreed with the parents, a child may attend school on a part-time basis to accommodate specific needs. The Member asked whether a proportion of children missing full-time education was still due to a lack of suitable transport arrangements, as well as the impact of missing full-time education had on children. The Director stated that home to school transport was not a focus of this report but recognised the connection. The Director explained that each individual child would have a learner's plan and the school would have a responsibility to ensure that their outcomes were in line with their peers. It could be the case that a child's education would need to be adapted to meet their needs. Leadership and locality teams reviewed the data of these cohorts regularly.

3. A Member asked about how the council monitored the number of children who were electively home educated and their education and safety. The Director for Education and Learning explained that legislation relating to elective home education did not provide the council with all the powers to identify this cohort fully: parents were not obliged to tell the council that they were electively home educating their child, but the council encouraged parents to provide this information. Close monitoring arrangements were in place for children who had been on the roll of a school and withdrawn to receive home education. The Assistant Director for Inclusion and Additional Needs explained that a risk assessment would take place for a child whose parents wished to home educate them and the Service would encourage the parents to keep the child in school. If the parents proceeded with home education, there would be an annual monitoring visit. If such a child was known to children's services, the risks of a them being home educated would be discussed with their social worker. Where an electively home educated child had an Education Health and Care (EHC) plan, an additional annual review would take place. Concerns regarding the safeguarding of electively home educated children were shared by officers; the Director for Education and Lifelong Learning and the Chair of the Safeguarding Board had written to Government regarding such concerns. The number of children known to the council as being electively home educated in January 2022 was 1,535.

Mechanisms were in place for hospitals and GPs to alert the council about any children who appeared not to be enrolled in a school. The Director added that there were no looked after children who were electively home educated. Many children were being electively home educated as the result of the pandemic, although a proportion had since returned to school. The Chairman noted that this was a national issue and requested the response from Government be shared with the Select Committee.

4. The Member also enquired about the progress of the new Alternative Provision Strategy and how it would impact children's outcomes. The Assistant Director for Education explained that the Strategy was launched in September 2021. The Strategy included a service level agreement for PRUs which focussed on integration and pupil outcomes, as PRUs should be seen as an intervention with the aim of a child returning to a mainstream school. A quality-assured approved provider list was being developed to enable schools to decide where would be best to place a child and to understand the council's prior work with that provision, although schools would still hold responsibility for the child. Key performance indicators (KPIs) were being developed, which would include the number of young people who were not participating in post-16 education, employment or training. The Assistant Director shared that in July 2020 there was a government grant to ensure that those in alternative provision during the pandemic transitioned successfully into education, employment or training after year 11. There was a high level of success in that year and the work was being mainstreamed. The Member queried if the success had continued in 2021. The Assistant Director clarified that the increase of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) in 2021 from AP was not large or cause for concern. The Assistant Director also explained that there had been work on new curriculum pathways, which included a strong vocational offer for 14 to 16 year olds. Through the Post-16 Phase Council, there had been work with all colleges in the county to ensure a vocational offer was accessible to all regardless of location. To provide fit-for purpose PRUs, feasibility work on the existing sites had been completed and the searches for new sites was completed in December 2021.
5. A Member sought assurance that all children with SEND had home to school transport and asked whether those who had missed education had received support during such periods. The Director for Education and Lifelong Learning assured the Member

that a relatively low proportion of SEND children had been affected by home to school transport shortages. Where any issues had arisen, the Education Service had worked closely with providers to ensure children could access school as quickly as possible. Schools were responsible for providing education to their pupils who were unable to attend.

6. A Member asked how many disadvantaged children were NEET, as only percentages were given in the report. The Assistant Director – Education was to provide the data following the meeting.
7. The Member asked how the figures in the report compared with benchmarks, how looked after children and care leavers were supported into post-16 destinations and what more could be done to support them. The Assistant Director explained that a role dedicated to supporting care leavers and looked after children had recently been created in the NEET team. The Service was committed to improving recording of post-16 destinations. Many looked after children experienced significant barriers to participation in EET and many were not engaged during Year 11. There was close working with the Headteacher of Surrey Virtual School (SVS) to consider if anything could be done differently to reduce the barriers experienced by this cohort. The Member queried whether there was any information on the destinations of care leavers placed in county versus out of county. That data could be circulated subsequently. The Director for Education and Lifelong Learning added that there had been a development in SVS on functional skills, as this had been a barrier for care leavers in the past. The Corporate Parenting Board routinely scrutinised this information.
8. The Member asked whether there was capacity in the home to school transport team to cope with increased demand as more SEND provision was established in Surrey. The Director for Education and Lifelong Learning explained that a dynamic purchasing model had been introduced and had enabled more providers to enter the market. The increase in local SEND provision had enabled more children to attend school in county and the majority of children went to school within six miles of their home. The independence of children was a key focus of this work and thus, a broad range of options were being considered. The Cabinet Member added that as part of the home to school transport review, there was currently a twin-track funding bid to

increase capacity in the home to school transport team so every case could be quality assured. The Director explained that the Capital Programme was about ensuring that where children required a special school placement, they would be placed in a local maintained setting.

9. Responding to a question on schools' involvement in decisions regarding home to school transport for SEND pupils, the Director for Education and Lifelong Learning explained that schools usually led on children's annual reviews and worked with the council on next placement steps for a child, which would often lead to conversations about transport arrangements. It was noted that the majority of parents took their children to school themselves. The Member raised a concern that the EHC plans were not being taken into account when transport arrangements were made for SEND children. The Director was to provide a response subsequently. The Member also asked why the NEET rate had remained at the same level as in 2019. The Assistant Director for Education explained that due to the complexity of needs of those children, there were significant challenges. The ambition was now 100% participation, which encouraged practitioners to consider the onward journey of each child. The number of NEET former pupils for every educational setting in Surrey was now monitored, which allowed for targeted conversations with individual settings. The Director added that a co-produced initiative for young people with SEND who get stuck on pathways to EET was being piloted under the Preparation for Adulthood programme.

10. The Member also raised concern about the proportion of looked after children who were NEET and asked about the support available to those children to see that they were not left behind. The Assistant Director for Education replied that as improvements delivered under the children's improvement programme embedded, there would be fewer social care placement breakdowns, which was likely to lead to more successful transitions into post-16 destinations. The young people who tended not to transition into post-16 EET were those who had experienced multiple placement breakdowns. The Director for Corporate Parenting acknowledged that the turnover for looked after children was higher than the mainstream group. Each individual child would have a Personal Education Plan which addressed the issues for them.

11. In response to a question on mitigating the learning gap and supporting disadvantaged pupils, the CEO of the Schools Alliance for Excellence (SAfE), recognising that quantifiable evidence was not available in the absence of statutory exams, explained that SAfE monitored schools to ensure they were focusing on supporting disadvantaged children to minimise the impact of the pandemic. The Department for Education (DfE) closely monitored schools' use of COVID catch-up provision, including tutoring, for disadvantaged children. Ofsted inspectors had identified that schools were sufficiently providing for disadvantaged children, although only one non-primary (an all through) school had been inspected recently.
12. A Member asked how the performance of academies were monitored, what the outcomes were for academy pupils and how a school's status as an academy affected the council's ability to improve its pupils' outcomes. The CEO of SAfE explained that although local authorities did not have the accountability for academies in the same way as they did for maintained schools, it did not result in a lack of engagement with academies. Ofsted inspected academies in the same way as maintained schools and SAfE scrutinised inspection reports in the same way. SAfE had regular meetings with the Regional Schools Commissioner and would provide challenge to the Commissioner regarding academies with low performance. SAfE's support was available to both academies and maintained schools. The Director for Education added the Education Service was part of a wider education system, the focus of which remained on the collective success of every child in the county. The Assistant Director for Education explained that if a pattern of complaints related to a specific academy, then the complaints would be addressed with the academy. The Member raised the issue of occasions where home to school transport arrangements were unsuitable for a child's specific needs. The Cabinet Member responded that work was underway with community providers to explore alternatives and to incentivise parents to transport their own children with a mileage reimbursement.
13. A Member asked whether the council had considered or modelled the formation of a multi academy trust (MAT) in light of a forthcoming white paper which could propose that local authorities be empowered to form MATs. The Director for Education shared that there had been a joint session with the Diocese of Guildford on the sustainability of schools. The Assistant Director for Education was leading on related analysis

which included risk accessing all schools and their direction of travel. The Service's view was that schools should be centrally involved in determining their own futures and thus, such work was undertaken in collaboration with schools.

Resolved:

The Select Committee noted the report and its recommendations.

Actions:

- i. The Director for Education and Lifelong Learning to share the council's letter to Government regarding elective home education and the response to it with the Select Committee once available.
- ii. The Assistant Director for Education to provide the numbers of children in the cohorts used in the figure *16- and 17-year olds NEET by disadvantage, as at end June 2021* on page 58 of the report and the percentage of those children whose post-16 destinations were unknown.
- iii. The Assistant Director for Education to provide comparative data on the post-16 destinations of looked after children and care leavers who had been placed in county and out of county.
- iv. Director for Education and Lifelong Learning to provide information on home to school transport arrangements for SEND children, including:
 - Consideration of Education Health and Care plans when arranging provision,
 - Schools' involvement in decision-making,
 - The number of children who did not start school at the beginning of the 2021/22 school year due to home to school transport issues,
 - Data on the increase in demand for home to school transport.

6/22 CHILDREN'S IMPROVEMENT AND NO WRONG DOOR UPDATE [Item 5]

Witnesses:

Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children and Families

Rachael Wardell, Executive Director – Children, Families and Lifelong

Learning

Tina Benjamin, Director – Corporate Parenting

Matt Ansell, Director – Family Resilience and Safeguarding

Key points raised in the discussion:

1. The Cabinet Member for Children and Families introduced the report and provided context, noting the key challenges within Children's Services and the Ofsted inspection taking place between 17 and 28 January 2022.
2. A Member asked why the Corporate Parenting Service was confident, from the work of Creative Solutions, that No Wrong Door (NWD) would be successful. The Executive Director for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning provided an overview of the NWD programme and explained that Creative Solutions was the early work undertaken to think and work differently with young people and families, similar to the approach of NWD. The Director for Corporate Parenting explained that the work of Creative Solutions provided opportunity to train and prepare staff ahead of the introduction of NWD. The North Yorkshire County Council's NWD accreditation process presented constructive challenge, and this provided reassurance around the success of the model. The Service was well set up in terms of collecting data and understanding the implications of NWD, and colleagues from North Yorkshire County Council would provide support in this area. A Member asked how many of the young people supported by Creative Solutions who did not enter care would have been expected to enter care without that support, and what impact on looked after children numbers was expected of NWD. The Director explained that financial predictions were based on conservative estimates based on data from North Yorkshire County Council's NWD. Creative Solutions had engaged with 75 children in the last nine months and had finished working with 35 of those children, work with the rest of the children was ongoing. Of this cohort, only two of those children still entered the care system, which was very low compared to figures from previous years.
3. In response to a question on the first NWD hub, the Director for Corporate Parenting shared that the hub was on track to open in January 2022, a staff restructure had been completed and recruitment to additional posts had taken place, whilst there were a few vacancies still to fill, including foster carers. The

Member also asked about the progress of the 'getting to good' phase of the children's improvement programme and inspection readiness. The Executive Director explained that the ongoing Ofsted inspection of Children's Services would provide an answer regarding service improvement. The compilation of evidence in preparation for the inspection had illuminated the considerable progress made during the previous phase of improvement between the 2018 inspection and 2020. The Executive Director stated that significant positive feedback had been received regarding improvement, but acknowledged that there were still areas where the Service needed to improve further in order to receive a grading of Good.

4. The Member asked about the challenges of engaging educational settings in Graded Care Profile 2 (GCP2) training, the timescale for the complete rollout of GCP2 and how the council monitored the application of the GCP2. The Executive Director explained that the GCP2 was being utilised by practitioners and its use as evidenced in referrals through the front-door, which were monitored by the Neglect Sub-Group and Children's Safeguarding Partnership. The Director for Family Resilience and Safeguarding noted the effectiveness of using GCP2 as an intervention tool with families at an early stage and could provide an update in the future on how the tool was being used.
5. A Member enquired about the job design of the personal advisor workforce. The Executive Director explained that personal advisors provided practical support for them to engage with adult life. Issues related to a lack of continuity for young people when personal advisors were absent. There had been a redesign of the duty arrangements to provide continuity of support for young people. The Director for Corporate Parenting added that the Ofsted focused visit to the Leaving Care Service came at a time of abnormally high vacancies and the overall turnover for permanent personal advisors was relatively low.
6. A Member asked about care leavers living outside of Surrey and their access to mental health support. The Executive Director explained that care leavers living outside of Surrey often lacked knowledge of local mental health services, but their personal advisors should help them to navigate the local system. In the long-term, there was an aspiration to support more young people within Surrey. The Director for Corporate Parenting added that

most care leavers would experience mental health issues at some point in their adult life. Many of these young people were in neighbouring counties and local authorities and their personal advisors could connect them to local teams. The Member highlighted anecdotal evidence of personal advisors lacking the knowledge to effectively support service users outside of Surrey.

7. In response to a question on the council losing contact with looked after children and care leavers, the Director for Corporate Parenting explained that there was statutory responsibility owed to former looked after children up to 21 years of age, which was extended to 25 years of age by the Children and Social Work Act 2017. Some young people would decide at age 21 that they no longer want to remain in contact with the council and sometimes they changed their mind following that decision. Care leavers were reminded that contact remained available if they changed their mind. The Executive Director shared that 90% of young adult care leavers had experienced two-way contact in the last 12 weeks. Of the 83 young adults who had not experienced contact in the last 12 weeks, there were 19 that the Corporate Parenting Service was not in touch with at all.
8. A Member asked for further detail on the pie chart included on page 29 of the report which rated 25% of children with disabilities (CWD) cases as red following a review. The Executive Director explained that this data came from a bigger report and cases were rated as red for different reasons, including practice not yet meeting a child's needs and children not meeting the CWD Service's threshold. For examples, families sometimes tried to see their child supported by the CWD Service, when their needs could be more appropriately met by other teams. External reviews had taken place to ensure the needs of each child were being met.
9. The Member also asked about Phase 3 and 4 of improvement initiatives and their impact on the rate of staff turnover. The Executive Director shared that Children's Services recruitment and retention efforts had started to pay off in maintaining the level of permanent workforce, although there was still work required to reduce the use of agency staff and to retain senior level practitioners. Additionally, the Member queried comments on the impact of the inadequate Ofsted grading on staff recruitment made at a previous meeting. The Executive Director explained that it often depended on the stage an individual was in their career, as a newly qualified social worker may not want to begin

their career in an inadequate local authority. This view was confirmed by a Community Care Survey which found that it was more likely for a social worker to think twice before joining a local authority graded inadequate than previously. The Director for Family Resilience and Safeguarding explained that the children's workforce was stabilising and the workforce strategy was in the process of being refreshed and this could come to the Select Committee for scrutiny. The Cabinet Member added that this challenge was found across the wider children's workforce and partner organisations, such as recruitment of youth workers.

Alex Tear left the meeting at 11:57.

Resolved:

The Select Committee noted the report and its recommendations.

Action:

- i. The Director for Corporate Parenting to provide the number of care leavers located outside of Surrey and of those, the number requiring mental health support.

7/22 ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TRACKER AND FORWARD WORK PLAN [Item 7]

The Actions and Recommendations Tracker and Forward Work Plan were noted.

8/22 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING [Item 8]

The Select Committee noted that its next meeting would be held on Thursday, 7 April 2022.

Meeting ended at: 12.04 pm

Chairman

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**Question to Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee
– 17 January 2022**

Question 1

What measures are taken by Surrey County Council Social Services, Surrey County Council Safeguarding, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, Children and Young Peoples Learning Disability Service Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation and Surrey Police, to keep the public safe from those with serious behavioural issues, specifically direct personal abuse pervading their homes?

Response

These services all act in accordance with the information and guidance provided within the attached briefing note also available to Council Officers and Members at [Anti-Social Behaviour – Briefing for Children’s Social Care | JiveSurrey \(jiveon.com\)](#)

Where Council Officers become aware of concerns regarding the impact of perceived anti-social behaviour they should direct residents to the Community Trigger Process which was introduced by the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime & Policing Act 2014.

Further information and advice on working in partnership to tackle crime, disorder, and anti-social behaviour is available from the Surrey County Council’s Community Safety Team: Email: communitysafety@surreycc.gov.uk

Question 2

Why is a third party that is significantly impacted by an individual's intrusive and abusive behaviours not allowed to have direct contact and discussion with those who are overseeing the care of that individual, specifically Surrey County Council Social Services, Surrey County Council Safeguarding, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, Children and Young Peoples Learning Disability Service Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation?

Response

Surrey County Council like all Local Authorities, Government Agencies and large business is required to comply with the principles of Data Protection as contained within the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), tailored by the Data Protection Act 2018. Further information regarding the sharing of personal data with third parties can be found on the [Information Commissioners Webpage](#)

Question 3

If special schools, respite care charities, disability taxi services and other support services have limits of tolerance regarding those clients in the care of Surrey services with significant behavioural issues why are the public not allowed to invoke the same limits of tolerance for their own homes and be supported in that by all of the stated agencies?

ITEM 4

Response

As indicated earlier in this letter, where Council Officers become aware of concerns regarding the impact of perceived anti-social behaviour they should direct residents to the Community Trigger Process which was introduced by the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime & Policing Act 2014.

Further information and advice on working in partnership to tackle crime, disorder, and anti-social behaviour is available from the Surrey County Council's Community Safety Team: Email: communitysafety@surreycc.gov.uk

Liz Bowes, Chairman – Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee

Question to Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee – 17 January 2022

In full-time equivalent terms – and looking at the snapshot of a typical recent month – how many Surrey County Council children and young persons' social workers are agency staff vs how many are permanent staff? Based on extrapolating from this month snapshot what is the approximate annual additional costs of employing agency staff?

Councillor Fiona Davidson

Response

In November 20 (the latest information available at the time of pulling together this response) the number of agency workers covering Social Worker, Senior Social Worker and Advanced Social Worker posts were 86.3 while there were 310.9 posts covered by permanent employees.

Social Worker agency staff cost on average £23,200 per annum more than permanent staff. This would make the estimated additional annual cost £2.0m which would represent 9.1% of the overall estimated cost of Social Workers, Senior Social Workers and Advanced Social Workers.

Liz Bowes, Chairman – Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee

Question to Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee – 17 January 2022

The Education, Health and Care plan timeliness information provided in response to a question in October 2021 identified that the South West quadrant has performed least well in delivering Education, Health and Care plans on time for the past two years.

- Why is this?
- What actions are being taken to remedy this situation?

Councillor Fiona Davidson

Response

Why is this?

Case officers have the responsibility for drafting Education Health and Care plans under the supervision of Senior Case Managers. The South West team has unfortunately had a number of vacancies and has been operating at reduced capacity.

The SW team is also comprised of a high proportion of new staff. These staff are given a comprehensive and thorough induction, however, it can take between 12-18 months before they are fully operational.

The retention of new staff in the SW has been a particular challenge for the team.

Exit interviews illustrate that COVID has had particularly significant impact upon new staff due to the lack of opportunity for office working where peer to peer support would have been available.

Additionally, there is a delay in advice being provided to the team by partner agencies due to increasing volumes of EHC assessment requests and capacity issues within those teams. This is an issue across the county but compounds the delays within the SW.

What have we done to address these concerns:

There is a robust recovery plan in place.

The number of EHCPs issued and their timeliness is monitored on a daily basis against targets by senior quadrant managers and there is a weekly performance meeting with the Assistant Director for Inclusion and Additional Needs SW to monitor progress against the recovery plan.

The recovery plan includes improved recruitment, support and training for staff, closer liaison with advice givers to minimise the delays in advice given as part of the EHCP process and operational changes to the work of the team.

The recruitment, support and training actions for staff includes:

ITEM 4

- The case officer induction process being redesigned to ensure that this is robust and appropriate for remote working.
- Case Officers being provided with more frequent supervision in order to support them manage their cases both on a 1 to 1 and group basis.
- Regular visits into the office so that new members of staff can work closely with their team.
- A buddy system.
- NASEN training to ensure staff develop the required skill set during their first year in post
- A series of staff training webinars and specific training for case officers in strengths based approaches.

The actions to improve the timeliness of partners advice includes

- A revised health pathway which has reduced steps in the advice giving process and therefore ensured health colleagues advice is received quickly
- Liaison with educational psychologists to help them prioritise their work to meet deadlines which has led to a reduction in delayed advice
- Liaison with Learners Single Point of Access (LSPA) to increase the speed of early decision making when assessment requests are received The operational actions include
- changes to the EHC assessment process to improve efficiency
- careful analysis of the work flow so that a proactive approach is taken to remove barriers to the timely completion of plans where issues are identified

This work has led to an improvement from 7% of plans due for completion in September 2021 being completed on time to 39% in December 2021. Forecasting of the workflow suggest that this percentage increase is likely to each between 50-60% in January 2022 bringing the team closer to the operational target of 70% by the end of March.

Liz Bowes – Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee

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Thursday, 7 April 2022

Care Leavers Service Report

1. Purpose of report: To provide an overview of the service provided to care leavers with particular regard to support around transitions, educational attainment including post 16 destinations, the impact of out of area placements and accommodation quality and stability.

Introduction:

2. The Care Leavers service is comprised of six care leaver teams, one in each of the four quadrants and two countywide teams dedicated to working with asylum experienced care leavers. The teams are comprised of Personal Advisors, a Team Manager and a Service Manager. The service is supported by a dedicated CAMHS worker, an education specialist within the Virtual School, two migration workers and two homelessness prevention workers. Broadly there are an equal number of care leavers in the South West, North West and North East quadrants with a higher number of care leavers in the South East quadrant. Whilst the workloads of personal advisors are currently considered to be reasonable we need to be mindful of the impact of extended duties to care leavers beyond the age of 21 as established in the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and the impact of newly arrived unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people into Surrey the majority of whom will become care leavers and the impact of this on capacity particularly for the South East quadrant.
3. As of 28 February 2022, there are 817 care leavers aged 16 - 25 in receipt of leaving care services, the vast majority are between the ages of 18 – 25 with only 13 being aged 16 or 17, no longer looked after by the local authority but entitled to a care leavers service. 526 are male (64%) and 300 (36%) female. Of that group 51% identify as White, 23% identify as Black or Black British, 13% Asian or Asian British, 7% mixed ethnicity and 7% Other Ethnic Group. There are 292 asylum experienced care leavers within the service, accounting for 35.7% of the care leaver population.

Definitions of categories of children entitled to leaving care support

4. **Eligible children** - Defined in paragraph 19B of Schedule 2 to the Children Act 1989, and regulation 40 of the Care Planning Regulations as a child who is: (a)

looked after, (b) aged 16 or 17, and (c) has been looked after by a local authority for a period of 13 weeks, or periods amounting in total to 13 weeks, which began after they reached 14 and ended after they reached 16.

5. **Relevant children** - Defined in section 23A(2) of the Children Act 1989 as a child who is: (a) not looked after, (b) aged 16 or 17, and (c) was, before they last ceased to be looked after, an eligible child. Regulation 3 of the Care Leavers Regulations prescribes a further category of relevant child who is: (a) not looked after, (b) aged 16 or 17, and (c) at the time they attained the age of 16 was detained (i.e. detained in a remand centre, a young offenders institution or a secure training centre, or any other centre pursuant to a Court order), or in a hospital, and immediately before they were detained or in hospital had been looked after by a local authority for a period or periods amounting in all to at least 13 weeks which began after they reached the age of 14.
6. **Former Relevant children** - Defined in section 23C(1) of the Children Act 1989 as a young person who is: (a) aged 18 or above, and either (b) has been a relevant child and would be one if they were under 18, or (c) immediately before they ceased to be looked after at age 18, was an eligible child
7. **Qualifying** - Defined in section 24 of the Children Act 1989 as a person who is: (a) aged at least 16 but is under 21, (b) with respect to whom a special guardianship order is in force (or was in force when they reached 18) and was looked after immediately before the making of that order, or (c) at any time after reaching the age of 16 but while s/he was still a child was, but is no longer, looked after, accommodated or fostered.

Transition to Independence – Relationship based practice

8. The transition to independence can be a daunting time for many young people, and this is especially so for young people leaving care. Many care leavers need a potentially higher level of care and support compared to their peers and cannot necessarily rely on this being provided through their family and friends network. It's important the relationships they develop whilst in the care of the local authority sustain into adulthood to provide that support and that care leavers are connected within their communities. Care Leavers may require support with securing employment, navigating through education and training pathways, moving into their own home and the practical skills needed to manage this successfully, as well as developing the resilience to deal with the many challenges life presents. Young people need the opportunities to build their skills, knowledge and independence to leave the care system and flourish as adults. Surrey County Council is committed to continuously improving the quality and responsiveness of its services to ensure that young people are supported to make this transition confidently and successfully. The Ofsted inspection in January 2022 found that "***the majority of care leavers are prepared well for independent living. Most of this work is carried out effectively by commissioned semi-independent providers. Most care leavers make progress with their education, independence and overall development.***"

9. We recognise that skilled personal advisors who can develop positive relationships with care leavers play an essential role in co-ordinating the support care leavers receive. The service has increased the number of personal advisors in each team with the majority of staff being permanent. Care leavers tell us via the Big Survey, through Care Council and Corporate Parenting Board the significance of a solid relationship with their personal advisor in making a positive difference to their lives. The Ofsted monitoring visit of September 2021 confirmed that most young people were well supported by their personal advisors in their transitions to becoming independent young adults, that personal advisors worked hard to maintain contact and trusting relationships and completed skilled and sensitive work with young people. Ofsted commented in the January 2022 inspection “**Care leavers are supported by committed personal advisers who work with them from the age of 16 to ensure that their needs are met through advice, support and access to the right services**”. There has been considerable focus on the allocation of personal advisors to care leavers at 16 years to support the early development of that relationship. Having capacity to allocate personal advisors earlier is enabling a reasonable period of time to develop joint working between the social worker, personal advisor and young person, building better relationships as they prepare for independence. Whilst good progress has been made in this area, since August 2021 there has been a sharp increase in the numbers of young people seeking asylum being placed in Surrey, consequently this is creating additional demand on early personal advisor allocation, this is an area we are reviewing closely.
10. Legislation prescribes that the level of expected contact with care leavers varies according to their age. For care leavers aged 16 – 20 it is expected that personal advisors keep in touch with them a minimum of every two months, this will include face to face contact and additional contact via a communication method agreed with the care leaver, this will be reflected in the young person’s pathway plan. The service is currently in touch with 83% of care leavers across the 16 – 20 age group. For care leavers over the age of 21 the legislation is much less prescriptive requiring annual contact is made to ensure that care leavers are aware of the services available to them. Surrey has had contact with 97% of care leavers over the last year and has been in contact with 91% of care leavers aged between 21 and 25 over the last 3 months. In terms of DFE reporting for 2021/2022 quarter 3 Surrey was in touch with 100% of care leavers aged 19 – 21, this compares with South East Benchmarking data of 91% for the same period.
11. 99.3% of all Surrey care leavers aged 16 - 25 have a pathway plan in place. All eligible young people are expected to have a pathway plan in place at 16 yrs and 3 months in line with statutory requirements. As of 22.03.22, 75% of eligible care leavers had a pathway plan completed within this timescale. Pathway plans must be reviewed every 6 months or whenever there is a significant change in the care leaver’s circumstances. 77.6% of care leavers had their pathway plan reviewed within 6 months. On closer analysis of the data performance is very

strong in the west quadrants, there is focussed activity from the service managers in the east quadrants in ensuring performance is comparable across the county. Ofsted found ***“Most pathway plans are comprehensive and are completed collaboratively with care leavers, but they do not routinely include the input of other relevant agencies. They are updated every six months, but not always when the young person’s circumstances significantly change. Care leavers’ views are reflected strongly in their plans.”*** For care leavers returning to the service after the age of 21, statutory guidance confirms their pathway plans should be proportionate to their individual needs, not all care leavers will require a full pathway plan but a full assessment is completed where required.

12. In response to feedback from care leavers we have updated the roles and responsibilities document which sets out the expectations of personal advisors and social workers, ensuring there are clear messages about what young people can expect from the service.
13. We have continued to support personal advisors in ensuring they have up to date training in areas such as Housing and Welfare Benefits to ensure they can discuss confidently entitlements with young people. It is a practice expectation that all personal advisors are familiar with Surrey’s Local Offer to support progress in education, training and employment. We know that some young people were not sighted on the Local Offer and to address this have ensured personal advisors are able to speak confidently about this and it is easily accessible via the email banners of all who work within the service. Ofsted found that ***“Care leavers are made aware of the local offer”***.
14. The service is currently participating in the Coram Bright Spots survey concluding on 11 March 2022 which evaluates the lived experience of care leavers and will be a useful source of information to drive service improvement.
15. The Local Offer is currently being updated with consultations sessions on the final draft document taking place in March 2022.

Transition to Independence - Education Attainment and post 16 destination

16. In education terms, local authorities have a statutory duty to track the participation in education, training and employment of young people in national curriculum years 12 and 13 (the year in which young people traditionally turn 18). This is aligned to the Raising of the Participation Age legislation which requires local authorities to actively promote participation for all young people in years 12 and 13. Authorities were initially required to track all young people up to the end of year 14 but this was relaxed in 2016. As a consequence of this change and the introduction of GDPR, we have increasingly seen higher numbers of young people whose destinations are not known beyond year 13, in addition to those who actively opt out of having their information shared with the local authority
17. At the current time, detailed education, employment and training (EET) destination data for care leavers is recorded by different services rather than held by one central team. These include the Leaving Care team, Inclusion and

Additional Needs (within education) and the Virtual School's Progression to Independence team. This reflects specific statutory responsibilities and accountabilities which individual teams and services have around care leavers. The development of EYES (a product within Liquid logic) and 'Career Vision' is a positive step which will combine education and social care data to create a single view of the young person and contribute to better cohort level information around EET

18. [OFSTED](#) concluded in January 2022 that *"Most children in care make good progress in education, employment and training. Learning and leisure activities are explored well in plans and reviews."* Feedback from care leavers at the most recent Corporate Parent Board also indicated that education had been a positive experience, with school and university settings promoting opportunities to them to develop their independence.

Access to Apprenticeships for Surrey Care Leavers

19. Surrey links in to the Apprenticeship Ambassador Network in the South East to grow apprenticeship opportunities with local employers and the county has strong links with the Association of Learning Providers which will support the development of internships and other employment/training opportunities. SCC is also involved in Kickstart, the rollout of youth hubs has started and there is a renewed focus on traineeships. SCC already has a strong focus on supporting care leavers into Surrey CC apprenticeships, championed by the Corporate Parenting Board and supported by the User Voice and Participation and other teams including the Virtual School. SCC will also be using its procurement leverage to encourage commissioned services to embrace and demonstrate social values by offering apprenticeships to care experienced and other vulnerable young people.
20. It's important to recognise the impact of the pandemic. Many young people start their employment journeys via hospitality, services industries and retail – for example, both Gatwick and Heathrow are within travelling distance from Surrey, however the pandemic hit these industries hard during 2020-21 and entry level employment opportunities suffered during this time.

The Role of the Surrey Virtual School

21. The Surrey Virtual School (SVS) has a small post 16 team who focus mainly on ensuring those young people in Years 12 and 13 (16–18-year-olds) have access to high quality education, employment and training (EET) and transition smoothly to post 16 settings. In line with its statutory remit, the Virtual School's focus is on children and young people currently looked after. Care leavers over the age of 18 who are still in Year 13 are included in the young people who receive a range of support and services from SVS. For those young people who still wish to have additional support as they continue their education into Year 14, the Virtual School continues to be involved, providing less intensive support. At the current time, the team has one education and employment adviser who provides support on a referral basis for young people aged 18-25.

22. Educational provision and the Virtual School's support for this group of young people have been a regular focus during the 2021 monitoring and focussed visits conducted by OFSTED. HMI noted that '*Personal education plans for children aged 16 and above are clearly focused to ensure that children can access appropriate learning or employment*' ([March 2021 Report](#)). HMI also observed that '*The virtual school provides helpful dedicated education and employment advice for care leavers and UAS young people. An extensive range of mentoring, and other well-targeted initiatives, helps many young people to make progress.*' ([September 2021](#)).
23. The bespoke approach to the education of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking young people encompass an assessment of English and first language skills delivered by REMA (the LA's specialist service) access to interpreters where needed, provision of a dictionary, laptop and online ESOL (English for speakers of other language) teaching, one to one tuition plus access to a range of educational activities developed by Big Leaf, a specialist charity.
24. As of January 2022, there were 356 young people in the Virtual School's Years 12 and 13 cohort (16–18-year-olds) of whom 80 or 22.5% were not in education employment or training (NEET). This compares to a cohort size of 304 in January 2021, of whom 88 or 29% were not in education, employment or training, a reduction of 6.5%.
25. The Virtual School has analysed the reasons and barriers for young people which prevent them accessing education employment and training – these were reported to Corporate Parenting Board in April 2021 and include:
- Scarcity of roll on roll off education or training provision in different locations and no powers of direction for the Virtual School to support admission to education as is the case for statutory school age children
 - Young people entering post 16 without qualifications in English and maths
 - Historical disengagement with education, including pre-care
 - Inconsistent experience of young people around careers advice information and guidance
 - SEND needs and or emotional/mental health needs
 - Pupil Premium Plus funding is not allocated for young people post 16 by the DFE
26. The Virtual School has already implemented a package of measures to address these barriers, including early identification of young people at risk of NEET, delivery of bespoke career's guidance and one to one coaching, the Virtual School's registration as an exam centre for Functional Skills in English and maths which provides flexible opportunities for young people to gain level 2 qualifications. SVS has also developed new partnerships with Training

Providers and third sector organisations to try and increase the availability of courses which can be joined midway through the academic year.

27. These measures have contributed to the reduction in NEET described in paragraph 26 above. The Virtual School's work in this area has impacted most keenly on young people in Year 12, where only 10.4% were NEET as of January 2022 compared with 27.3% in January 2021. The overall NEET figure for Year 12 and 13 is likely to fluctuate during the year but has remained below 25% since the start of the new academic year in September 2021.
28. The Surrey Virtual School is also delivering a post 16 pilot project currently for the DFE focussing on access to post 16 education, employment and training for young people, and is contributing to national research in this area.
29. A recent analysis by the Virtual School of young people who are NEET in Years 12 and 13 in January 2022 highlighted that of our 122 Y12/13 new to care since 31st March 2021,

• 4 were EET before entering care but are now NEET	3.3%
• 35 have remained NEET since coming into care	28.7%
• 22 have remained EET since coming into care	18%
• 59 were NEET before coming into care are now EET	48.4%
• 2 were long term missing	1.6%

30. Please note, this is the date each year identified by government as the cut of date for calculating the eligible cohort referred to in all published data.
31. The Virtual School has supported 59 young people into education employment and training since becoming looked after, and a further 22 to sustain their chosen post 16 EET destinations.

32. Whilst much is being done in years 10 and 11 to prevent young people from becoming NEET, it can be challenging to change the outcomes of those young people with a longer history of not engaging in education employment or training. To this end, in September 2021 'Grandmentors' was launched to provide bespoke mentoring for a cohort of 30 young people. This has been part funded during its first year by the Virtual School, and future funding for the next two years has been secured. Grandmentors is a mature organisation with a proven track record and infrastructure around mentoring care leavers and other young people from vulnerable groups. The following example from the Surrey Project Co-ordinator illustrates some of the impact Grandmentors is already making.

I received a referral for a UASC who had hopes of one day studying Law.

I was fortunate enough that at the time I had a mentor who had trained and worked as a solicitor for many years and once I told him this, I could see the excitement in his face.

Shortly after, we arranged a match meeting for them and they just clicked.

They have met several times and together they have been looking at different universities, the qualifications required to get onto those courses and different areas of Law that may be of interest.

The mentor has kindly gifted him some old books of hers about the history and geography of the UK that she no longer reads.

Thanks to Grandmentors, this young man is able to receive specialised, one to one support in his area of interest that he would not have received otherwise. They are only 2 meetings in however I know that with the support and guidance of his mentor, he is destined for big things.

33. The Virtual School links closely with the User Voice and Participation [UVP] team to identify the cohort of young people to be referred to Grandmentors pilot, identifying the other sources of support and information available to them via UVP. SVS has also further strengthened the links with Surrey's Alternative Provision and Participation teams so that we have a coherent offer across education and social care. SVS funds a post in this team to enable bespoke support to be provided to young people in care.

Access to further education (FE) and University

34. The following table shows the number who have started their university course from 2017 to the current year.

2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-2
20	10	7	15	9

2021-22 University	Course
Southampton	Psychology
Greenwich	Primary Education
Williams College U.S.A.	Mathematics
Portsmouth	Business & Finance
West London	Paediatric Nursing
Greenwich	Electrical Engineering
Surrey	Law
Bristol UWE	Fashion and Communication
Roehampton	Diverse Dance

35. Surrey young people are studying a range of courses including Law & Politics, Game Design/Development, Game Design/Animation, Musical Theatre, Foundation Health Education & Well Being, Philosophy, Politics & Economics, Health & Social Care, Mental Health Nursing, Law& Criminology, Social Work, Public Services, Music, Veterinary Nursing and Animal behaviour, English with Law and Performing Arts.
36. SVS has linked up with Aim Higher for pre-HE mentoring and outreach work. Links are also in place with NNECL (National Network for the Education of Care Leavers), the Universities of Surrey and Sussex for Widening Participation events and bespoke pieces of work, ‘children in social care’ around access to HE planned for the next academic year.

Education, Employment and Training across the Care Leaver population

37. Of the 814 young people in Surrey’s care leaver population aged 16 – 25, 68% are engaged in education, employment or training. In terms of DFE reporting 69% of 19 – 21 yr old care leavers in Surrey were reported as being in education, training or employment for quarter 3 of 2021/2022, this compares with South East Benchmarking data of 55% for the same period.
38. There are 294 asylum experienced care leavers within Surrey’s care leaver population. 84% [246] are engaged in education, employment or training with 15% [44] not engaged in education, employment or training. Social workers and personal advisors work closely with Virtual School to address the barriers

preventing access to education, employment and training for those up to the age of 18. We know that for some of this group delays in their asylum status being confirmed by the Home Office act as a barrier to accessing education, training or employment beyond 21.

39. Within the South West quadrant, a NEET clinic is being piloted to consider the specific needs of each care leaver who is not in education, employment or training and ensure the right support is in place to enable access. The pilot commenced in February 2022 and reviews all of the NEET care leavers with the Team Manager, the Virtual School and the Education lead workers in the team. The intention is to reduce the numbers of young people who are NEET and to generate a better understanding of young people's circumstances. The Virtual School Lead brings detailed knowledge of options available for young people. Whilst it is too early to assess the impact of the clinic it is hoped collaborative working with clear objectives will result in more young people accessing education, employment and training opportunities. If it is evidenced that focussed activity of this nature can drive improvement the intention would be to establish similar clinics in the other quadrants.
40. The service has recently met with the London based Drive Forward Foundation with a view to engaging their support in working with care leavers living in London and supporting them into employment, education or training. The organisation can facilitate differing levels of support according to individual need. This can range from supporting those with no experience of employment to develop the necessary skills and gain relevant work experience, to supporting those wanting to move from part time into full time employment and preparing for internships and apprenticeships. The only requirement is consent from the young person to be referred and motivation to engage with the foundation. This provides an excellent opportunity for those living in London to be supported into employment, education or training.

Transition to Independence – Financial Support

41. In terms of financial support, Independent Living Allowance payments have been increased to £60 per week, enabling care leavers to access all of their financial entitlement. As the weekly universal credit payment is slightly below this level, paying a rounded-up total enables care leavers to physically access the full entitlement from their bank accounts. This is in line with recommendations from Mark Riddell, National Adviser for Care Leavers about actions which Local Authorities can undertake that make a big difference to care leavers. During the pandemic, additional financial support of £20 per week was provided to care leavers in receipt of Independent Living Allowance, matching the government scheme which continued to October 2021. Grant funding has also been secured at Christmas and Easter allowing additional £30 payments and most recently funding secured via the Household Support Fund to pay eligible care leavers £50 towards energy costs before the end of the 21/22 financial year.
42. As part of the pathway planning process, social workers or personal advisors

will discuss with young people all finance related issues, this is also supported by foster carers, residential carers and keyworking staff for those in independent accommodation. Colleagues in Surrey's residential homes developed a helpful guide which considers in detail all issues related to finance and the important elements young people need to be aware of. Young people are encouraged to engage in Education, Employment and Training opportunities in order to maximise their chances of being able to realise their aspirations and Virtual School offer a number of initiatives to increase participation in education, employment and training.

43. The Care Leavers Service is piloting a financial literacy course through The Money House, an accredited UK charity which delivers expert led financial education programmes. The sessions will be focussed on young people who are about to move into their own accommodation and have responsibility for managing a tenancy. The initial pilot will be with asylum experienced care leavers and consider all aspects of preparedness for independent living with a desired outcome of reducing the risk of homelessness and better equipping young people in the transition into their own accommodation. The Money House programmes evidence strong outcomes for care leavers who have accessed the courses in terms of positive management of tenancies and maintaining accommodation.
44. Care leavers have continued to benefit from Council Tax exemptions and all Surrey Districts and Boroughs will offer this to Surrey care leavers with effect from 1 April 2022 which will make a significant difference to easing financial pressures.
45. All care leavers in Further and Higher Education are in receipt of the relevant bursaries, £1200 per annum for those 16 – 19 in further education and £2000 per annum for those attending university. Personal advisors ensure that young people are sighted on their financial entitlements and are able to access these and the Local Offer also signposts to a range of organisations that can provide financial support.
46. All care leavers securing permanent housing are able to access the setting up home allowance of £2000 and are also supported with initial costs associated with setting up home as identified in the finance policy including one month's rent and deposit. We are currently in the process of finalising a rent guarantor scheme for care leavers who can evidence their ability to manage independent living successfully. The service has also started to engage with the Care Leaver Covenant with a view to establishing partnerships with a variety of local businesses and providers within Surrey that can create opportunities for care leavers both in terms of training and employment as well as potential financial savings.

Transition to Independence – Commissioning arrangements

47. All local authorities have a statutory duty to secure (as far as reasonably

practicable) enough accommodation that meets the needs of looked after children and care leavers within the local area. Surrey has continued to make progress on this measure during 2021/22, reaching: 43.9% of care leavers accommodated in Surrey and 77.1% placed within 20 miles of the county as of December 2021. Compared to December 2020 where 40.68% of young people were accommodated in Surrey and 76.18% where within 20 miles of Surrey's borders.

48. Surrey County Council's Looked After Children and Care Leaver Sufficiency Strategy 2020-25 includes 5 key ambitions: Surrey homes for Surrey children; living in a family setting; a wide range of placements for diverse needs; homes of the highest quality; and support to move to independence. These principles underpin much of our thinking in terms of planning accommodation and support for care leavers. This work is currently being enhanced by resources and governance oversight provided through the Placement Value and Outcomes Transformation Programme, which covers a comprehensive range of projects and initiatives that are focussed on further improving the number of looked after children and care leavers who live in and contribute to Surrey's communities.
49. One key area of change that affects care leavers specifically, is the focussed work that has taken place to improve access to high-quality supported accommodation in Surrey. In September 2021, Surrey County Council became a Member of the Commissioning Alliance Dynamic Purchasing Vehicle for Semi-independent Accommodation and Support (hereafter Commissioning Alliance DPV), which is enabling us to work together with 18 other local authorities to assure and improve the quality of supported accommodation provision for young people, whilst also ensuring value for money. Central to this is the "Setting the Standard" quality accreditation that providers are required to secure as part of the Commissioning Alliance DPV, which provides confidence about the quality of accommodation and provision, ahead of the planned introduction of Ofsted regulation from April 2023 onwards.
50. Working through this arrangement and in support of Surrey homes for Surrey children, Surrey County Council has awarded new block contracts for provision based in the county for over 300 beds, increasing from the previous level of 229, to start from 1 April 2022. This will enable more care leavers to access quality assured provision locally in the county and for us to establish longer term relationships with a network of key providers to support collaboration, learning and improvement.
51. An added benefit of joining the Commissioning Alliance is the opening up of a new route for commissioning specific packages of floating support for care leavers who have moved into their own tenancies. This arrangement should enable us to better support young people's progression to independence.
52. Alongside quality assurance carried out at a cross-regional level through the Commissioning Alliance, Surrey County Council also undertakes its responsibilities for contract management and quality assurance – with the lead for this work sitting in the Gateway to Resources Resource Review Team. Since April 2021, strengthened quarterly contract monitoring meetings have

taken place with all providers on Surrey County Council's current Dynamic Purchasing System for Supported Accommodation for Young People (which comes to end on 31 March 2022). These have focused on set Key Performance Indicators, young people's outcomes as well as looking at young person's feedback. In addition to the contract monitoring meetings, property inspections and Quality Assurance (QA) visits are undertaken on both an announced and unannounced basis.

53. Alongside this, since September 2021 we have been rolling out Outcomes Star training to all our commissioned Supported Accommodation providers. Outcomes Star is an evidence-based tool to enable improved person-centred practice and measure the difference that is being made to young people's lives through supported accommodation provision. When all providers have received Outcomes Star training the expectation is that monthly report will be sent to personal advisors to evidence the progress that it being made against defined preparation for adulthood outcomes.
54. As part of the on-going improvement in our approach to support better outcomes for young people in supported accommodation, a review of the forms used to undertake quality assurance visits has been undertaken. A decision has been made to use the standard templates developed by the Children's Cross Regional Arrangements Group (CCRAG – a network of local authorities who work together to share quality assurance information and best practice) for all quality assurance visits as of April 2022. The use of these templates we ensure focus on the lived experience of care leavers in the provision where they are living. We are also exploring adoption of the Commissioning Alliance property inspection forms for supported accommodation, again looking to improve our practice in collaboration with other local authorities.
55. As part of our work to further improve accommodation and support pathways for care leavers, we have begun exploring the potential to implement the [Care Leaver Accommodation and Support Framework](#) (St Basil's and Barnardos) in Surrey. This would provide a clear structure for our future work to develop and improve pathways for care leavers. In response to this, we are working to develop a new pilot of Houses of Multiple Occupation with floating support, as a bridging option to support care leavers to progress from supported accommodation into their own tenancies. Our current plan is to use SCC capital to purchase property and then commission floating support from a third party provider to create and deliver up to 30 beds over the next 18 months, through to summer 2023.

Transition to Independence – Care Leaver Accommodation

56. In accordance with the DfE definition "accommodation is considered to be suitable if it provides safe, secure and affordable provision for young people ...it would generally include short term accommodation designed to move young people on to stable long-term accommodation but would exclude emergency accommodation used in a crisis".

57. As of 28 February 2022, 92% of Surrey Care Leavers between the ages of 16 - 25 are living in suitable accommodation. Over the course of the last year there has been considerable focus on ensuring that practitioners are aware of the importance of housing registration being progressed as close to 16 as possible for all eligible young people. We have also recently introduced performance reporting via Tableau, this is linked to the pathway plan being updated at six monthly intervals and capturing housing registration. In due course this should provide a helpful guide to identify those not yet registered alongside the scrutiny of the accommodation panels [see paragraph 54]. As identified in the Care Leavers Service plan 2020/21, we are involving Housing Officers in pathway planning meetings with the consent of the young person. Currently approximately 62% of all Care Leavers are registered with Housing and as pathway plans are updated we expect this total to increase. We encourage care leavers to register for housing with more than one borough in Surrey to increase the likelihood of securing social housing whilst also exploring privately rented options. Registration in Surrey can take place alongside registration in a borough outside of Surrey. Ofsted found that **“most care leavers are in accommodation that meets their needs. While many care leavers are supported to get permanent housing which is suitable and safe, the sufficiency and availability of accommodation for some care leavers are limited.”**. Our sufficiency strategy continues to focus on this area and the development of accommodation options which meet identified needs.
58. Social housing is one option available to young people post 18 but not all district and boroughs are able to meet the demand for care leaver accommodation, an issue that was recognised in the January 2022 Ofsted inspection. For those placed outside of Surrey they are subject to the housing allocation policies of the areas where they are living, contingent on having established a local connection there. For all care leavers it is important they develop the skills to manage a tenancy in either the social housing or privately rented sectors with the support of their personal advisors. Some care leavers opt to remain with their foster families under a Staying Put arrangement through to 21, others will opt for Supported Lodgings arrangements available through to 25. For those with needs indicating they require a greater level of support whilst they build on their independence skills, there are a variety of time limited supported accommodation options available. With the development of the Commissioning Alliance Framework supported accommodation capacity within Surrey will increase by 100 beds from April 2022 enabling care leavers to be located within Surrey, closer to their existing networks.
59. In order to ensure good understanding of post 18 accommodation arrangements, accommodation panels were introduced for all young people aged 17 in each of the quadrants in April & May 2021. The panels meet six times per year and their purpose is to ensure that Children’s Services and Housing have clear accommodation plans in place for all 17 yr olds. The panels are chaired by the Looked After and Care Leavers Service Managers and include Care Leaver and Housing representatives with the discussion considering housing registration, ability to live independently, whether Staying Put is being considered and actions to achieve, the young person’s ability to manage a tenancy and their risk of homelessness. The accommodation plan

is captured in the young person's pathway plan. Feedback from the meetings is positive. We know from discussions with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities this can be one mechanism which facilitates early identification of those at risk of homelessness allowing measures to be implemented which reduce the likelihood of this. There are also two dedicated homelessness prevention officers within the care leavers service who work countywide to address promptly with personal advisors and young people any emerging housing issues. All looked after children and care leavers have access to the advocacy contract with Coram to advise on issues related to housing and homelessness and personal advisors have received bespoke training from Shelter regarding tenancies and tenancy management.

60. For young people living in London boroughs, particularly those seeking asylum, there is often a belief that they will be able to secure social housing within London. Given the demand for accommodation in London it is highly unlikely that a young person would be able to secure social housing via this route. Social workers and personal advisors have ongoing discussions with young people to manage expectations around this and encourage registrations with housing in Surrey boroughs. Workstreams aligned to the sufficiency strategy are also exploring how more in-house provision can be developed including step down options in areas where there are high numbers of young people seeking asylum. This would enable continuity of education or training for the young person and also provide more cost-effective provision for the local authority with associated support costs aligned to the young person's needs as opposed to contracted hours.
61. The last year has seen more collaborative working with colleagues in Property and Commissioning as we look at the existing resources available within Surrey and what opportunities there may be to deliver in house supported accommodation options for Care Leavers. A number of sites are being considered for the development of supported accommodation and plans have been shared with the Participation Officers within User Voice and Participation seeking their views on design considerations.

Transition to Independence – Impact of Out of Area Placements

62. Surrey's ambition is to reduce the numbers of young people coming into the care of the local authority through a solid offer of Early Help interventions, the Family Safeguarding model and the embedding of the No Wrong Door approach which seeks to enable children to remain safely within their families.
63. When children do need to become looked after and go on to become care leavers, Surrey's Sufficiency Strategy has been developed on the premise of Surrey Homes for Surrey Children. It is acknowledged that it will take time for the impact of these approaches to be evidenced.
64. For many of our care leavers living outside of but close to the Surrey borders and well established within their local communities, it would not necessarily be appropriate for them to return to live in Surrey. However, for those newly

looked after, particularly teenagers, the ambition is for them to reside within Surrey. There are clear benefits for Surrey care leavers from living within Surrey in terms of access to a range of local services which may not be as easily accessible in a different local authority and easier contact with the professionals working alongside them. There are also practical and economic benefits for the local authority in terms of personal advisors spending less time travelling to locations outside of Surrey, more established relationships with local professionals and greater understanding of access to local services and resources. It is also more likely that those living in Surrey will be prioritised for services.

65. Given the current reality, personal advisors have become well versed in liaising with professionals in other local authorities to secure relevant services and as an authority we are looking at opportunities to work collaboratively with organisations operating where we have groups of care leavers placed to promote relevant opportunities for them [e.g., Drive Forward Foundation]. The migration workers based in the asylum teams continue to develop good links with local charities and faith-based communities to ensure the needs of asylum experienced care leavers can be promoted locally and we can shift the narrative amongst some newly arrived asylum experienced young people of wanting to reside in a London borough.

Conclusions:

66. The Care Leavers Service has made positive progress over the course of the last year. There has been helpful feedback from the Ofsted Monitoring Visit from September 2021 and full inspection in January 2022 alongside internal scrutiny informed by quality assurance stocktakes and the audit programme. There will be further feedback from the Coram Bright Spots survey findings. Collectively these are contributing to the development of a solid platform from which to further develop and strengthen the service ensuring it continues to be responsive to the needs of Surrey's care leavers.

Recommendations:

67. The Select Committee notes the Care Leavers Annual report.
68. For continued scrutiny of the activity to reduce care leavers who are not engaged in education, employment and training and how Surrey as an organisation can collectively work to reduce the number of care leavers who are NEET.

Next steps:

Identify future actions and dates.

Report contact

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CARE LEAVERS

Strengths:

- Personal Advisor (PA) profiles to introduce the Care Leaver to their PA, explains their role, a little bit about them and key contact information.
 - Most Care Leavers are well supported by their PAs, a particular strength is our support to Care Leavers seeking asylum.
 - PA contact with Care Leavers remains high as does timely Pathway Plan completion and the number of Care Leavers in suitable accommodation.
 - PAs understand the needs of young people, are committed to development of good relationships and undertake skilled work with care leavers.
- Care Leavers are provided with information on their health histories and entitlements with an extensive Local Offer.
- We have two dedicated Asylum Teams for 18+ Care Leavers.
- Successfully recruited to the second Homelessness Prevention Worker role in October 2021 supporting young people who may experience housing issues at an early stage and also supporting improved partnership working with Ds & Bs.
 - Care leavers can register with 3 Surrey housing departments.
 - Council Tax Exemption offered by all districts and boroughs from 1 April 2022.
 - Dedicated mental health practitioner and services for emotional wellbeing.
 - Established bi-monthly accommodation panels.
 - Continued to provide additional financial support to Care Leavers during the pandemic in terms of matching the governments enhanced offer and via utilisation of the Household Support Fund.
 - Recently reviewed and updated the Local Offer, to be finalised in first quarter of 2022.

CARE LEAVERS

Areas for Improvement / Priorities for 2022:

- Improve arrangements for teams impacted by staff absence.
- Continue development of an affordable local accommodation offer, implementing new commissioning arrangements & repurposing existing accommodation options.
- Reduce the number of care leavers who are NEET, ensuring there is a consistent offer through our partnerships [e.g. Drive Forward Foundation} and promotion of opportunities across Surrey.
- Finalise practice guidance to support consistent practice with Care Leavers across all teams and reduce variability in the quality of written records & pathway plans.
- Ensure all Personal Advisors are confident in their discussions about the Local Offer particularly around rights and entitlements.
- Implement a Care Leavers Housing Protocol – due in the first quarter of 2022.
- Full Implementation of the Care Leavers' Covenant.
- Learning from the Coram Bright Spots survey of Care Leavers (concluding March 2022) and how this is utilised to shape service delivery.
- Develop a young person friendly finance policy.
- Improve access to services for Care Leavers placed outside of Surrey.
- Ensure Care Leavers benefit from partnership work with Money House



Thursday, 7 April 2022

PROPOSED CHANGES TO HOME TO SCHOOL TRAVEL ASSISTANCE POLICY

Purpose of report: The purpose of this report is to outline the proposed changes to the Home to School Travel Assistance (H2S TA) policy for children and young people in mainstream schools and pupils with additional needs (SEND). This report sets out the rationale for, the objectives of the changes, the changes being consulted on and the intended outcome.

Introduction:

1. The Council is committed to meeting the educational needs of as many children and young people as possible within local schools. In many cases, this will mean that pupils can walk or cycle. Approximately 160,000 pupils attend school each day in Surrey. A small proportion (approximately 10,000 or 6%) of pupils find it difficult to travel to a setting, school or college without some assistance and require additional support from Surrey County Council. Residents may qualify for support for many reasons including distance between their home and education setting, lack of public transport options, their age, or if they have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) because they have additional needs.
2. To support Surrey County Council's ambition for children and young people to live, learn and grow up locally over the next five years, the Council is investing £139m to create more school places. This will mean more children are educated closer to home, which will reduce demand on travel assistance services.
3. Home to school travel assistance helps children and young people get to and from their education setting. This comes in several different forms, such as independent travel training (ITT), mileage re-imburement, bikeability, driving lessons and taxi, minibus and coach services. H2S TA supports pupils and young people to travel to their school or college, for children of statutory school age (5-16 years old), for children under 5, and for young people aged 16 to 19 and 19 to 25. A summary of our statutory duties for home to school transport are in Annex 2.
4. The Council is seeing significant challenges in securing appropriate transport provision due to challenges in the labour market, both in Surrey and nationally. This is also in the context of a significant rise in fuel costs. This has made it difficult to ensure that children and young people who most need our support get it at the right time, against the backdrop of increasing demand.

5. The Council is refreshing the H2S TA policy in several key areas so that it is reflective of the ambitions we have for our children and aligned to the context summarised in this paper. This means that the policy will align to the Authority's commitment to moving away from an offer of school transport delivery model to a travel assistance model, with an increased focus on sustainability and Surrey's green agenda.
6. In doing so, the council has proactively engaged with parents, carers, schools and colleges and other stakeholders. A public consultation on the proposals was launched on 22 February 2022 and will conclude on Tuesday 31 March 2022. The consultation covers services provided to both mainstream and children and young people with additional needs.

Why this change is required

7. The H2S TA sets out the way in which the council discharges its statutory and discretionary powers and responsibilities for parents and carers, young people and young adults on the transport assistance available for pupils aged up to 25 years of age.
8. The Council is focused on ensuring children and young people in Surrey can attend local schools and settings, and travel to and from school with their friends and peers. Therefore, very significant investments have been made to create more school places in our special schools across the County and further work to promote inclusion is a key priority in our SEND Transformation.
9. In Surrey, everyday nearly 10,000 children and young people access H2S TA, this is funded via the Council Tax. The cost of this per annum is circa £40m. This cost has increased consistently over the past few years and we, like other transport commissioners nationally, are seeing additional financial pressures as we move out of the pandemic as well as more demand.
10. To illustrate the costs of providing transport services, as of January 2022, just over 18% of mainstream service users are provided with a taxi or minibus service, costing the council nearly £100,000 per week. By contrast, 98% of children and young people with additional needs who are provided with transport use a minibus or taxi, costing the council nearly £1m per week.
11. Whilst the council intends to continue to support those that most need help, we must manage increasing costs and demand and we are therefore proposing to:
 - Increase the options for children and young people who qualify for H2S TA assistance, moving away from a reliance on solo taxi routes (when there is only one child or young person in the vehicle). Solo routes make up approximately one third of the spend on H2S TA. Surrey County Council wishes to move towards travel assistance options used routinely by children and young people and communities such as buses and rail, where appropriate through ITT.
 - Encourage people, where possible, to use environmentally friendly travel and transport. Greater use of green alternative travel options would help us mitigate

the impact of climate change, through better use of walking, cycling and bus and train routes and where possible, increasing the occupancy in vehicles.

- Ensure young people don't face a 'cliff edge' when they become adults. For young people with additional needs, for example, their eligibility for transport is linked to their Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) and will expire at some point in the future. If they are not supported through ITT to travel independently this can create isolation and reduce access to employment as well.
12. Some pupils with additional needs will not be affected by these proposals. Of those young people in post-16 education with an EHCP, we estimate that 11% will require lifelong support from Adult Social Care and 4% will have complex medical needs, which will require lifelong support from their Clinical Commissioning Group. For the remaining pupils, their travel assistance will end once their EHCP ceases, for example, when their EHCP expires when they turn 25 years old.

Proposed Changes

13. To support Surrey County Council's ambition of empowering and supporting children and young people, prepare them for adulthood and use resources wisely, several key changes to the H2S TA Policy are proposed. The changes are set out in the consultation that is taking place and are summarised below:

Broader range of travel assistance options

13. The Council plans to offer a broader range of Travel Assistance options, aligned with Surrey's commitment to its green agenda, promoting more sustainable modes of travel assistance. This includes options such as bikeability (cycling safely and with confidence), driving lessons and access to TfL Oyster Card (in some areas of the county). In addition, individual travel training assessments are proposed which will be undertaken in an agreed location rather than in the home.
14. Alongside this expanded set of options, collection points will be introduced. Currently children and young people are collected from home and dropped off there each school day. It is proposed to change this so that pupils are collected from a designated pick-up and drop-off locations. Where children and young people with complex additional needs or the parents or carers' own mobility or disability may impact on them being able to use the collection points, the council will assess individual needs to determine suitability.

Clarity on transport journey times

15. The Council currently aims to comply with national guidance on the maximum length of journey time for a child to get to and from school. This is 45 minutes for a primary aged child and 75 minutes for a secondary aged child attending placements both within and outside the County. This means that in planning routes, the maximum time standard eclipses all other considerations and means that when children and young people could potentially share or participate in other modes of travel, they don't have this option.

16. The Council is proposing that the national guidance suggestions for journey times will not apply to any pupils travelling to out of county schools, where distances and the frequency of journeys may vary. We are also proposing to change the maximum journey times for all children in Surrey schools from 45 minutes to 75 minutes. The national guidelines apply to children aged 5- to 16-year-olds. They were written in 1996 for all local authorities and state that best practice suggests that journeys are completed in these times. Surrey's size as a large rural area means some journey times will exceed the best practice times recommended. Introducing this change will mean greater flexibility to consider journeys via other means and will support the reduction proposed in solo taxi transport. The needs of the child and young person (including their age) will be considered alongside time and transport methods.

Proposing a change to the measuring system for determining Independent Travel Allowance (ITA) from Straight Lines to Road Routes.

17. Straight line route measurements have previously been used for Independent Travel Assistance agreements but has occasionally been a barrier for agreeing transport funding for children, young people and families to make their own travel arrangements. Moving to a method that measures road route distance will simplify the process and more effectively reimburse families for the costs of making their own arrangements and increase the number of families able to take up this offer.
18. The current H2S TA provides two modes of mileage reimbursement:
- A tiered mileage allowance based on average distance between a home address and school. This tiered allowance is broken down into 3 bands.
 - A standard mileage rate.
19. It is proposed to introduce a simpler scheme to enable a more unified reimbursement process for parents and carers (including how and when they are reimbursed). The mileage rates to be used will still be set in line with Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC).

Notice period(s) for the removal of travel assistance in certain circumstances.

20. At present if a family's circumstances change or a route to school becomes safe to walk, travel assistance will remain in place unchanged for the children or young person until the end of the academic year. The Council proposes in the future to reduce this to four weeks following notification to parents and carers.
21. If a family's low-income status has ended, the Council proposes to continue to provide travel assistance until the end of the academic year. The Council will also connect with families and offer support such as signposting to specific services if this would prove helpful to them.

Reasons for withdrawal of transport

22. The current policy states in what circumstances transport will be withdrawn. The reasons include where fraud has taken place or a submission made included misleading information. The Council proposes to expand this part of the policy to include if there are errors with the initial assessment. Parents and carers will have the right of appeal if assistance is withdrawn for this reason.

Provision of travel assistance for under 5s.

23. The current policy states that the council may provide travel assistance to children aged Under 5 if it feels that extenuating circumstances have been demonstrated. It is proposed that this discretionary assistance will only be provided to reception aged children (children aged 4 and above). Currently 169 children who access H2S TA fall into this group. The Council may provide assistance to children who are aged four and entering into the reception year at primary school if extenuating circumstances have been demonstrated.

Medical and Health Interventions in the Travel Assistance Policy.

24. The current policy outlines in what circumstances a Passenger Assistant may be approved to support a child during travel to school, and one of these circumstances may be a child who has specific health and/or medical needs. It does not outline the operational standards or processes linked to the provision of medically trained transport staff. It is proposed that the new policy will provide guidance on the operational standards and processes which the Council follows if there is a requirement for a medically trained Passenger Assistant to support children during their journey to school.

One child per vehicle transport.

25. The current policy outlines in what circumstances individualised transport would be agreed. This is mainly taxis taking children and young people to and from schools and settings. The proposed change will mean that in the future, only in very specific circumstance will individualised transport be provided which will mean more children sharing transport and accessing a wider range of travel assistance options. Provision of individualised transport will instead be linked to medical needs or where the child or young person is receiving one-to-one support in their education or training venues.
26. Individualised transport involves provision of a single vehicle and a member of staff, for a single pupil. This carries a significantly higher unit cost than shared transport. Reasons this transport may be determined as the most appropriate solution may relate to the geographical location of the home address in relation to the education setting. It may also be linked to a health or medical need or the inability to share a vehicle due to the one-to-one nature of their education provision. The proposed change will clarify for both families and Surrey County Council staff the circumstances under which individual transport will be agreed to.

Travel assistance and unacceptable behaviour

27. The policy advises in some detail that the Council may look to withdraw transport assistance in instances of unacceptable behaviour. The Council understands its duty to provide travel assistance to children who are eligible, however, in circumstances where a child's behaviour has been dangerous and or potentially risks harm to themselves and others in a vehicle (including the driver), a review of the arrangements will be undertaken. It is proposed that parents/carers will be asked to accept a mileage allowance instead of transport being provided.

Travel Assistance and post-16

28. National guidance states that the council does not have to provide free transport for students aged 16-19. The Council's current policy states that transport will be provided in exceptional circumstances only. Currently 653 young people over the age of 16 access H2S TA. This costs circa £ 7.8M per annum.
29. In the future it is proposed that offers of travel assistance will focus on independent travel options, including the use of public transport and will move away from provision of private hire vehicles such as minibuses or taxis.
30. In addition, it is proposed that where the Council assesses a young person aged 16 to 19 years as eligible for travel assistance under its policy, the assistance offered may be in the form of a post-16 transport bursary to support families and young people to make their own transport arrangements.

Travel assistance appeals process

31. National guidance sets out how appeals against decisions made for H2S TA are conducted. This includes a two-stage process. Stage two must be independent of the stage one decision-making process. At present the stage two panel can be made up of members of the local authority.
32. It is proposed to continue with a two-stage process and that the stage two panel will be independent of the first, but the membership will now include Council Officers and in the future. This is in line with national guidance.

Conclusions:

33. The changes to the H2S TA policy are designed to increase the range of transport options offered to children who are eligible, promote inclusion and independence, support preparing for adulthood outcomes and make effective use of public sector resources. The Council has consulted with Surrey Residents about the proposed changes.
34. The consultation has been designed to adhere to legal requirements to consult communities on changes to H2S TA. The key elements of the consultation have been:

- A hard copy letter was sent to all current mainstream and additional needs (SEND) H2S TA service users setting out the proposed changes and inviting them to respond to the survey.
 - A survey on 'Surrey Says' that can be accessed by all Surrey Residents. As of 22 March 2022, 557 people had responded to the survey.
 - 4 virtual events
 - A Face Book Live Event with Family Voice
32. The consultation closes on 31 March 2022 at which time the results will be analysed and will inform the Cabinet decision on H2S TA policy changes.

Recommendations:

33. The Committee shares its views on the proposed approach to the new H2S TA policy and make any recommendations to Cabinet to inform their final decision.

Next steps:

- Public consultation closes 31 March 2022
 - Consultation response reviewed and analysed.
 - New travel assistance policy to be considered for decision-making by Cabinet on 26 April 2022.
-

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Sources/background papers

Annex 1 – Proposed Changes Guide



HOME TO SCHOOL TRAVEL ASSISTANCE POLICY:

Proposed Changes Guide

Introduction

This document summarises proposed changes to Surrey County Council's Home to School Travel Assistance Policy (H2S TA). This policy explains the eligibility criteria for travel assistance for children, with and without special educational needs, of statutory school age (5-16 years old), for children under 5 and for young people aged 16-19 and 19-25, and describes how the Council fulfils its duties and exercises its discretionary powers as set out in the Education Act 1996 and subsequent legislation and guidance.

The Council is refreshing the Home to School Travel Assistance (H2S TA) policy in a number of key areas. In doing so we will proactively engage with parents, carers, schools and colleges and other stakeholders. The policy will help align the Authority's commitment to moving away from an offer of school transport to a travel assistance model, with an increased focus on sustainability and Surrey's green agenda. Moving forward, the Council wants to focus on:

- Enhancement of the independent travel training (ITT) offer
- Further promotion of collection points rather than home pick-up arrangements
- A review of the process for the provision of individual transport
- Not providing H2S TA when the school attended is one of parental choice rather than the closest school to meet need
- The adoption of a more sustainable approach with greater use of public transport options where appropriate, reducing reliance on taxis and private cars

To complement the new policy, we are developing a parent guide that will sit alongside the agreed policy document. The parent guide will simplify guidance outlined in the new policy and explain the council's processes in greater detail.

The consultation uses the term 'additional needs' and 'SEND' to refer to children, young people and adults with special educational needs and disabilities. We have agreed to use identify-first language (eg "additional needs" rather than SEND unless it refers to legislation or a policy as this was the preference of young people we spoke to.

The main areas the Council is proposing to change are as follows :

1. The Council plans to offer a broader range of Travel Assistance options, aligned with Surrey's commitment to its climate policy agenda, promoting more sustainable modes of travel assistance.

Our engagement with children and young people tells us that working towards and supporting their independence is important. These options will help empower them, prepare them for adulthood and as a result contribute to improving their quality of life.

- The Council will introduce options such as bikeability (cycling safely and with confidence), driving lessons and access to TfL Oyster Card (in some areas of the county).
- We will no longer require children and young people to undertake individual travel training assessment in the home. The assessment will be undertaken in an agreed location.
- We will be encouraging the use of collection points, the designated pick-up and drop-off locations for pupils to meet the bus or taxi. Where children and young people with complex additional needs or the parents or carers' own mobility or disability may impact on them being able to use the collection points, we will assess individual needs to determine suitability. Where the introduction of collection points is being considered, the Council will consult with the parents and carers already on those routes affected by this potential change in service.

2. We propose to clarify the Council's position on transport journey times

The Council currently aims to comply with national recommendations on the maximum length of journey time for a child to get to and from school. This is 45 minutes for a primary aged child and 75 minutes for a secondary aged child attending placements both within and outside the County.

The Council is proposing that the recommended journey times will not apply to pupils travelling to out of county schools, where distances and the frequency of journeys may vary. We are also proposing to change the maximum journey times for primary aged children to 75 minutes.

3. We propose to change the measuring system for determining Independent Travel Allowance (ITA) from Straight Lines to Road Routes.

The policy currently says that the calculation of independent travel allowance is based on a straight-line (as the crow flies) calculation between a home address and school. The Council proposes to change this to a calculation that measures distances via road route. This is a better and more accurate reflection of the journey distance undertaken.

4. We are proposing to introduce a simplified mileage reimbursement system which replaces the original tiered system with the aim of increasing the take-up of this offer.

At the moment, the policy provides two modes of mileage reimbursement:

- A tiered mileage allowance based on average distance between a home address and school. This tiered allowance is broken down into 3 bands (0-5.99 miles, 6-10 miles and 11+ miles) and there are corresponding allowance rates next to each band.
- A standard mileage rate.

The Council proposes to introduce a simpler scheme to enable a more unified reimbursement process for parents and carers (including how and when they are reimbursed). The mileage rates to be used will still be set in line with Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC). Distances will be calculated using the shortest road route. In conjunction with this, the Council proposes to introduce flexibility to agree reimbursement rates on an individual basis with parents and carers where the alternative would be high-cost transport.

5. The Council proposes to change the notice period for the removal of travel assistance in certain circumstances.

The current policy requires travel assistance to remain in place until the end of the academic year in instances where low-income status of a child ends, and in instances where a walking route previously deemed unsafe becomes safe after review. The Council proposes to write to parents and carers when a walking route becomes safe with the explanation of the change and continue to provide assistance for four weeks at which point transport will be withdrawn.

If a family's low-income status has ended, applicants who have been entitled to travel assistance will be written to with the explanation that assistance will end. Travel assistance will be provided until the end of the academic year. The Council will also connect with families and offer support such as signposting to specific services if this would prove helpful to them.

6. The Council proposes to clarify the reasons for the withdrawal of transport and include the removal of assistance if an application approved for H2S TA has been done in error.

The current policy states in what circumstances transport will be withdrawn. The reasons include where fraud has taken place or a submission made included misleading information.

This part of the policy will be expanded to include the withdrawal of assistance if there are errors with the initial assessment. Parents and carers will have the right of appeal if assistance is withdrawn for this reason in the usual way.

7. The Council proposes to clarify its position regarding the provision of travel assistance for under 5s.

The current policy states that the council may provide travel assistance to children aged Under 5 if it feels that extenuating circumstances have been demonstrated.

It is proposed that this discretionary assistance will only be provided to reception aged children. The Council may provide assistance to children who are aged four and entering into the reception year at primary school if extenuating circumstances have been demonstrated.

8. The Council proposes to add information on Medical and Health Interventions in the Travel Assistance Policy.

The current policy outlines in what circumstances a Passenger Assistant may be approved to support a child during travel to school, and one of these circumstances may be a child who has specific health and/or medical needs. It does not outline the operational standards or processes linked to the provision of medically trained transport staff.

It is proposed that the new policy will provide guidance on the operational standards and processes which the Council follows if there is a requirement for a medically trained Passenger Assistant to support children during their journey to school.

9. The Council proposes to reduce the reliance on one- child- per-vehicle transport.

The current policy outlines in what circumstances individualised transport would be agreed. This is mainly taxis taking children and young people to and from school and settings.

The refreshed policy develops a focus on enabling independence and preparing for adulthood such as employment or shared living away from home. The proposed change to individual transport will be that it will only be agreed in extenuating circumstances. Travel assistance options other than bespoke transport will be explored in the first instance. Where transport is needed, it would normally be in a vehicle shared with other students or pupils such as a taxi or minibus. Provision of individualised transport would normally be linked to medical needs or where child or young person is receiving one-to-one support in their educational training venues.

10. The council proposes to clarify the conditions in which transport may be withdrawn based on instances of dangerous behaviour and a more detailed process.

The policy advises in some detail that the Council may look to withdrawing assistance in instances of unacceptable behaviour. The Council understands its duty to provide travel assistance to children who are eligible.

However, in circumstances where a child's behaviour has been dangerous and or potentially risks harm to themselves and others in a vehicle (including the driver), a review of the arrangements will be undertaken. It is proposed that parents and carers will be written to. If the occurrences are repeated, then a parent/carers will be asked to accept a mileage allowance instead of transport being provided.

11. The Council proposes to create an updated version of its statement for post-16 young people in-line with national guidance.

The Council's current policy states that transport will be provided in exceptional circumstances only.

National guidance states that the council does not have to provide free transport for students aged 16-19. The proposed change to the policy will be that the Council in the exercise of its discretion as to what travel assistance is necessary for learners of sixth form age may provide travel assistance for young people aged 16 to 19 who have additional needs in order to help them transition into adulthood and explore independent travel. It will also provide signposting to transport services for those young people who are not provided with H2S TA. Offers of travel assistance will now focus on independent travel, including the use of public transport and not on the provision of private hire vehicles such as minibuses or taxis.

12. The Council proposes to introduce bursaries for young people post 16 years of age.

The current policy outlines the types of travel assistance available if the Council deems a young person aged 16 to 19 eligible for travel assistance. It is proposed that where the Council assesses a young person aged 16 to 19 as eligible for travel assistance under its policy the assistance offered may be in the form of a post-16 transport bursary to support families and young people to make their own transport arrangements to develop independence and prepare for adulthood.

13. The Council is proposing to introduce changes to its travel assistance appeals process.

There is national guidance that sets out how appeals against decisions made on H2S TA are conducted. This includes a two-stage process. Stage two must be independent of the stage one decision-making process. At present the stage two panel can be made up of members of the local authority.

It is proposed to continue with a two-stage process and that the stage two panel will be independent of the first but that the membership will include Council Officers in the future.

For any questions regarding the survey, please contact research@surreycc.gov.uk

Annex 2 – Summary of statutory duties for Home to School travel assistance

Mainstream primary

Children in year 0 (Reception) to year 3 can get free home to school transport if they attend their nearest school and live more than 2 miles away.

Children in year 4 to year 6 can get free home to school transport if they attend their nearest school and live more than 3 miles away.

Children from low-income families in year 4 to year 6 can get free home to school transport if they attend their nearest school and live more than 2 miles away.

Mainstream secondary

Children aged 11 to 16 (school years 7 to 11) can get free home to school transport if:

- they attend their nearest school
- they live more than 3 miles away

Children from low-income families can get free home to school transport if:

- they attend one of their 3 nearest qualifying schools
- the school is between 2 and 6 miles from their home address

School transport for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

Home to school transport will not be provided if you signed a transport disclaimer when agreeing your child's school and if there is no legal entitlement.

We will provide home to school transport where children:

- are attending their nearest suitable school (that we've identified)
- live 2 miles or more for children below 8 from their nearest suitable school
- live 3 miles or more for children aged 8 or over from their nearest suitable school
- where the mainstream low-income policy (above) is met

School transport could also be provided if a child has SEN or mobility difficulties and cannot reasonably be expected to walk to their nearest suitable school, even when accompanied by a parent.

**CHILDREN, FAMILIES, LIFELONG LEARNING AND CULTURE SELECT COMMITTEE
ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TRACKER
APRIL 2022**

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KEY			
	No Progress Reported	Recommendation/Action In Progress	Recommendation/Action Implemented

Recommendations

Meeting	Item	Recommendation	Responsible Officer/Member	Deadline	Progress Check On	Update/Response
14 December 2020	Update on the Implementation of the SEND Task Group [Item 5]	CFLLC 1/20: That the Director – Education, Learning and Culture share the re-designed outreach offer, once it is complete, with the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee.	Liz Mills, Director – Education, Learning and Culture		May 2022	The outreach review was delayed by one year due to the pandemic – the existing arrangements were extended during this period. A consultation is underway to help inform the new outreach offer and the Select Committee will be updated again once the proposals have been agreed.

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18 October 2021	SEND Transformation Update [Item 5]	CFLLC 2/21: At an appropriate time, the Select Committee visit educational settings supporting children with special educational needs and disabilities.			April 2022	Visits are being looked into for later this year.
		CFLLC 3/21: The Director – Education and Lifelong Learning share the findings of the SEND Self-Evaluation and any actions to be taken in response to it with the Chairman of the Select Committee for circulation to the Committee once available.	Liz Mills, Director - Education and Lifelong Learning	April 2022	April 2022	The Summary Self Evaluation will be available in April 2022 and will be shared with the Select Committee along with actions planned in response.

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	EWMH [Item 9]	CFLLC 5/21: The Select Committee agree an approach to future scrutiny of Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health services with the Adults and Health Select Committee.	Benjamin Awkal, Scrutiny Officer – CFLLC Ben Cullimore, Scrutiny Officer – Adults and Health	January 2022	April 2022	A meeting has been set up between the respective Scrutiny Officers and the Scrutiny Business Manager to discuss the approach.
		CFLLC 6/21: That the Director – Commissioning arrange the development of a dashboard of key performance information and make it available to the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture and Adults and Health Select Committees.	Hayley Connor, Director – Commissioning	April 2022	April 2022	The dashboard is expected to be developed in April.

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		CFLLC 7/21: That the Director – Commissioning provide the Select Committee with a report containing a clear overview of the Alliance Partnership’s governance including further detail on the specific role of each organisation within the Partnership Alliance, the associated performance measures and targets and the resources allocated to them by April 2022.	Hayley Connor, Director – Commissioning	April 2022	May 2022	A report is due to be shared with Select Committee Members by May 2022.
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13 December 2021	Scrutiny of 2022/23 draft Budget and MTFS to 2026/27 [Item 5]	CFLLC 9/21: After the meeting, the Committee shall agree wording for inclusion in a joint report from the council's Select Committees to the Cabinet in respect of the draft Budget 2022/23 and Medium-term Financial Strategy to 2026/27. That wording shall be drafted under the oversight of the Chairman and Vice-Chairmen and then shared with the Committee for agreement.	Select Committee	January 2022	N/A	The wording for the report has been prepared and the joint report went to Cabinet on 25 January 2022.
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Actions

Meeting	Item	Action	Responsible Officer/Member	Deadline	Progress Check On	Update/Response
15 July 2021	Children's Improvement Update [Item 1]	CFLLC 1/21: That the Director of Family Resilience and Safeguarding share the findings of the review of the Family Safeguarding Model with the Chairman of the Select Committee for circulation to Committee members.	Matt Ansell, Director – Family Resilience and Safeguarding	February 2022	March 2022	Report will be delivered to Council in February 2022 earliest and shared with the Select Committee subsequently.
13 December 2021	Questions and Petitions [Item 4]	CFLLC 8/21: The Director of Corporate Parenting to provide data, including commentary on caseload, on the number of full-time equivalent social workers by the next public meeting, in January 2022.	Tina Benjamin, Director – Corporate Parenting	January 2022	N/A	The Director provided a response which has been circulated to the Select Committee Members.

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	Scrutiny of 2022/23 draft Budget and MTFS to 2026/27 [Item 5]	CFLLC 10/21: The Executive Director for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning to provide the number of 18-25 year olds with no prior Surrey County Council contact that would be affected by the planned efficiency.	Rachael Wardell, Executive Director – Children, Families and Lifelong Learning Hayley Connor, Director – Commissioning	January 2022	N/A	The Executive Director provided a response which has been circulated to the Select Committee Members.
17 January 2022	Inclusion, Post-16 Destinations and School Improvement [Item 6]	CFLLC 1/22: The Director for Education and Lifelong Learning to share the council’s letter to Government regarding elective home education and the response to it with the Select Committee once available.	Liz Mills, Director – Education, Learning and Culture	22 February 2022	N/A	The Director provided the letter and the response which has been circulated to the Select Committee Members.

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		CFLLC 2/22: The Assistant Director for Education to provide the numbers of children in the cohorts used in the figure <i>16- and 17-year olds NEET by disadvantage, as at end June 2021</i> on page 58 of the report and the percentage of those children whose post-16 destinations were unknown.	Jane Winterbone, Assistant Director – Education	22 February 2022	N/A	The Assistant Director provided a response which has been circulated to the Select Committee Members.
		CFLLC 3/22: The Assistant Director for Education to provide comparative data on the post-16 destinations of looked after children and care leavers who had been placed in county and out of county.	Jane Winterbone, Assistant Director – Education	22 February 2022	N/A	The Assistant Director provided a response which has been circulated to the Select Committee Members.

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		<p>CFLLC 4/22: The Director for Education and Lifelong Learning to provide information on home to school transport arrangements for SEND children, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration of Education Health and Care plans when arranging provision, • Schools' involvement in decision-making, • The number of children who did not start school at the beginning of the 2021/22 school year due to home to school transport issues, • Data on the increase in demand for home to school transport. 	Liz Mills, Director – Education and Lifelong Learning	22 February 2022	April 2022	The Director has been contacted for a response.
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	No Progress Reported	Recommendation/Action In Progress	Recommendation/Action Implemented

	Children's Improvement and No Wrong Door Update [Item 5]	5/22: The Director for Corporate Parenting to provide the number of care leavers located outside of Surrey and of those, the number requiring mental health support.	Tina Benjamin, Director - Corporate Parenting	22 February 2022	N/A	The Director provided a response which has been circulated to the Select Committee Members.
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Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee

Forward Work Programme 2021 - 2022

Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee
Chairman: Liz Bowes | Scrutiny Officer: Benjamin Awkal | Democratic Services Assistant: Emily Beard

Date of Meeting	Type of Scrutiny	Issue for Scrutiny	Purpose	Outcome	Relevant Organisational Priorities	Cabinet Member/Lead Officer
6 July 2022	Overview, policy review and development	School place sufficiency	To review strategic approach to ensuring a sufficiency of school places within a sustainable system, including schools capital estate (maintained, special and PRUs) management and programme, admissions and place planning (including current and forecast roll numbers); and updated on any relevant national policy developments, such as schools white paper.	Committee reviews strategic approach to maintaining a sufficiency of places within a sustainable school system and makes recommendations as appropriate.	Tackling health inequality Empowering communities	Denise Turner-Stewart, Cabinet Member for Education and Learning Liz Mills, Director – Education and Lifelong Learning

<p>6 July 2022</p>	<p>Overview, policy review and development</p>	<p>Children’s Services (ILACS) inspection findings and Corporate Parenting Annual Report</p>	<p>To review findings of Ofsted inspection of the Council’s children’s services and actions to be taken in response.</p> <p>Update on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Corporate Parenting; the development of the work of the Corporate Parenting Board; and the key performance data for year ending March 2021 for looked after children as compared with statistical neighbours and nationally; and updated on any relevant national policy developments, such as Care Review output.</p>	<p>Inspection findings and response and corporate parenting annual report reviewed; Lead Member and senior officers held to account.</p>	<p>Tackling health inequality</p> <p>Empowering communities</p>	<p>Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children and Families</p> <p>Tina Benjamin, Director – Corporate Parenting</p> <p>Matt Ansell, Director – Family Resilience and Safeguarding</p>
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<p>4 October 2022</p>	<p>Overview, policy review and development</p>	<p>Universal youth work</p>	<p>To review the provision of universal youth work and outcomes for all young people at county and district level and outcomes for service users; and contrast data from new provision with that of previous provision.</p>	<p>Committee assured of adequacy and impact of provision</p>	<p>Tackling health inequalities</p> <p>Growing a sustainable economy so everyone can benefit</p> <p>Empowering communities</p>	<p>Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children and Families</p> <p>Matt Ansell, Director – Family Resilience and Safeguarding</p>
<p>4 October 2022</p>	<p>Overview, policy review and development</p>	<p>Family centres</p>	<p>To review the new model of providing support to families, including by reviewing usage and outcomes for services users and also all families; and contrast data from new provision with that of previous provision.</p>	<p>Committee assured new model is effectively supporting families to build their resilience and self-reliance.</p>	<p>Tackling health inequality</p>	<p>Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children and Families</p> <p>Matt Ansell, Director – Family Resilience and Safeguarding</p>

<p>4 October 2022</p>	<p>Overview, policy review and policy development and pre-decision</p>	<p>SEND Transformation Update and the development of the next SEND Strategy</p>	<p>Committee to review progress of SEND Transformation Programme and Safety Valve agreement, be updated on the development of the SEND strategy and recent complaints data and insights; and updated on any relevant national policy developments, such as output of SEND review.</p>	<p>Cabinet Member and senior officers held to account in respect of SEND Transformation; and Committee reviews the development of the new SEND strategy and its anticipated principles.</p>	<p>Tackling health inequality</p> <p>Empowering communities</p> <p>Growing a sustainable economy so everyone can benefit</p>	<p>Denise Turner-Stewart, Cabinet Member for Education and Learning</p> <p>Liz Mills, Director – Education and Lifelong Learning</p> <p>Emily George, Assistant Director – SEND Transformation</p> <p>Julia Katherine, Assistant Director – Inclusion and Additional Needs (NW Quadrant and policy lead)</p> <p>External Family Voice Surrey</p>
<p>4 October 2022</p>	<p>Overview, policy review and policy development</p>	<p>Report of the Adult Learning and Skills Task Group</p>	<p>Committee to receive the report of the Adult Learning and Skills Task Group.</p>	<p>Committee reviews and endorses the Report and its recommendations.</p>	<p>Tackling health inequality</p> <p>Growing a sustainable economy so everyone can benefit</p> <p>Enabling a greener future</p> <p>Empowering communities</p>	<p>Chris Townsend, Vice-Chairman/Chairman of the Adult Learning and Skills Task Group</p>

<p>8 December 2022</p>	<p>Pre-decision</p>	<p>Budget 2023/24 and Medium- Term Financial Strategy</p>	<p>Select Committee to receive draft budget proposals and Medium-Term Financial Strategy for 2022/23.</p>	<p>Select Committee scrutinises relevant aspects of the Council's draft budget and medium-term financial strategy, provides feedback and makes recommendations.</p>	<p>Tackling health inequality</p> <p>Growing a sustainable economy so everyone can benefit</p> <p>Enabling a greener future</p> <p>Empowering communities</p>	<p>Denise Turner-Stewart, Cabinet Member for Education and Learning</p> <p>Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children and Families</p> <p>Mark Nuti, Cabinet Member for Communities</p> <p>Rachael Wardell, Executive Director – Children, Families and Lifelong Learning</p> <p>Marie Snelling, Executive Director – Communities and Transformation</p>
<p>Meeting 1 of 2023</p>	<p>Performance and overview, policy review and development</p>	<p>Inclusion in education</p>	<p>Committee to review number and characteristics of children missing education and full-time education and approach to including disengaged children and young people in education, and exclusions data and practice.</p>	<p>Cabinet Member and senior officers held to account for providing an inclusive education system which enables disadvantaged children and young people to achieve positive outcomes</p>	<p>Tackling health inequality</p> <p>Growing a sustainable economy so everyone can benefit</p> <p>Empowering communities</p>	<p>Denise Turner-Stewart, Cabinet Member for Education and Learning</p> <p>Liz Mills, Director for Education and Lifelong Learning</p>

<p>Meeting 2 of 2023</p>	<p>Overview, policy review and development</p>	<p>Active children and young people</p>	<p>Committee to review the benefits of physical activity and the opportunities provided by the council and partners for children and young people to be physically active, including physical education (PE) and sport provision and active travel opportunities in maintained schools; and to review local public health data regarding child and young person health and wellbeing.</p>	<p>Committee to understand benefits of physical activity, sport and high-quality PE for children and young people, evaluate the offer in Surrey, and make recommendations as appropriate.</p>	<p>Tackling health inequality</p> <p>Enabling a greener future</p>	<p>Denise Turner-Stewart, Cabinet Member for Education and Learning</p> <p>Sinead Mooney, Cabinet Member for Adults and Health</p> <p>Mark Nuti, Cabinet Member for Communities</p> <p>Marie Snelling, Executive Director for Customer and Communities</p> <p>Liz Mills, Director for Education and Lifelong Learning</p> <p>Ruth Hutchinson, Director for Public Health</p> <p>Maria Dawes, CEO – Schools Alliance for Excellence</p>
<p>Meeting 2 of 2023</p>	<p>Performance and overview, policy review and development</p>	<p>Educational attainment and post-16 destinations</p>	<p>Committee to review information, inc. for specific (particularly vulnerable) cohorts, on the educational attainment and development of Surrey pupils, including centre assessed grades, and post-16 destinations and NEET.</p>	<p>Cabinet Member and senior officers held to account for learners' outcomes.</p>	<p>Tackling health inequality</p> <p>Growing a sustainable economy so everyone can benefit</p> <p>Empowering communities</p>	<p>Denise Turner-Stewart, Cabinet Member for Education and Learning</p> <p>Liz Mills, Director for Education and Lifelong Learning</p>

<p>Meeting 3 of 2023</p>	<p>Performance and overview, policy review and development</p>	<p>School standards, improvement and policy</p>	<p>Committee to review annual change in Ofsted gradings of, and inspection-finding trends re, Surrey schools, the work and impact of the Schools Alliance for Excellence and the strategic direction for maintained schools, including relevant national policy developments.</p>	<p>Cabinet Member and senior officers held to account for school standards and improvement; and Committee updated on strategic direction for maintained schools.</p>	<p>Tackling health inequality Growing a sustainable economy so everyone can benefit Empowering communities</p>	<p>Denise Turner-Stewart, Cabinet Member for Education and Learning Liz Mills, Director for Education and Lifelong Learning Maria Dawes, CEO – Schools Alliance for Excellence</p>
<p>Meeting 4 of 2023</p>	<p>Overview, policy review and development</p>	<p>Support for resettled children and families</p>	<p>Committee to review the needs of resettled children and families and the support provided to them.</p>	<p>Cabinet Members and senior officers held to account</p>	<p>Tackling health inequality Growing a sustainable economy so everyone can benefit</p>	<p>Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children and Families Denise Turner-Stewart, Cabinet Member for Education and Learning Rachael Wardell, Executive Director for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Items to be scheduled</p>						
<p><i>(Date)</i></p>	<p><i>(Type)</i></p>	<p><i>(Issue)</i></p>	<p><i>(Purpose)</i></p>	<p><i>(Outcome)</i></p>	<p><i>(Cabinet Member/Lead Officer)</i></p>	
<p>TBC – once fully embedded</p>	<p>Overview, policy review and development</p>	<p>Family Resilience</p>	<p>Committee to review service performance and outcomes for service users following</p>	<p>Committee assured of service performance, outcomes for users and</p>	<p>Tackling health inequality Growing a sustainable economy so</p>	<p>Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children and Families Simon Hart, Independent Chair – Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership</p>

			transformation including the introduction of new practice models.	identifies any learning opportunities following service transformation and embedding of new practice models.	everyone can benefit Enabling a greener future Empowering communities	
TBC	Overview, policy review and development	Adolescent suicide (joint with, and led by, Adults and Health)	Committees to review the issue of adolescent suicide and the proposed strategic approach.	Committees understand issues and evaluates proposed approach.	Tackling health inequality	Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children and Families Sinead Mooney, Cabinet Member for Adults and Health
TBC	Pre-decision	Children's Social Care Workforce Strategy	Committee to review the proposed changes to the children's social care workforce strategy	Committee makes recommendations as appropriate.	Tackling health inequality	Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children and Families Rachael Wardell, Executive Director for Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture

Task and Finish Groups

Topic	<u>Relevant organisational priorities</u>	<u>Membership</u>
Adult Learning and Skills	<u>Tackling health inequality</u> <u>Enabling a greener future</u> <u>Empowering communities</u>	<u>Chris Townsend (Chair)</u> <u>Jonathan Essex</u> <u>Fiona White</u> <u>Jeremy Webster</u> <u>Catherine Baart</u>

	Growing a sustainable economy so everyone can benefit	
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Standing Items

- **Recommendations Tracker and Forward Work Programme:** Monitor Select Committee recommendations and requests and forward work programme.

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