

CHILDREN, FAMILIES, LIFELONG LEARNING AND CULTURE
SELECT COMMITTEE

Thursday, 13 March 2025



MOTION REFERRED TO CFLLC SELECT COMMITTEE

Purpose of report: The Select Committee will consider a motion entitled 'Taking a broader preventative approach to Children's Services', as requested by the Council.

Background:

On Tuesday 10 December 2024, at the meeting of Council held at Woodhatch, Members of Surrey County Council under item 11 voted to refer motion (ii) on 'Taking a broader preventative approach to Children's Services' to the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning & Culture Select Committee for their feedback and input.

The motion, proposed by Cllr Jonathan Essex and seconded by Cllr Liz Townsend, asks the Council to commission a review of recent research into the benefits of taking a broader preventative approach to Children's Services, and to ask the Local Government Secretary for additional funding directed to prevention.

Full text of the motion presented to the Council meeting is at Annex 1.

Process:

According to the Surrey County Council constitution, Part 1 of the Standing Orders states that:

- When an original motion is referred to the Cabinet or appropriate committee under Standing Order 12.3, the Member of the Council who has moved the original motion and his/her seconder shall be notified of the meeting at which the Cabinet or committee will consider it. They shall have the right to attend the meeting and speak to the motion.

The motion was referred to the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning & Culture Select Committee at the Council meeting on 10 December 2024 and will be considered by the Select Committee at its meeting on 13 March 2025.

Recommendation:

That the Select Committee hears from the proposer and seconder of the motion, the Cabinet portfolio lead and service representatives, asking questions as appropriate, and that following debate the Committee makes recommendations to Cabinet or Council for decision. This might include endorsing the proposer's original motion or recommending an alternative course of action.

Next Steps:

The Select Committee will report back to the next ordinary meeting of the Council, scheduled for 18 March 2025.

Report contact

Julie Armstrong, Scrutiny Officer

Contact details

julie.armstrong@surreycc.gov.uk

Annex 1

MEETING OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL

10 DECEMBER 2024

NOTICE OF MOTION

Item 11 (ii)

Jonathan Essex (Redhill East) to move under standing order 11 as follows:

This Council agrees that:

- Surrey County Council used to support a network of 58 Sure Start Children Centres with some government support. These were replaced with 23 Family Centres in 2017 and these are now funded through 11 Family Centre and Family Resilience contracts that also include youth services up to 18 (and age 25 for those with SEN).
- This shift to the family centres model has been accompanied by a shift in council funding for children services. There is now less funding allocated to universal and community support, and signposting to families (often through group sessions) alongside increased funding for more targeted and intensive support to individual families, including through the new Intensive Family Support Service (IFSS).
- Recent academic research has highlighted that the Sure Start Children Centres model reduced childhood obesity and youth crime whilst increased early identification of SEN (and reduced SEN and EHCPs in secondary schools) and improved educational outcomes.
- The above shift in funding in children's services within a post-Covid context of continued austerity, together with service improvements in Surrey County Council, has contributed to a reduction in children being taken into care in Surrey. However, at the same time there has been an increase in the numbers of children requiring additional support when they start school, and a surge in the number of children who have mental health needs.

This Council resolves to:

- I. Commission a review of recent research into the benefits of taking a broader preventative approach to children's services. This review should include recommendations to improve long-term outcomes for Surrey families, including through strengthening universal and community support to meet emerging needs earlier.
- II. Write to the new Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, the Rt Hon Angela Rayner MP, to call for additional funding for local authority Children's Services across the UK that is directed to prevention, to improve outcomes to meet the objective that no children or families are left behind.

Seconder: Liz Townsend

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