

MINUTES of the meeting of the **CHILDREN & EDUCATION SELECT COMMITTEE** held at 10.35 am on 18 September 2014 at Ashcombe Suite, County Hall, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT1 2DN.

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Committee at its meeting on Thursday, 27 November 2014.

Elected Members:

- * Dr Zully Grant-Duff (Chairman)
- * Mr Denis Fuller (Vice-Chairman)
- * Mrs Liz Bowes
- * Mr Ben Carasco
- * Mr Robert Evans
- * Mr David Goodwin
- * Mr Ken Gulati
- * Mrs Margaret Hicks
- * Mr Colin Kemp
- * Mrs Mary Lewis
- * Mrs Marsha Moseley
- * Mr Chris Townsend

Ex officio Members:

Mrs Sally Ann B Marks, Vice Chairman of the County Council
Mr David Munro, Chairman of the County Council

Co-opted Members:

- * Cecile White, Parent Governor Representative
- * Duncan Hewson, Parent Governor Representative
- * Derek Holbird, Diocesan Representative for the Anglican Church
- Mary Reynolds, Diocesan Representative for the Catholic Church

Substitute Members:

Mary Reynolds

In attendance

44/13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]

Apologies were received from Mary Reynolds, Simon Parr acted as her substitute.

45/13 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING: 10 JULY 2014 [Item 2]

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2014 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

46/13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

No declarations of interest were received.

47/13 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]

A question had been received from Ben Carasco. A written response was tabled at the meeting, and is attached as an appendix to these minutes. A supplementary question was asked concerning the number of allegations and incidences of Child Sexual Exploitation that were known in Surrey. Officers responded that this question was best directed to the Surrey Safeguarding Children Board, as the multi-agency statutory body. It was noted by the Committee that the annual report of the Safeguarding Board would be considered at the Committee's meeting on 29 November 2014.

48/13 RESPONSES FROM THE CABINET TO ISSUES REFERRED BY THE SELECT COMMITTEE [Item 5]

There were no referrals to Cabinet at the last meeting, so there were no responses to report.

49/13 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY UPDATE [Item 6]**Witnesses:**

Nick Wilson, Strategic Director of Children, Schools and Families
P-J Wilkinson, Assistant Director for Schools and Learning
Susie Campbell, Surrey SEND Pathfinder Manager

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. Officers informed the Committee that the Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) reforms were still relatively new, and that their implementation over the coming months would highlight any requirements to improve the system that had been developed through the SEND pathfinder. It was highlighted that report set out the governance arrangements that would provide oversight of the implementation of the SEND reforms.
2. The Committee was told that the spirit of the legislation was to ensure clearer pathways to accessing SEND support, and to encourage greater choice for families. Officers expressed the view that this would

- be achieved through partnership working, supported through the use of a joint Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan.
3. The Committee was asked to note that the four key changes outlined in the reforms included a greater involvement of parents and children in the assessment process; greater involvement from education, health and social care partners in the assessment process; an emphasis on personalisation; and an extension of SEND provision to young people aged 25 years old. Officers commented that there was no significant extra resources provided by central government to meet the cost of these reforms, following implementation, and that budget allocation would be more challenging as result.
 4. The Committee raised a question concerning the resources available to implement the reforms. Officers explained that the Designated Schools Grant of £730 million broke down into 3 separate elements, one of which was the High Needs Block. The Department for Education had indicated that the expectation was £125 million of the Designated Schools Grant should be allocated to the High Needs block. It was highlighted by officers that the present High Needs block allocation in Surrey was higher, with an additional £10 million being used. The Committee was informed that there were measures identified to help reduce this additional spending over the coming few years. Officers commented that the current system was heavily reliant on independent SEND school provision to meet current SEND supports needs. It was highlighted that the SEND reforms could potentially encourage greater re-integration of students with SEND requirements back into mainstream school provision. Officers commented that in most circumstances this would be undertaken, where appropriate, when a child made the transition to secondary education. Officers explained to the Committee that the notional SEND funding was allocated to ensure an even distribution of resources for each Surrey school.
 5. The chair of Family Voice introduced herself and outlined the advocacy role of the organisation for families and young people with SEND requirements. She expressed the view that new legislation meant the parent and child were at the centre of each decision. She added that aspects outside of the classroom needed to be looked at, and that access to services through the Local Offer should be improved, particularly for those groups who were vulnerable or disadvantaged. Officers noted that there was a challenge to ensure that the Local Offer was accessible to all, and recognised that this would be an ongoing consideration. The Committee was informed that individual school head teachers and SEND co-ordinators would be the first point of contact for any parent who felt their child may require additional SEND support.
 6. Officers informed the Committee that the new systems meant the development of new measures for customer satisfaction; these were being produced in collaboration with the Parent Partnership and Family Voice.

7. The Committee was informed that at this stage it was too early to tell whether the reform would see a substantial number of personal budgets being used. It was noted that the budget would allow specialised activities and support outside of a school's remit. There was a discussion regarding the use of personal budgets, and possible impacts this might have on SEND support in schools.
8. The Committee raised concerns on the advice and support families would receive around using personal budgets effectively. Officers responded that the Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans would have attached a set of outcomes, and any expenditure that would be required to support those outcomes.
9. The Committee was informed that the mediation process played an important role in reducing the number of SEND decisions going to tribunal. Witnesses commented that the legal sector had responded to market demands concerning tribunals, and this had produced an increasing pressure to ensure that the assessment process and mediation services were robust. The Committee was informed that an enhanced service could potentially see a reduction in the number of tribunals. It was highlighted that the majority of families had expressed satisfaction with the services they received.
10. Witnesses expressed the view that some students requiring SEND support made the transition to Further Education without the necessary information provided in advance. This presented a commissioning challenge, as it was difficult to anticipate the required resources for the academic year in advance. It was also highlighted that many Further Education provisions were unable to provide a suitable education for SEND students up to the age of 25, and that expectations were often higher than what the provision was able to offer. The Committee was advised that Further Education colleges were allocating greater budget resources to meeting SEND requirements.
11. The Committee discussed the work being undertaken to review joint paediatric therapies. It was highlighted that there was significant demand for speech and language therapies, and work was being undertaken to ensure an equitable offer across the six Clinical Commissioning Group areas. Officers and witnesses also highlighted the role of early identification and the addressing of need in order to ensure the best outcomes for children and their families.

Recommendations

- That officers continue to work with families and children to ensure that the Local Offer is accessible, in particular for vulnerable groups such as children who are Looked After.
- That the SEND governance board considers how stakeholders can work together to ensure earlier identification of SEND requirements for

children who are Looked After, in particular to ensure need has been identified before reaching Further Education.

- That the Committee is provided with the Key Performance Indicators the SEND Governance Board will use -- once agreed -- and that a report on these is provided to the Performance & Finance Sub-Group in six months. A further, formal report to be brought to the full Committee in 12 months.
- That the SEND Governance Board provide a further report in 12 months outlining how integrated commissioning arrangements have worked to meet the requirements of the SEND reforms, and how this has provided support for Early Years families.
- That the CCGs and Council officers provide a report in 12 months concerning the provision of joint paediatric therapies.
- That the School Phase Councils are invited to make a joint representation to the Committee in 12 months covering their views on the impact of:
 - The introduction of Personal Budgets
 - The loss of School Action and School Action Plus
 - That the Parent Partnership and Family Voice are both invited to prepare reports to the Committee in 12 months, in particular focussing on the “customer satisfaction” work presently in development, in order to provide an independent view of how the SEND reforms have been implemented in Surrey.

50/13 PERFORMANCE AND FINANCE SUB-GROUP [Item 7]

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Committee discussed the establishment of a performance and finance sub-group and the elected members were: Zully Grant-Duff, Denis Fuller, Colin Kemp, David Goodwin and Chris Townsend.

Resolved:

- That the Committee agree the membership of a performance and finance sub-group, as set out by the Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

51/13 RECOMMENDATION TRACKER AND FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME [Item 8]

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Committee was informed that the independent review of residential care homes was available and would be considered at a future meeting.
2. It was noted that School Place Planning is not included on the forward work programme, and officers agreed to ensure this was included as an item at future meeting. The Committee discussed the possibility of

establishing a separate sub-group to discuss school attainment outcomes. Officers agreed to explore the proposal further with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

52/13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING [Item 9]

The next Children and Education Select Committee will be held at 10.00am on Thursday 27 November 2014.

Meeting ended at: 1.05 pm

Chairman