

MINUTES of the meeting of the **CHILDREN & FAMILIES SELECT COMMITTEE** held at 10.30 am on 20 March 2013 at Committee Room C, County Hall, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT1 2DN.

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Committee at its next meeting.

Elected Members:

- * Mrs Clare Curran (Chairman)
- * Mrs Liz Bowes (Vice-Chairman)
- * Mr W D Barker OBE
- * John V C Butcher
- * Nigel Cooper
- * Dr Lynne Hack
- * Mrs M A Hicks
- A Mrs Yvonna Lay, Substituted by Mrs Sally Ann B Marks
- A Mr Geoff Marlow
- * Mrs Pauline Searle
- * Mrs Fiona White
- A Mr Keith Witham, Substituted by Simon Gimson

In attendance

Mary Angell, Cabinet Member for Children & Families

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

Apologies were received from Geoff Marlow, Keith Witham and Yvonna Lay. Simon Gimson acted as substitute for Keith Witham, and Sally Marks was substitute for Yvonna Lay.

14/13 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING: 30 JANUARY 2013 [Item 2]

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

15/13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

There were no declarations of interest.

16/13 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]

There were no questions or petitions to report.

17/13 RESPONSES FROM THE CABINET TO ISSUES REFERRED BY THE SELECT COMMITTEE [Item 5]

Declarations of interest: None.

Witnesses: None.

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Committee noted one response from the Cabinet on 5 February 2013, following a recommendation made in relation to Budget Monitoring 2012/13. One Member commented as to a possible adverse impact to Children's Services as result of the outlined savings.

Recommendations:

None.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

18/13 RECOMMENDATION TRACKER AND FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME [Item 6]

Declarations of interest: None.

Witnesses: None.

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The proposed Forward Work Programme for 2013/14 was shared with the Committee. A Member requested that consideration be given to an item on Surrey's measures to identify and reduce institutionalised sexual abuse. It was suggested that the Committee query this with the

Independent Chairman of the Surrey Safeguarding Children's Board when she next attends a Committee meeting.

2. The Committee noted the Recommendation Tracker and there were no further comments.

Recommendations:

None.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

Committee Next Steps:

None.

19/13 CHILDREN'S SERVICES JOINT COMMISSIONING UPDATE [Item 7]

Declarations of interest: None.

Witnesses:

Ian Banner, Head of Children's Social Care and Wellbeing Commissioning, Surrey County Council

Lucy Botting, Director of Quality and Governance, Guildford and Waverley Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)

Sheila Jones, Head of County-wide Services

Caroline Budden, Deputy Director, Children's, Schools and Families

Mary Angell, Cabinet Member for Children and Families

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Committee was given an update as to the current status of joint commissioning for Children and Young People. It was outlined by officers that there had been some progress, but not as much as expected. It was commented that there was optimism for the future, and the proposed key priorities and structure were now in place for this work to progress. It was noted that these were pending agreement by the Health & Wellbeing Board once it was formally established on 1 April 2013.
2. Members raised concerns regarding the transition between Children's Services to Adult Social Care and asked what joint commissioning work had been proposed to address this. Officers commented that Children's Services were adopting the "think family" approach and working closely with the Surrey & Borders Partnership to address this. It was highlighted to the Committee that efforts were made to ensure that Adult Mental Health professionals attended Child Protection Conferences where necessary.
3. Members queried which organisations contained within the organisational chart held budgetary responsibilities. It was clarified that

the chart did not represent budget structures, and that Surrey County Council held its budget for joint commissioning within the Children, Schools & Families directorate.

4. Members commented on the re-commissioning of Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and asked officers how this could be jointly procured in the future to form a more responsive service. The Head of Children's Social Care and Wellbeing Commissioning commented that there was work underway to rework the governance arrangements for CAMHS following the implementation of the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs). It was recognised by officers that future priorities included the timeliness of referrals and the need for greater joint commissioning between the CCGs and Children's Services.
5. The Director for Quality and Governance commented that the present arrangements split different levels of need in relation to mental health across different providers. The CCGs were exploring options in relation to this, from the perspective of both adults and children, and there were a number of ongoing conversations with both medical directors and nursing directors in relation to the matter. It was confirmed that the Guildford & Waverly CCG was leading on mental health in Surrey.
6. The Committee raised concerns that there had been problems in relation to the delay in CAMHS providing services. The Cabinet Member for Children & Families commented that that in the past CAMHS had provided services only to those identified as tier 3 and 4 (severe, complex and persistent mental health conditions and specialist long term mental health conditions respectively). The new arrangements provided an opportunity to address areas where previously there had been less identified provision, such as tier 1 and 2 (less severe mental health conditions and assessments and interventions for more severe or complex mental health conditions respectively). Members commented that it seemed positive that there was a drive to commission work around tiers 1 and 2, as well as the acute work in relation to tiers 3 and 4.
7. Members asked officers to clarify whether there would be a gap created in the CAMHS provision by the transition between the Primary Care Trust and CCG. It was confirmed that the joint working would continue, and that the only transition work still outstanding related to paperwork for the arrangements in place.
8. Members commented that there was a need to ensure that practitioners were providing information to Children's Services when required. Highlighted in respect to this was the requirement to appoint a medical advisor for adoption panels. The Director of Quality and Governance informed the Committee that there had been historic difficulties around the procured services for adoption medicals, and these were being undertaken by the Designated Nurse for Looked After Children (LAC) as an interim measure.
9. The Deputy Director for Children's, Schools and Families commented that the new arrangements in relation to the CCGs would provide an

opportunity for health practitioners and Children's Services to work more closely together around commissioning. She informed the Committee that she was confident about the progress being made. Officers outlined a number of targeted services that were being developed to accompany the LAC health checks; these included additional support from CAMHS where appropriate, and targeted support around sexual health.

10. The Chairman of the Committee commented that the medical checks for LAC had been of particular concern to the Committee in previous months. The Director of Quality and Governance stated that she anticipated that the performance around LAC medical checks would show improvement in the next 3 to 6 months. It was highlighted that dental checks would prove more challenging to address as this was the responsibility of the National Commissioning Board, and there would be less opportunity to input into the commissioning of dental health for LAC. It was recognised that things worked effectively on a practitioner level, and that efforts were being made to ensure that there was a shared vision in relation to leadership.
11. Members asked how the CCGs would address issues raised by the Health & Wellbeing Board. Officers commented that they would anticipate that any identified issues would already have been known to the CCG. The Committee was informed that the Chairman of the Guildford & Waverley CCG was a member of the Health & Wellbeing Board. The view was expressed that the Health & Wellbeing Board would enable a greater joint strategic approach.
12. The Committee asked for information in relation to joint commissioning for Children with Disabilities (CwD)/Complex Needs. The Deputy Director for Children's, Schools and Families outlined that the intention was to develop a one assessment and one plan approach in relation to CwD. The Committee was informed that Surrey was acting as a pathfinder for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) in the South East 7. It was confirmed that there was a review of short-term residential breaks, and that the Head of Children's Social Care and Wellbeing Commissioning was co-ordinating this with the CCGs. The findings of this review would feed into the Public Value Programme. The view was expressed that this was not intended to reduce the current offer in relation to short-term residential breaks, but developing a more effective offer that provided greater value for money.

Recommendations:

- a) That the Committee invite the Director of Public Health to attend its meeting in Autumn 2013.
- b) That a further report on the progress of Children's Services Joint Commissioning is provided to the Committee in Autumn 2013.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

Committee Next Steps:

None.

20/13 CHILDREN'S HEALTH, WELLBEING AND SAFEGUARDING PLAN [Item 8]

Declarations of interest: None.

Witnesses:

Jo Holtom, Senior Strategy and Policy Development Manager
Victoria Cannizzaro, Strategy and Policy Development Manager, Children, Schools and Families Directorate
Sheila Jones, Head of County-wide Services
Caroline Budden, Deputy Director, Children's, Schools and Families

Mary Angell, Cabinet Member for Children and Families

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Committee was informed that the Children's Health, Wellbeing and Safeguarding Plan was a one year plan which would be replaced by the joint Children's Health and Wellbeing strategy in 2014. The plan was intended to set out the long term ambitions of the County Council in relation to health, wellbeing and safeguarding, and set out key actions and ambitions for 2013/14.
2. The Committee held a discussion about safeguarding arrangements within the County. Members were informed that the plan set out a commitment to safeguarding, but that specific details were covered by the relevant bodies. The Safeguarding Board was highlighted in relation to this.
3. Members commented that there seemed to be a persistent challenge in addressing poor health outcomes for those in disadvantaged areas. Officers commented that there was a commitment to improve this, and that some of these concerns would be outlined within the Impacts of Welfare Reform report to be discussed later in the meeting.
4. Members asked for further details with reference to the knowledge gaps identified within the report. Officers commented that priority 8 set out the actions to address this, and that the joint strategic needs assessment would also support the Council in identifying such gaps.
5. The Chairman expressed the view that one of the key gaps was around children within independent schools, and whether appropriate safeguarding policies and measures were in place to meet the needs of vulnerable children in this environment.
6. Members raised concerns about the estimated number of children and young people with a disability who did not access any social care, education or health support services. Officers commented that this was necessarily a negative thing, as many families and children did not feel it necessary to access the services available to them. It was

recognised that a balance needed to be struck between leaving families empowered and supplying help when required.

7. Members highlighted that the figures quoted in relation to Early Years outcomes were taken from 2011. It was queried how officers proposed to ensure they were making effective comparisons when using statistical data. Officers confirmed that they were in the process of developing a performance management framework, and that the baseline figures for 2013/14 would be used in relation to measuring performance at the end of the 2013/14 municipal year.

Recommendations:

- a) That the approach to supporting children, young people and families' health and wellbeing as set out in the plan is noted.
- b) That the implementation of the plan is reviewed by the Select Committee every 6 months on an exception basis, with more regular reports provided through the information bulletin.
- c) That the Children & Families Select Committee is consulted through a private workshop during the drafting of the Children's Health & Wellbeing Strategy for 2014.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

Committee Next Steps:

None.

21/13 PREPARING FOR WELFARE REFORMS [Item 9]

Declarations of interest: None.

Witnesses:

Ginni Smedley, Strategy and Policy Development Manager
Sheila Jones, Head of County-wide Services
Ian Vinall, South East Area Head of Children's Service
Christine Westwood, Team Manager – Care Leaver's Service
Caroline Budden, Deputy Director, Children's, Schools and Families

Mary Angell, Cabinet Member for Children & Families

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Chairman opened discussions by thanking officers for a comprehensive report. It was proposed that the report form part of the induction for Members.
2. The Deputy Director for Children's, Schools and Families expressed the view that the challenges faced as a result of welfare reform provided an opportunity to think proactively about how Children's Services sign-posted information and defined its workforce. The

Committee was informed that Children's Services should not be perceived as the default service for families experiencing difficulties, when other organisations and services might be more appropriate. The Strategy and Policy Development Manager also highlighted that Children's Services response to welfare reform must be seen to sit within a wider response that was linked across the County Council's directorates.

3. Members raised a question as to what was being done to identify those who may not be receiving their full benefit entitlement. Officers confirmed that a Universal Welfare Benefits service was being set up and aimed at targeting those who were not aware of their entitlements. This was being communicated through leaflet drops and other information channels. Officers informed the Committee that there was a challenge in quantifying the number of families likely to experience difficulties as result of the change to welfare arrangements.
4. Members expressed concerns regarding the direct payment of benefits to families who experienced difficulty managing finances, and asked officers what measures were being put in place to assist them. The Deputy Director for Children's, Schools and Families commented that the best means of addressing this was early involvement and discussions with those it was likely to effect.
5. The Committee was given a summary of the concerns in relation to the impact of welfare reform on care leavers. Officers commented that this group in particular was considered to be at risk, particularly in relation to rent payments. A request had been put forward that monies received for rent payments would be paid directly to the relevant landlord, however this was currently required to be done on an individual basis. It was confirmed that Children's Services were recommending that this was the default position in respect to care leavers.
6. The Team Manager for the Care Leaver's Service outlined that personal advisors for care leavers were undertaking welfare benefit training in advance of the changes. It was highlighted that there was a short-term pressure in the transition from weekly payments of benefits to a monthly payment, and how care leavers would manage in this interim period.
7. Officers commented that it was the case that advice could be provided in relation to financial acumen, but not always taken. The Committee was informed that the priority was better working with partners on a local level to ensure that the dialogue on addressing potential need was not just happening within Children's Services. Members commented that there was a need to educate and encourage families to develop better financial management. It was also highlighted that there was an opportunity within the education system to teach life-skills around budgeting and healthy eating.

Recommendations:

- a) That the Children & Families Select Committee monitor the impact of welfare reforms after the changes come into effect.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

Committee Next Steps:

None.

22/13 SUPPORTING FAMILIES TASK GROUP [Item 10]

Declarations of interest: None.

Witnesses:

Sheila Jones, Head of County-wide Services

Ian Vinall, South East Area Head of Children's Service

Caroline Budden, Deputy Director, Children's, Schools and Families

Clare Curran, Chairman of the Task Group

Mary Angell, Cabinet Member for Children & Families

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Committee was presented with the report of the Supporting Families Task Group, which was due to go to Cabinet on 26 March 2013. The Chairman of the Task Group thanked officers for their contribution, in particular the support of Democratic Services Scrutiny Officers in their assistance in preparing the final report.
2. Members commented that they were supportive of both the report and its recommendations. The Committee highlighted that the over-riding concern was connected to emotional health and well-being, and the difficulties encountered in accessing these services. The Deputy Director of Children, Schools & Families commented that there was need to consider how resources were commissioned in order to address these concerns, and that it was a question of better partnership working so that Children's Services was in a position to prioritise its services. The view was expressed that the Supporting Families Programme offered an opportunity to adopt a more localised, joined-up approach across a number of services.
3. One Member expressed concerns that the problem lay not in what provision was available, but in the delay encountered before any intervention began. Officers commented that it was a question of identifying the appropriate level of intervention, and that the Supporting Families Programme would be in a position to address individual emotional health and well-being concerns before they became more acute.
4. The Committee was informed that there had been difficulties in engaging partners within the Police, and that the task group had not had an opportunity to explore the issues with them. Officers stated that this in part was due to the changes in responsibilities occurring within the police force. It was suggested that the Police's participation could

be covered in part of the monitoring report to the Select Committee in the future.

5. Members commented that there needed to be consideration given to how the programme developed and was monitored on a strategic level. It was confirmed that the Select Committee would be an important component in reviewing the programme's progress.

Recommendations:

- a) That the Cabinet approves the stated objectives of the Surrey Family Support Programme.
- b) That the Cabinet asks that the Strategic Director of Children, Schools and Families provide clarity over how the objectives of the Surrey Family Support Programme relate to the wider objectives of the Directorate Public Value Programme.
- c) That Cabinet reviews the outcomes for a sample of the families a year after completing the Programme.
- d) That the Cabinet receives an analysis of the costs of families included within the Surrey Family Support Programme and projected savings to the public purse.
- e) That the Cabinet encourages the Borough and District Councils to develop a mechanism for involving and raising the awareness of elected Members through local governance structures, including Local Committees.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

Committee Next Steps:

None.

23/13 DETAILED SERVICE BUDGETS 2013/14 [Item 11]

Declarations of interest: None.

Witnesses:

Caroline Budden, Deputy Director, Children's, Schools and Families
Paula Chowdhury, Strategic Finance Manager for Children, Schools and Families

Mary Angell, Cabinet Member for Children & Families

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Committee was presented with an extract of the Medium Term Financial Plan papers due to go to Cabinet on 26 March 2013. These are included as a supplement to these minutes.
2. The Committee was asked to note that following feedback from the Committee the Service budgets now separated out income and expenditure, in order to improve transparency It was confirmed that there had been an additional £5 million funds allocated to the Directorate's budget in order to meet service pressures. Officers informed the Committee that £3.1 million of these funds had been assigned to Child Protection.
3. It was requested that the Committee note that while particular areas of the service would be anticipated to overspend, there were other areas where significant savings could be made. Officers commented that the risk levels involved were not linked to difficult decisions, but connected to the timeliness in which processes could be implemented.
4. The Committee was informed that the reduction in the Early Intervention Grant had led to a £2.5 million shortfall in the base budget, but that the County Council had agreed to maintain the level of funding from other sources.
5. The Chairman asked officers to what extent the impact of welfare reform had been taken into consideration when setting out changes to the Medium Term Financial Plan. The Committee was informed that these numbers were not projected, but it was anticipated that it would contribute to the level of overspend in some areas.

Recommendations:

None.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

Committee Next Steps:

None.

24/13 BUDGET MONITORING [Item 12]

Declarations of interest: None.

Witnesses:

Caroline Budden, Deputy Director, Children's, Schools and Families
Paula Chowdhury, Strategic Finance Manager for Children, Schools and Families

Mary Angell, Cabinet Member for Children & Families

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Committee noted the budget monitoring report. Officers commented that Children's Services was projecting an overspend of £2 million. However, it was also noted that the Children's, Schools and Families Directorate as a whole maintained an underspend, and it was anticipated that it would be requesting a £2.5 million carry-forward into the new financial year.

Recommendations:

None.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

Committee Next Steps:

None.

25/13 PERFORMANCE MONITORING [Item 13]

Declarations of interest: None.

Witnesses:

Caroline Budden, Deputy Director, Children's, Schools and Families
Ian Vinall, South East Area Head of Children's Service

Mary Angell, Cabinet Member for Children & Families

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Committee noted the latest Performance Monitoring report for Children's Services. The Chairman asked officers to comment on whether the new joint contact centre with the Police was likely to see a decrease in referrals. Officers stated that they anticipated an increase in numbers to begin with, as the level of information sharing adjusted.

Recommendations:

None.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

Committee Next Steps:

None.

26/13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING [Item 14]

The Committee noted that this would be the last Committee meeting before the Local Elections in May 2013. The Chairman thanked officers and the Cabinet Member for their contributions to the Select Committee. Thanks was also expressed to Cheryl Hardman for her work as Scrutiny Officer for the Children & Families Select Committee.

Meeting ended at: 1.15 pm

Chairman

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