

## Children's Services Overview Committee

Minutes of a meeting held at County Hall,  
Colliton Park, Dorchester on 14 October 2014.

Present:

Michael Bevan (Chairman)  
Pauline Batstone (Vice-Chairman)  
Dan Brember, Mike Byatt, Barrie Cooper, Beryl Ezzard, Mike Lovell,  
Margaret Phipps, Michael Turnbull and Daryl Turner.

Rebecca Knox (Cabinet Member for Children's Safeguarding and Families) and Toni Coombs (Cabinet Member for Education and Communications) attended under Standing Order 54(1).

### Officers attending:

Sara Tough (Director for Children's Services), Vanessa Glenn (Head of Family Support), Phil Minns (Head of Learning and Inclusion), Anne Salter (Head of Strategy, Partnerships and Performance), Siân Dobson (Children's Services Group Finance Manager) and Rebecca Guest (Senior Democratic Services Officer).

### The following officers attended for certain items, as appropriate:

John Alexander (Policy and Performance Manager), Rosie Darkin (Consultant - Lead Auditor, South West Audit Partnership), Vicky Fearn (Public Health Consultant), Clive Hawkins (Youth Offending Team Manager), Claire Shiels (Commissioning and Procurement Manager) and Sally White (Audit Manager, South West Audit Partnership).

(Note: These minutes have been prepared by officers as a record of the meeting and of any decisions reached. They are to be considered and confirmed at the next meeting of the Children's Services Overview Committee to be held on **20 January 2015**.)

### **Chairman's Welcome**

84. The Chairman welcomed Phil Minns to his first meeting of the Overview Committee since taking up his role as the Head of Learning and Inclusion.

### **Apologies for Absence**

85. Apologies for absence were received from Steve Butler, Peter Hall, Susan Jefferies and Mary Kahn.

### **Code of Conduct**

86. There were no declarations by members of any disclosable pecuniary interests under the Code of Conduct.

### **Appointments**

87.1 The Committee considered a report by the Acting Director for Corporate Resources which informed members of recent activity to appoint statutory co-opted members to the Committee.

87.2 Members reviewed the nomination for the appointment of the Bath and Wells, Salisbury and Winchester Diocesan Councils for Education statutory co-opted member (voting on education matters only) of the Committee, received from Mrs Joy Tubbs. Members were advised that since the report had been written, Mrs Tubbs had been made substantive and was now the Director of Education for Salisbury Diocesan Board of Education.

87.3 Members noted that despite an invitation to parent governors to indicate their interest in joining the Committee, no nominations had been received. Members who were school governors were asked to use their personal contacts to encourage participation and clarification was given in relation to the legal requirements and election process in recruiting parent governor co-opted members.

87.4 The Cabinet Member for Education and Communications suggested that an article be placed in the governors' electronic magazine to highlight the need for additional co-opted members. Members agreed that this would be beneficial and that further nominations for parent governor representatives should be timed to co-inside with this publication.

#### **Resolved**

88.1 That further nominations for parent governor representatives be sought in conjunction with the next issue of the Governors' electronic magazine publication.

88.2 That Joy Tubbs, Director of Education for Salisbury Diocesan Board of Education, be appointed for the period up to the quadrennial elections of the County Council in 2017.

#### **Reason for Decision**

89. To ensure that the membership of the Children's Services Overview Committee is in accordance with its statutory duty and Terms of Reference.

#### **Minutes**

90. The minutes of the meeting held on 1 July 2014 were confirmed and signed.

#### **Matters Arising**

##### **Minute 82 - Outside Bodies**

91.1 In response to concerns, members received assurances that outside bodies worked well together despite their differing roles. The Director confirmed that it would be helpful to have an illustration of the working relationships, and agreed to highlight this to members. The Cabinet Member for Education and Communications confirmed that she was working with the Policy Development Panel on Involving Local Members and the use of SharePoint. She confirmed that she would take member's comments back to the Panel.

91.2 A member questioned the consistency of the minutes in regards to references to members. It was explained that within this section of the minutes, members had been invited to address the Committee and therefore their role or divisions were given to highlight their participation.

#### **Corporate Parenting Board**

92.1 The Committee received the minutes of the Corporate Parenting Board meetings held on 22 May and 17 July 2014.

92.2 A member advised that The Pledge, as referred to in the minutes of 22 May 2014, had been published and he questioned whether members had been made aware of its existence. Officers confirmed that the document was currently being considered by young people and would return to the next meeting of the Board before becoming a public document.

92.3 Members asked, due to its importance, that the Pledge be included in the Committee's work programme for 20 January 2015.

#### **Noted**

## **Public Participation**

### Public Speaking

93.1 There were no public questions received at the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 21(1).

93.2 There were no public statements received at the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 21(1).

### Petition

#### **Petition to Change School Admission Arrangements for Christchurch Junior School**

93.3 The Committee considered a report by the Director for Children's Services on the receipt of a petition, signed by in excess of 50 signatories, asking for a change in the school admission arrangements for Christchurch Junior School. The petitioners had requested that Christchurch Infant School children, from within the designated catchment area, be prioritised.

93.4 Members were advised that since the report had been written, the Schools Adjudicator had reviewed the admissions arrangements of the Junior School and these had been amended accordingly.

93.5 A member confirmed that she had received correspondence from the petition's organiser, Mr Russel New, from which she read an extract. Mr New confirmed that he had been invited to attend the Committee and thanked officers for the work undertaken in regards to the petition, on behalf of all the signatories.

93.6 Members considered the recommendations of the report and in light of Mr New's correspondence deemed that no further action was necessary.

### Noted

#### **Children's Services Forward Together Programme – Progress Update**

94.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director for Children's Services which provided a further update on the progress with the Forward Together Programme which was being implemented within the Children's Services Directorate. The report included progress since the previous update to the Committee on 1 July 2014.

94.2 The Director introduced the report and highlighted that Natalie Johnson was now in post as the Business Change Lead. She would be working with the Children's Services Leadership Team and senior managers to define and implement the next phase of change. The Director then drew attention to the achieved savings and advised members that the required savings of £1.4M in 2015/16 would not be achieved. It was now clear that the scale and complexity of the significant new structure and appointments within the service required a longer implementation period than had originally been planned for. Work was underway to define and plan these changes in order that they be achieved in 2016/2017.

94.3 Members noted the achievements to date and the challenge to make financial savings, however they were mindful that these had a minimal impact on children. Members commented on the recurring theme in regards to the service's overspend and asked how officers could ensure that the recent changes would reduce the budget. The Director advised that the majority of the services' overspend was as a result of the increased number of children in care. Further work would shortly be undertaken to focus on future savings. There were two elements to this work; reducing the on-going overall budgets and secondly reducing the everyday pressures to the service.

**Resolved**

95. That the direction of travel of work being undertaken towards the Children's Services Forward Together Programme be supported.

**Reason for Decision**

96. The programme was critical to Children's Services' ability to meet the challenge of sustaining high quality services for children and families whilst at the same time delivering those services within a reduced financial envelope.

**Proposal for a Pan-Dorset Youth Offending Team**

97.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director for Children's Services that informed members of the scoping work that had taken place to explore establishing a Pan-Dorset Youth Offending Service. Currently the two teams providing services covering Bournemouth Borough, the Borough of Poole and Dorset County areas were both performing well and had been managed by the same manager since February 2013.

97.2 Following detailed scoping and consideration of a number of different models by a Steering Group formed of members from the three local authorities, a proposal had been presented to a joint meeting of the Management Boards to establish a Pan-Dorset Youth Offending Service. The Joint Board meeting resolved to recommend to their respective elected member groups that a Pan-Dorset Youth Offending Team (YOT) be established. Detailed work would be undertaken, subject to the approval of the three local authorities.

97.3 Members noted that it was proposed that Bournemouth Borough Council would lead on the developments on behalf of the three authorities. The Youth Offending Team Manager highlighted the benefits of a Pan-Dorset YOT including increased capacity, refined officer expertise and budget efficiencies. He advised that subject to the Cabinet's approval, staff would be engaged in greater detail on the plans and structure of the new team.

97.4 In response to a question, the Youth Offending Team Manager confirmed the intention to rotate the Chairmanship of the Pan-Dorset Youth Offending Service between the Borough of Poole and Dorset County Council to enable challenge and oversight of the lead service delivery authority (Bournemouth Borough Council), of which Dorset County Council would Chair for the first three years. Questions were also raised in regards to the governance and the body responsible for the team. Officers confirmed that in the past, performance reports had been brought to the Overview Committee and audit reports to Bournemouth Borough Council. It was expected that a similar arrangement would continue, but it was too early to commit to governance arrangements. However, members were assured that Dorset County Council's Chief Executive would continue to have a statutory responsibility and this would not be removed. The Director added that the Joint Board would want to hold each authority to account and therefore individual local authority's reporting mechanisms would not change. Nor would the level of information contained within the existing reporting structure.

97.5 Members noted the Youth Offending Team Manager's retirement and paid tribute to his work.

**Resolved**

98. That subject to Cabinet's approval of the following recommendation, detailed planning would be undertaken towards implementation of a Pan-Dorset Youth Offending Team. Progress of which would be reported to future meetings of the Committee.

**Recommended**

99. That the Cabinet approve the setting up of a single Youth Offending Service to cover Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset, as a partnership between the three local authorities, and the other statutory partners.

**Reason for Recommendation**

100. The Committee had a responsibility for the overview and scrutiny of the arrangements for monitoring the success of the YOT in preventing and re-offending by children and young people. The proposals would provide the best option for a high quality effective service in the future.

**Children and Young People's Mental Health Services**

101.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director for Children's Services that responded to the Young Mind's report that highlighted national concerns about funding for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. This expressed concerns about the impact on children's and young people's mental health.

101.2 The report described the local arrangements for supporting mental health, and the actions being taken to address these. Members noted that the Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) was undertaking a review of children's mental health services and a new mental health action plan was being prepared by the Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Strategy Group.

101.3 The Commissioning and Procurement Manager highlighted a number of challenges to the service, including the availability of in-patient beds, which was a national problem. In response to the Young Mind's report's concerns about waiting times, a review had been commissioned that would be finished in December 2014. The Young Mind's report also raised concerns regarding investment and early intervention and a later agenda item (Early Help and Prevention) would discuss this.

101.4 Members noted that officers were also reviewing the Pan-Dorset Wellbeing Health Strategy as the current strategy ended in 2015. The Chairman advised that he would be attending a meeting of the Dorset Emotional Wellbeing Health Strategy Group and would update the Committee at a later date.

101.5 In response to questions, the governance and funding arrangements of the service were clarified. A member also commented that an equalities impact assessment was needed for future reports and he requested further information on the waiting time tiers outside of the meeting.

101.6 Members referred to the level of children and young people who did not attend appointments and officers were asked to review this. In response to a question regarding appropriate referrals, officers recognised that there were a large number of referrals from general practitioners. They believed that there was a lack of understanding of service provision and alternative services, and a re-launch of the service focusing on children and young people's needs and levels of appropriate provision was planned. Children and young people were actively involved, with their views on different media and forms of contact being sought.

101.7 The Director advised that an all service review, focusing on earlier interventions, was being carried out which would lead to a change in culture within the Directorate.

**Resolved**

102. That a further report, including an equalities impact assessment and the outcome of the commissioned review on waiting times, be presented to the Committee at its meeting on 17 March 2015.

**Reason for Decision**

103. To keep members informed of the service.

**Audit of Capacity/Funding to Deal with Increasing Numbers of Children Coming into Care**

104.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director for Children's Services that presented the findings of an independent audit review that identified the reason(s) why the service was overspending and, if possible, what changes could be made to improve the service to children and reduce the cost to the Council. It was noted that in addition, the way in which the service was being delivered was also being reviewed as part of the Council's 'Forward Together' programme.

104.2 Members were advised of the audit's limitations and informed that many officers took part in the completion of the audit. In addition to officers, auditors met with Social Services, Independent Conference Reviewing Managers (ICRMs) and one of the children in care. The audit testing included a review of the robustness of the budget setting and monitoring process; making notes of processes that exist to bring children into care and to move them out of care; and sitting with social workers and discussing with ICRMs the case histories and decisions made for a sample of children who were in care during the year to 31 March 2014.

104.3 Officers summarised the audit's findings. In particular, it showed that budget setting and monitoring were basically robust, but there was a gap of £1.9m between the budget that was identified by the accountant as required and the control total which the service was allowed as part of the corporate budget-setting process. The audit also found that the service had been £2m overspent in the last two years. There was also no link to the Children's Services demand model when budgets are being set.

104.4 The testing carried out by the auditors indicated that it would not be possible to make significant savings by moving children out of residential accommodation into foster care, as the Council is always likely to have a number of children whose complex needs are best met within a residential placement with a high level of support. Audit recommended that this need be borne in mind when the service is re-designed, but that savings could potentially be made by long-term contracts with providers, or possibly by the provision of the service in-house. The interview with the young person in care revealed that part of the work necessary to improve the ability of the service to identify children and young people in need of support is better publicising of the services offered by the Council as the national media coverage of social care has left many children and young people with a negative view of the service. The young person thought that perhaps this could be achieved by the service attending school assemblies.

104.5 Concerns were also raised in regards to attracting future foster parents and encouraging people (of all ages) to speak to the service. However it was recognised that many were afraid of the repercussions. The need to change people's perceptions, raise understanding and offer value for money were paramount. The audit report illustrated concluded that there were two very high risks still existing and that these were likely to remain in place for a reasonable length of time given the size and scope of the action plan to address them. The risks were the insufficient budget with the current organisational arrangements and action not being taken early enough.

## Children's Services Overview Committee – 14 October 2014

104.6 The audit was to be discussed by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee on Thursday, 16 October 2014, and a follow up review would be agreed with the service. A further report would then be brought before the Committee for consideration.

104.7 Members noted that there was a need to invest in change, but that this would not show savings within the service for a number of years. Members welcomed the frank and honest report and commended the service for commissioning it. However they asked that an action column for the recommendations be added to allow the Committee to monitor progress. The Director advised that a draft Action Plan had been initiated and work was ongoing in regards to this. She emphasised that work had to take place, not in regards to restructuring, but about how the service thought and provided the right help, at the earliest opportunity. A member asked that when completed, the Action Plan be placed on-line for all members to view its progress.

104.8 The Director advised the Committee of the direction of travel in which the service was going, with the help of partner agencies working together. There would be a strategy on permanency and as the child/young person got older, funds would be used to provide alternatives to care, where appropriate. She highlighted the small timeframe available to reintroduce the child back to their own families, otherwise evidence showed that their stay in care would be longer, thus pressurising the budget even more.

104.9 A member proposed that the Committee offer assistance to promote and support the service and recommended that members of the Committee, in liaison with officers, visit their local schools to do this and that this should form part of the Action Plan. Acknowledgment was also given to the need to invest to save and the need for the Cabinet to consider the audit and its finding when discussing future budget proposals was stressed.

104.10 The Director welcomed members' engagement and advised that this was not a Dorset specific issue, but a national one that required national work.

### Resolved

105.1 That the findings of the audit and the actions contained within the draft action plan be noted.

105.2 That members of the Committee, in liaison with officers, visit their local schools to help promote and support the service.

105.3 That a progress report, with accompanying Action Plan, be presented to the Committee on 20 January 2015.

### Reason for Decisions

106. To act on the findings contained within the audit report.

## **Update on Joint Commissioning Arrangements for Children and Young People Services and a Review of Performance in Relation to Public Health Outcomes for Children and Young People**

107.1 The Committee considered a joint report by the Directors for Children's Services and Public Health. The report gave an overview of the current health outcomes for children and young people in Dorset and outlined commissioning arrangements for them to improve health and wellbeing outcomes. It also provided an overview of progress in terms of collaborative commissioning between Dorset County Council, NHS Dorset CCG and the Local Authorities of Bournemouth and Poole (Pan-Dorset Commissioning). Progress of the Pan-Dorset Children and Young Peoples Joint Commissioning Partnership was also included within the report.

107.2 Members commented that they would like to receive information at both a Dorset and local level, but were advised that some was not available at a localised level.

107.3 In regards to the delivery of services, a member asked for an illustration of the impact of existing strategies on an individual and asked whether real case models could be presented to aid members' understanding. Members discussed how this could be presented, and the Chairman and Director agreed to consider this outside the meeting.

### **Resolved**

108.1 That the continued joint work with the NHS and neighbouring local authorities be noted and the areas of focus for commissioning be supported.

108.2 That real case models be presented to members, using the most appropriate media.

### **Reason for Decisions**

109. To improve health outcomes for children and young people and to continue to work collaboratively seeking opportunities for integrated commissioning and efficiency savings Pan Dorset.

## **Holistic Transport Review**

110.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director for Children's Services that detailed the activity that had taken place since a review of Dorset County Council's transport arrangements. As a result of the report, twelve headline recommendations had been considered by the Forward Together Board on 17 May 2014. The report stated the recommendations and governance arrangements that were now in place to take these recommendations forward. Details of the work streams applicable to the Committee were also provided.

110.2 The Director advised members that Special Education Needs (SEN) had been included within the review. This would be reported back to the Committee on 20 January 2015. She confirmed that the service had a multi-disciplined governance structure.

110.3 A member highlighted that the SEN service was extremely important, especially in rural areas, and he believed improved coverage was needed. He also referred to the need for an equalities impact assessment.

110.4 Members asked whether a Committee Member could have a seat on the Holistic Transport Board. The Cabinet Member for Children's Safeguarding and Families advised that both she and the Cabinet Member for Education and Communications had been invited to the Board's meeting and she hoped that the Cabinet Member for Environment and the Economy would also attend. Members reiterated that they needed to be aware of discussions before reports were brought before Cabinet and asked that their request be considered.

110.5 In reference to appendix 1 of the report, members also asked that the words 'where appropriate' be deleted from the purpose "engage where appropriate with elected members and external groups, i.e. Parent/Carer Groups, Schools Forum".

110.6 The Director confirmed that she would feedback members' comments and advised that the County Council's Overview Committees would also be added within appendix 1. She added that minutes of the Holistic Transport Board would be placed on the members' gateway.

### **Resolved**

111.1 That forthcoming reports on the progress of relevant work streams be presented to the Committee.

111.2 That members' comments be fed back to the appropriate officers.



Reason for Decisions

112. The recommendations were made so that the Committee was able to be updated on the impact of the holistic transport review on children and young people and Children's services' budgets.

**Early Help and Prevention**

113.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director for Children's Services which included an early draft of the services' strategic approach to early help and prevention. The strategy set out the overarching framework by which models could begin to emerge as the reshape of services took place in Children's Services.

113.2 Recognition of the value in intervening early in life and promptly in any episode that could negatively impact on outcomes for children and young people was given, as was the need to co-ordinate work so that the service was able to maximise the impact of each partner organisation's resource. Officers stressed the importance of involving families and children.

113.3 The Commissioning and Procurement Manager highlighted the key aims of the strategy, together with the challenges and desired outcomes. She then invited members' views on the draft document.

113.4 Members asked if localised information could be given and a discussion followed as to the format of the document and its usefulness when members addressed constituents. Officers advised that work had been done with children and young people in regards to the document's presentation and it would also be tested by them. The results would be shared with the Committee.

Resolved

114. That the draft document form the foundation with which models of early help and support could be developed.

Reason for Decision

115. To enable the Committee to contribute to the direction setting for models of early help that was beginning to be developed.

**Corporate Performance Monitoring Report First Quarter 2014-15 (1 April – 30 June 2014)**

116.1 The Committee considered a joint report by the Chief Executive and Director for Children's Services that presented the results of the monitoring of the Corporate Balanced Scorecard for the first quarter of 2014-15. As well as the Corporate Plan, the Balanced Scorecard was the principal means by which the County Council monitored high priority performance measures on budget management, customer service and staff development and wellbeing.

116.2 The Policy and Performance Manager informed members of the new reporting style and sought members' approval to replace a measure in regards to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) on the scorecard with two that were considered to be more useful by the Directorate.

116.3 The Policy and Performance Manager responded to general questions. In particular he highlighted that in regards to 'value for money', a number of key services had scored highly (shown in green) at the expense of overspent budgets (shown in red). Members highlighted a numbering error on page 5 of appendix 1, and the officer confirmed that the first risk code CRR 04 should actually read CRR 01. He advised that if a directorate

had any risk code at red level on this page, issues would need to be addressed. There were none for Children's Services.

116.4 The Head of Strategy, Partnerships and Performance highlighted the findings of an external audit process carried out from June to August 2014 in relation to vulnerable children and young people. An action plan was included and progress would be reported to the next Committee. Members noted that there was recognition that the development of the 'Early Help' Model across Dorset would be an important focus in preventing needs from escalating to specialist services.

116.5 The Director drew members' attention to the information received during the course of the meeting regarding CAMHS and children in care. She referred to the important measures in place and highlighted the quality of the work being carried out. The audit helped evidence this work and indicated areas that required improvement.

#### **Recommended**

117. That it be recommended to Cabinet that the revised measures and targets for Children Accessing Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (appendix 1, page 2 of the report), with the Quarter 2 corporate performance monitoring report, be agreed.

#### **Reason for Recommendation**

118. To ensure members are aware of the County Council's performance against the 2014-2015 Corporate Plan and Corporate Balanced Scorecard.

#### **Revenue Budget Monitoring 2014/15, including Forward Together Update**

119.1 The Committee considered a report by the Acting Director for Corporate Resources which set out the budget monitoring information as at the end of August 2014. The information showed a forecast overspend against service budgets for the County Council of £7,419k.

119.2 The Children's Services Group Finance Manager explained that the Children's Services overspend was due to the increased number of children in care which had caused a forecast overspend of £2,444k on the Family Support budget. This had been subject to debate by the Committee earlier in the meeting. In addition, the budget for transport for children with a statement and children who attended a learning centre was also forecast to overspend by £496k.

119.3 Members noted that in relation to Forward Together in 2014/2015, the majority of the Directorate's projects were either completed (£885.3k) or on target (£409k). In regards to the schools' budget, there was a balance of £2,282k brought forward from underspends on the schools' budget central expenditure in 2013/2014; and a forecast underspend was in respect of grants for 2 year old places. From 2015/2016 the Dedicated Schools Grant for 2 year old funding would reflect take up.

119.4 The Children's Services Group Finance Manager responded to general questions and confirmed that the budget for Transport for Children with SEN or attending a Learning Centre was ring fenced within Children's Services Directorate, as responsibility is shared with the Environment and the Economy Directorate. Totals are therefore shown separately within the report.

#### **Noted**

**Work Programme**

120.1 The Committee considered a report by the Acting Director for Corporate Resources which detailed the updated work programme for 2015.

120.2 Additional items were to be added to the work programme as set out in the minutes, 92.3, 98, 102, 105.3, 110.2, 111.1 and 113.4.

**Noted****Schedule of Member Seminars and Events 2014/2015**

121. The Committee received a schedule of forthcoming seminars and events arranged for members in 2014/2015.

**Noted****Member Briefings**

122. No subjects for future member briefings were identified. However a member repeated his request for further information in regards to Children and Young People's Mental Health Services waiting time tiers.

**Outside Bodies**

123.1 The Cabinet Member for Children's Safeguarding and Families advised that the Children's Trust Board had extended its membership since the last meeting. There was now an extensive membership with access to all specialist services, although not all members were in attendance at one time. The Board was working well developing early help and prevention, while giving a steer to outside bodies.

123.2 Members noted that the Board was now more visible via the Dorset Safeguarding Children's Board and the Dorset Health and Wellbeing Board, but the Cabinet Member suggested that additional signposting was needed.

123.3 In response to a question, she confirmed that the Board's size had been increased, while others were reduced, to ensure access to specialist services and this had greatly helped each partner's awareness of the others roles and responsibilities. This had made a positive impact.

123.4 The Cabinet Member for Education and Communications provided a summary of the work of the Salisbury Diocesan Board of Education. She confirmed that she represented the County Council at the Diocese and they had sat on the project board when the Purbeck Review of School Provision was being undertaken. This had helped partnership relations, and there was now strong links in regards to school buildings.

123.5 She commented that the next Building Committee of the Diocesan was to be held in November 2014 when it would start to look at school applications for building voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools. This was very important and had links to funding streams.

**Noted****Questions**

124. No questions were asked by members under Standing Order 20(2).