

Children's Services Overview Committee

Minutes of a meeting held at County Hall,
Colliton Park, Dorchester on 17 March 2015.

Present:

Michael Bevan (Chairman)

Pauline Batstone (Vice-Chairman)

Dan Brember, Steve Butler, Mike Byatt, Barrie Cooper, Beryl Ezzard, Peter Hall,
Susan Jefferies, Mike Lovell, Mrs Joy Tubbs, Dr Michael Turnbull and Daryl Turner.

Toni Coombs (Cabinet Member for Children and Young People) and Robert Gould (Leader) attended under Standing Order 54(1). Spencer Flower attended under Standing Order 54(3).

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, Partnership and Performance), Tom Wilkinson (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), Ed Denham (School Admissions Manager), Mike Felstead (Corporate Parenting Officer), Sam Fox-Adams (Head of Policy, Partnerships and Communications), Dave Franks (County Sports and Physical Activity Manager), Paul Leivers (Head of Community Services) and David Webb (Manager Dorset Youth Offending Team).

(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 **18 June 2015**.)

Chairman's Welcome

34. The Chairman welcomed Mrs Joy Tubbs, Director Salisbury Diocesan Board of Education and officer Tom Wilkinson, Group Finance Manager to their first meeting of the Overview Committee.

Apologies for Absence

35. Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Mary Kahn, Councillor Margaret Phipps and officer Jackie Groves, Early Years and Educational Improvement Manager.

Code of Conduct

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

Minutes

37. The minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2015 were confirmed and signed, subject to minute 8.2 being amended to read :-

"... One inspection was now outstanding, at Maumbury House."

Matters ArisingMinute 7 – Children and Young People's Mental Health Services

38. The Committee was informed that the workshop held on 26 January 2015 was well attended.

Minute 8.2 – Corporate Parenting Board

39. Members were advised that the inspection at Maumbury House had been completed and a satisfactory rating had been received. This was a promising rating, in light of previous inspections. A further inspection was due to be completed in the Summer.

Minute 16.2 – Forward Together for Children – Update

40. The Committee was advised that the Executive Advisory Panel was referred to in agenda item 8, Forward Together for Children – update.

Minute 26.2 - Corporate Performance Monitoring Report Second Quarter 2014-15

41. Work was progressing to decrease the level of youth unemployment and young people in jobs without training. A paper was presented to the Children's Trust Board on 16 March 2015 and discussions were ongoing with colleagues in the Environment directorate. It was recognised that focus had to be given on increasing the opportunities for these young people to receive skilled jobs and long term commitment. Bournemouth Borough Council and Poole Borough Council had now started to work with a peer network including other local authorities across the South West, to look at career opportunities for post 16 year olds with disabilities. This was a good opportunity and would enable networking opportunities.

Minute 29.2 - Schedule of Councillor Seminars and Events 2015

42. The Committee was informed that the Dementia Friends seminar held on 24 February 2015 was not well attended, and as a result, the National Dementia Declaration could not be signed. It was anticipated that during Dementia Awareness Week, 18-22 May 2015, a further meeting would be arranged to facilitate this. Members would be advised of the date in due course.

Corporate Parenting Board

43. The Committee received the minutes of the Corporate Parenting Board meeting held on 28 January 2015.

Noted**Public Participation**Public Speaking

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

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

Petition

45. There were no petitions received in accordance with the County Council's petition scheme at this meeting.

Noted

Revenue Budget Monitoring 2014/15

46.1 The Committee considered a report by the Chief Financial Officer which set out the budget monitoring information as at the end of January 2015. The information showed an overall forecast overspend against service budgets for the County Council of £5.2m. The forecast overspend on service budgets would be in part offset by the forecast underspend on other central budgets of £1.8m meaning a forecast overspend of £3.4m.

46.2 The bulk of the overspend was largely due to the increased number of children in care within the Family Support budget. At the time of writing the report, there were 59 places, this had since increased to 62. Clarification was received in regards to the number of children in care, including those placed out of country and the Director for Children's Services gave an update on the strategy and challenges to increasing the numbers of in-house carers. In response to a question, she confirmed that numbers of children in care had increased by a third in the last two years. The Director advised the increase was due to a number of factors, including a greater awareness, however she assured members that the necessary controls were in place to ensure the increases were well managed. The Head of Family Support advised that a report would be presented to the Committee at the end of the year, that would detail the flow of children in and out of care and she asked members to note that the Authority was still below the national average.

46.3 A member commented that there would always be a need for residential care and that the County Council needed appropriate strategies that provided value for money. He also questioned whether there were alternatives to residential care homes. The Director and Head of Family Support advised that children in care had been recognised nationally as the biggest budget challenge. The strategic aim was to supply the right type of home, in the right location, at the right price and to have early preventative measures in place. This was not just a challenge for the Authority, but for all its partners. The Director added that a workshop to follow the Committee meeting would further explore this challenge.

46.4 There were mitigating underspends in Children Centres, Youth Centres and other early support services, being held back where possible in amalgamation with other strategic underspends across the directorate. A member questioned where the £343k underspend in Other Services had come from and the Group Finance Manager advised that this was from several high quantity one-off underspends taken throughout the year. In response to a question regarding the underspend of grants for 2 year old places, the Head of Learning and Inclusion advised that officers and partners were trying to increase the uptake of places and that as the Authority had been funded to receive larger numbers, an underspend had occurred.

46.5 The Committee noted the continued pressure in relation to the transport of children with statements or attending a learning centre, and officers highlighted that the holistic transport review to reduce the overspend was on going. The Head of Learning and Inclusion informed the Committee of a pilot scheme in Blandford where a learning centre had been given control of the transport arrangements. This had seen real savings and a paper would be presented at the next meeting of the Holistic Transport Board. The pilot had potential to be rolled out in other centres, with an aim to introduce it permanently from September 2015. He added that officers were currently working to accurately record the savings, as the pilot had also led to an increase in attendance numbers at the centre, and therefore a further increase in transportation costs. Officers were working to get a clear sign of both.

46.6 A member welcomed the increase in social worker posts and he sought clarification from the Director regarding any potential structural changes. The Director confirmed no decisions had been made, but work had commenced last year on how the service supported children through their journey through the care system, and would be

considered through the Forward Together for Children Board. However, any proposals to change structures and posts would be brought before the Committee.

46.7 In response to a question, the Head of Learning and Inclusion advised that any vacancies in the Early Years team, the Education Psychology team and Advice Challenge and Improvement would not impact on children and the number of assessments being carried out.

Noted

Corporate Performance Monitoring Report Third Quarter 2014/15 (1 October – 31 December 2014)

47.1 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 third 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.

47.2 The Policy and Performance Manager highlighted the improvements and challenges within the report and drew attention to the percentage of children and young people who were able to access primary (tier 2) Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services within 8 weeks of referral. This had reduced to 88% from the previous figure of 98%. The target was 95%. The Head of Strategy, Partnership and Performance advised that this was a one-off drop in performance and was being closely monitored. The provider was producing information to clarify the performance but the figures reflected the increased pressure in this area. A report on Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) was scheduled for the next meeting of the Committee (18 June 2015).

47.3 A member commented on the health performance indicators and questioned how the Committee would have sight of these issues and took responsibility of public health issues following the Cabinet's decision to incorporate this within overview committees' terms of reference. The Head of Strategy, Partnership and Performance asked members to note that a recent invitation by the Health and Wellbeing Board had been circulated that tied in to the healthy weight indicator. Officers confirmed that a report from Public Health was scheduled for the next meeting of the Committee and its October's meeting would be concentrating on health issues. The member asked for a report to be presented, given the complexities and number of strategies within the County Council, to highlight how these integrated, and detail how governance arrangements in and around Children's Services directorate were connected and intelligence used collectively.

47.4 An officer confirmed that the Health and Wellbeing Board had invited all members to attend a workshop on Healthy Eating, Obesity and Diabetes to be held on the afternoon of 14 April 2015. A member of the Committee who also sat on the Task and Finish Group on Obesity advised that he hoped the Group would have recommendations following their review.

47.5 The Policy and Performance Manager responded to additional questions for clarification purposes.

Resolved

48.1 That the corporate performance monitoring report for the third quarter of 2014-15 be noted;

Children's Services Overview Committee – 17 March 2015

48.2 That a further report to highlight how strategies of the Authority were integrated and intelligence used collectively, be presented to the next meeting of the Committee.

Reason for Decisions

49. To ensure councillors were aware of the County Council's performance against the 2014-2015 Corporate Plan and Corporate Balanced Scorecard.

Forward Together for Children – update

50.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director for Children's Services which provided an update on the progress with the Forward Together Programme which was being implemented within the Children's Services directorate.

50.2 The Chairman brought members' attention to the report's recommendation and advised that a further one would be added to recommend to the Cabinet that the Executive Advisory Panel (EAP) for Universal Services be reconvened and membership be invited from interested members.

50.3 The Director highlighted the need to amend the title of the EAP as it would be used to steer activity to design an overall model and business case for what children's services in Dorset could look like in the future. The change in name to the 'EAP in relation to Forward Together for Children' would recognise that this was a whole local authority provision and of the need to use all resources in a strategic way.

Resolved

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

Recommended

52.1 That the Cabinet be recommended to reinstate the Executive Advisory Panel on Universal Services.

52.2 That the Cabinet be recommended to rename the Executive Advisory Panel to 'in relation to Forward Together for Children'.

Reason for Recommendation

53. 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.

Corporate Plan 2015/18

54.1 The Committee considered a report by the Chief Executive that sought members' comments on the new County Council Corporate Plan, to become operational at the start of the 2015/16 financial year. A further ten year vision, founded upon the Forward Together principles of Smarter Services, Greater Independence and Empowered People (Appendix B) was circulated at the meeting. The three year Plan followed an outcomes based approach that identified the difference that the County Council and its partners were seeking to make to people's lives in Dorset. The plan aimed to specify what the County Council would contribute towards those outcomes, and what communities would need to try, to contribute for themselves. Appropriate performance measures and indicators would then be used to link with the outcomes.

54.2 Members welcomed the revised approach but asked what mechanisms were in place to reach people within the County. The Head of Policy, Partnerships and Communications advised that the County Council would build upon the success of 'Ask Dorset' and have genuine engagement with members, who would act as the Authority's

conduit. Town and Parish Councils would be given a tool kit and asked to assist, while the County Council would co-ordinate responses. Members commented that they knew their communities well, and asked officers to use this to their advantage.

54.3 The proposed increased dialogue was noted but it was emphasised that there was a need for the County Council to fully engage with the District/Boroughs and Town and Parish Councils. It was suggested that previously barriers had been raised and the County Council appeared to be risk evasive. There was a need for the County Council to be more equitable with its partners, and less dictatorial. It was also suggested that there should be alignment of corporate plans and strategic documents, such as housing policies. A whole authority approach was needed to ensure delivery. As part of this officers were asked to make greater use of ICT, in particular broadband and digital technology.

54.4 Members commented on the need for the following to be included within the plan; the supply of renewable energy; the improvement of the Dorset's road network; and support for fair trade.

54.5 A member highlighted the aim for children, young people and families to know what it was to be healthy and adopt lifestyles that promote it. However, she commented that this seemed to be in contradiction with the reduction of youth workers and clubs. She added that most young people accessed appropriate help via these means and further support to clubs was needed. In addition, it was highlighted that 12 candidates from the Youth Parliament were from Dorset, with 17,000 young people voting. Officers and members were encouraged to open a dialogue with these youths.

54.6 The Policy and Performance Manager echoed members' statements and confirmed that the corporate plan was about shared responsibility in order to deliver the outcomes. It was recognised that almost all outcomes listed required partnership working, and officers were clear that this could not be achieved alone.

Resolved

55. That the Head of Policy, Partnerships and Communications incorporate the Committee's comments on the Draft Corporate Plan, within the report for the Cabinet.

Reason for Decision

56. To ensure that the County Council's Corporate Plan for 2015/18 was a relevant and useful expression of what the organisation is seeking to achieve for Dorset within the resources available.

Pan Dorset Joint Commissioning arrangements for Children and Young People

57.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director for Children's Services which gave an updated position in relation to the joint commissioning arrangements for children and young people across Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole. The current governance and reporting structure was outlined and the progress in relation to the specific strategic programmes detailed.

57.2 The Head of Strategy, Partnership and Performance advised members that they were currently in the procurement process in regards to a jointly commissioned contract for Children Missing from Home. She confirmed that child sexual exploitation had been included within the contract's specifications.

57.3 Further headlines from the report were highlighted and the Head of Strategy, Partnership and Performance confirmed a more detailed report in relation to Child and

Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) would be presented to the Committee's next meeting.

57.4 A member raised a concern regarding Virgin Health Care for the Lyme Regis area, and he asked for a direct comparison with other areas. The Head of Strategy, Partnership and Performance acknowledged the concern and advised that the issue was being reviewed. Progress was being made under the new arrangements, and she confirmed that these had highlighted differences and the need to strengthen arrangements.

Resolved

58.1 That the progress being made by commissioners across the partnership, be noted.

58.2 That a more detailed report in relation to CAMHS be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

58.3 That the work stream in relation to Health Visiting be brought back for future consideration in the autumn 2015.

Reason for Decisions

59. These arrangements would ensure that strategic commissioning priorities would be delivered. In addition there would be a reduction in the use of high cost specialist services, maximising the use of available funding.

Education Performance and Pupil Premium Gap

60.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director for Children's Services that informed members of performance in Early Years Foundation Stage, Year 1 Phonics, Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2 and Key Stage (KS) 4.

60.2 The Head of Learning and Inclusion highlighted the headline findings within the report and asked members to note that overall performance was good, however Key Stage 2 was slightly below national standards and needed improvement – especially in maths and attainment at the higher levels. Work was being undertaken to share best practices amongst schools to improve performance in this area. It was also recognised that those in receipt of Pupil Premium did less well, and more focused work in this area was being introduced, as well as additional funding to increase performance.

60.3 Officers responded to general questions and confirmed that more in-depth comparisons were available, for example boys versus girls. Members noted that officers were looking at how to work with schools to offer an increased range of qualifications, at the appropriate locations.

60.4 The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People asked members to note that achievement at KS1 was assessed internally, and externally modulated at KS2. This could make progress harder to monitor. She also advised that the Children's Trust Board had considered the importance of early years attainment to the skills that young people needed to achieve later in life. This included social skills and general development, therefore the need to get it right at that key early state was paramount.

Resolved

61. That the work of the School Improvement Partnership (previously known as the Dorset Learning Partnership) be supported.

Reason for Decision

62. The work streams target improvements to ensure the best educational outcomes for Dorset's children and young people.

Admissions Arrangements 2016-2017, Catchment Area Changes and Transport Policy 2015-2016

63.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director for Children's Services that summarised the consultations that had taken place on changes to school admission arrangements and invited members to recommend approval of changes in order to meet the Local Authority's statutory requirements.

63.2 In addition to the determination of admissions arrangements, the report also included two proposed changes to catchment areas that had been consulted on, and updated the existing Home to School Transport and the Post 16 Transport Support Policy that would come into effect for September 2015. The Committee was also asked to note the outcome of a consultation on the decrease in Pupil Admissions Number at Emmanuel CE VA Middle School.

63.3 The Chairman advised members of an email of support to the proposed changes that he had received from the County Councillor for Commons. Her comments were supported by a local member in a neighbouring division.

63.4 A member expressed concern that there had been no responses to the consultation from members of the armed forces in regards to the policy in order to support military families and to meet the requirements of the Armed Forces Covenant, and he questioned who had been consulted. The School Admissions Manager confirmed there was an agreed list of statutory consultees, but this had not included the armed forces or the Member Champion for Military/Civilian Integration. The member voiced his opinion that groups representing the armed forces should be included and the officer was asked to take this on board for future consultations.

63.5 The School Admissions Manager responded to general questions and he clarified the position in regards to the appointment of a head teacher at Twynham Primary and the proposed move to Marsh Lane, once construction of the new school was completed. Officers suggested that further clarification be given outside of the meeting.

63.6 A number of members expressed concern that the recommendations included the rise in the surplus bus seat price from £460 to £485, effectively a 5% increase. These members expressed a view that this was too large and would have a huge impact on rural communities and low income families. They asked officers to re-consider this increase. The School Admissions Manager advised that the increase was necessary to better align with the true cost of the travel. The proposed price was still some way away from a full balance recovery, as it was estimated that the real cost was between £700-£800.

63.7 Members who sat on the Children's and Adult Services Appeals Committee asked whether that committee would still have the flexibility to offer further reductions to the surplus seat price. Officers agreed to clarify this, but initial thoughts were that no discounted price could be offered.

63.8 The Chairman highlighted that these seats were not a mandatory requirement of the County Council and the offer of these seats were discretionary. The Head of Learning and Inclusion reminded members of previous financial discussions and of the on going Holistic Transport Review. The need to save money in this area was essential, and he reiterated that the County Council was not expected to offer these spaces and yet it did, at a subsidised cost. The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People reminded members that the Authority had a statutory obligation to determine and publish its admission arrangements and associated costs by 15 April 2015. She advised that the proposed price was set at a market value and compared well with the cost of annual bus and college passes. The County Council provided options to parents, if extra seats were available, but

members needed to recognise and make decisions based on the financial budgetary constraints.

63.9 A member proposed an amendment to report's recommendation 1 (b), to reduce the proposed rise in surplus seat price in line with the council tax precept for 2015/2016, as agreed by County Council on 12 February 2015, at 1.99%. This proposal was seconded. On being put to the vote, the amendment was lost.

Resolved

64.1 That the suspension of the consultation with East Dorset, until such time as the wider review of Dorset County Council's Pupil Place Planning Strategy and East Dorset consultation be completed, be noted.

Recommended

65. That the Cabinet be recommended to adopt the following:
- (a) Dorset County Council Admissions Arrangements including the Co-Ordinated Scheme, the Admissions Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools in Dorset 2016-2017, the In Year Fair Access Policy 2016-2017, the Admission of Armed Forces Community Children Policy and the Guidance on the Placement of a Pupil Outside His or Her Normal Age Group.
 - (b) The Home to School Transport Entitlement Policy for Children Attending Mainstream School 2015-2016 and the Dorset Post 16 Transport Support Policy for 2015-2016 which includes a rise in the surplus seat price from £460 to £485.
 - (c) Changes to the Catchment Areas within Weymouth Town.
 - (d) Changes to the Pupil Admissions Number for Emmanuel Middle School, reducing from 150 to 124.

Reason for Recommendation

66.1 To determine admissions arrangements in accordance with statutory requirements including the Schools Admissions Code December 2014.

66.2 To ensure compliance with the latest legislation and subsequent regulation/statutory guidance.

Dorset Physical Activity Strategy

67.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director for Adult and Community Services that sought to create a new Physical Activity Strategy for Dorset to co-ordinate the many local authority key functions which impact on this agenda and support a more co-ordinated and efficient approach to deliver corporate aims.

67.2 The strategy aimed to increase rates of physical activity in Dorset in line with national recommendations to improve health and wellbeing outcomes. The Strategy would adopt a life-course approach with a particular emphasis on those who were currently inactive. It also aimed to position Dorset so that it could maximise external investment into the County.

67.3 The Strategy's activities sought the assistance of partners across the County in developing the relevant countywide strategy and the important role of partners such as Active Dorset, the County Sports Partnership, and district and borough councils was recognised.

67.4 Members supported the introduction of a strategy but one raised concerns regarding funding streams. She highlighted that local areas struggled with on going maintenance costs and needed guidance to access funding. The Head of Community Services confirmed that work was on going with district and borough councils and other key

partners to ensure that the strategy incorporated their priorities and approaches in creating a relevant countywide strategic document. District councillors had been positive and saw the benefit of the Strategy and would seek to contribute. Working together would allow for a greater number of evidence based funding bids to be placed, which could relate to schools in addition to communities.

67.5 A member asked officers to consider the provision already available within schools, and whether access to these could be better utilised during weekends and evenings. The Head of Community Services advised efforts would be made to do this, however its success would be reliant on the schools themselves.

Resolved

68. That the creation and implementation of the Physical Activity Strategy considering: the involvement and responsibilities of directorate services; and the corporate strategy, be endorsed.

Recommended

69. That the Cabinet be recommended to adopt the Dorset Physical Activity Strategy to ensure the importance of physical activity be recognised in multiple service areas in helping to achieve corporate aims.

Reason for Recommendation

70.1 To contribute to the corporate vision of Working Together for a strong and successful Dorset and help secure a sustainable approach to the County Council's corporate area of focus on health, wellbeing and safeguarding.

70.2 To lead on a countywide strategy to engage district and borough councils, the County Sports Partnership and other partners.

Pan-Dorset Youth Offending Team Progress Report

71.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director for Children's Services that informed members of progress made on the development for a pan-Dorset Youth Offending Service (YOS)..

71.2 Work towards a new pan-Dorset Youth Offending Team was being undertaken under a number of headings, including governance, employment models, IT and finance. The report set out the progress under each heading and concluded that the planned start date of 1 July 2015 was currently achievable.

71.3 The Dorset Youth Offending Team Manager asked members to note that the proposals had also been approved by Bournemouth Borough Council and by Poole Borough Council and that Bournemouth Borough Council was to be the lead local authority for the pan-Dorset YOS.

71.4 Members asked that staff be congratulated on the progress made to date.

Noted

The Dorset Pledge

72.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director for Children's Services that set out a list of promises (a Pledge) to young people in the County Council's care and care leavers. The Pledge was developed with the Children in Care Council (Dorset Kidz) and was handed out to all young people as they come into care.

72.2 Some of the promises in the Pledge had been integrated into the strategic plans for children in care and care leavers and these were regularly addressed by the

Children's Services Overview Committee – 17 March 2015

Corporate Parenting Board. However, many of the promises in the Pledge were considered by the young people as too 'woolly' and young people now reviewing the document to include specific and measurable targets by the end of 2015.

72.3 Members received confirmation that the Pledge would be available both in electronic and booklet form. A copy of the revised document would be circulated to members when finalised.

Resolved

73.1 That the implementation of the Pledge and the Action Plan be supported.

73.2 That the revised Pledge be circulated to the Committee when completed.

Reason for Decision

74. To ensure that Dorset County Council meets its commitments to Children in Care.

Work Programme

75. This item was deferred to the next meeting of the Committee, to be held on 18 June 2015.

Schedule of Councillor Seminars and Events 2015

76. This item was deferred to the next meeting of the Committee, to be held on 18 June 2015.

Councillor Briefings

77. This item was deferred to the next meeting of the Committee, to be held on 18 June 2015.

Outside Bodies and Member Champions

Outside Bodies

78.1 This item was deferred to the next meeting of the Committee, to be held on 18 June 2015.

Member Champions

78.2 This item was deferred to the next meeting of the Committee, to be held on 18 June 2015.

Questions from County Councillors

79. No questions were asked by councillors under Standing Order 20(2).

Meeting Duration: 10.00am – 12.25pm