

Children's Services Overview Committee

Minutes of a meeting held at County Hall,
Colliton Park, Dorchester on 18 June 2015.

Present:

Pauline Batstone (Vice-Chairman in the Chairman)
Mike Byatt, Barrie Cooper, Mary Kahn, Margaret Phipps and Daryl Turner.

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

Peter Richardson, County Councillor for St Leonards and St Ives, attended the meeting for minutes 90 to 91.

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), Gary Binstead (Senior Manager, Strategy, Planning and Commissioning), Ed Denham (School Admissions Manager) and Claire Shiels (Manager, Commissioning and Procurement).

(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 **13 October 2015**.)

Apologies for Absence

80. Apologies for absence were received from Michael Bevan, Dan Brember, Steve Butler, Beryl Ezzard, Peter Hall, Susan Jefferies, Mike Lovell, Joy Tubbs and Michael Turnbull.

Code of Conduct

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

Terms of Reference

82. Members received the Children's Services Overview Committee's Terms of Reference.

Noted

Minutes

83. The minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2015 were confirmed and signed.

Matters Arising

Minute 54 - Corporate Plan 2015/18

84. A member commented on the importance of having a clear understanding of the Committee's duties and how this linked with corporate strategies across the County Council. Members noted that this would be discussed in greater detail under the agenda

item on Quality Assurance and Performance in Children's Services and that other members were welcome to report to the Committee under the agenda item Outside Bodies and Member Champions.

Minute 63-65 - Admissions Arrangements 2016-2017, Catchment Area Changes and Transport Policy 2015-2016

85.1 Members were advised that they would be given a formal note to clarify whether the Children's and Adult Services Appeals Committee would still have the flexibility to offer further reductions to the surplus seat price.

85.2 Officers agreed to respond to a question regarding the changes to the catchment areas within Weymouth Town directly with a member outside the meeting.

Corporate Parenting Board

86.1 The Committee received the minutes of the Corporate Parenting Board meeting held on 19 February 2015.

86.2 Member asked that the minutes be seen by the Committee in a more timely fashion.

Noted

Public Participation

Public Speaking

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

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

Petition

88. The Committee were informed that a petition had been submitted for consideration, minutes 89 to 90 refer.

Procedure for Petitions - Petition entitled "Petition from the Parents of St Ives First School in Support of Proposal to Become a Primary School"

89.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director for Children's Services on the receipt of a petition containing 92 signatories that supported the school's proposal to become a primary school from September 2015. The petition was accompanied by an explanatory letter setting out the petitioners concerns, what they were asking to be done and how this might be achieved. The explanatory letter was made available to the Committee. The Director's report set out the Authority's response to the school's proposals and enclosed a copy of a letter to the Secretary of State regarding the matter. A series of options were made available to the Committee on how they might wish to respond to the petition, together with the possible financial implications, the prejudice such a change may have on neighbouring feeder schools and the potential wider capital costs of a larger school reorganisation.

89.2 The County Councillor for St Leonards and St Ives spoke of the complexities of the situation and the impact the decision could have on other schools in the east of the County. He informed members that the matter had been discussed at considerable length in Parliament on 10 June 2015. The Minister of State for Schools had made some good points during the debate and a response was now awaited from the Secretary of State. While he supported the Cabinet's decision, he asked that the Committee's decision be deferred, pending the Secretary of State's response.

89.3 The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, spoke of her understanding of the parents' wishes, but advised that the Authority had a duty to look at the impact of the school's request across East Dorset. The Directorate would rather work with all schools to find a solution as any independent change could be uncontrolled and may cause school closures in other areas. She highlighted that the MP had, during the debate, stated that schools in the area were undersubscribed, which was incorrect.

89.4 Officers clarified that the capital costs of the proposal quoted within the report was highly conservative and taken from some recent costing exercises in East Dorset and Corfe Mullen. This had been through a rigorous exercise and took into consideration consultation and architecture costs.

89.5 Members highlighted the need for a prompt decision, for the parents and children's sake. However, they recognised the duty and responsibility of the Authority to provide for all children, now and in the future. They asked officers to ensure that the Secretary of State was in receipt of the full and accurate facts regarding the matter, enable her to come to her conclusions. Officers confirmed that there was on-going liaison with all parties. Unfortunately, the Secretary of State had given no indication of when a decision would be forthcoming.

89.6 The Committee proposed to defer a response to the petition, pending the Secretary of State's determination. Members asked that an open dialogue be maintained with the school and both petitioners and the Committee informed of any action. In addition, officers were reminded of the protocol for engaging and consulting local members.

Resolved

90.1 That the Children's Services Overview Committee defer a response to the petition, pending the Secretary of State's determination.

90.2 That officers ensure the Secretary of State had full and accurate facts to determine the matter.

90.3 That officers write to the lead petitioners, informing them of the Committee's deferment and the reasons for this.

90.4 That all parties, including local members and the Committee be kept informed of developments.

Reason for decision

91. In order to comply with the County Council's published scheme for responding to petitions and so as to enable local people to connect with local elected decision makers.

Revenue Budget Outturn 2014/15 and High Level Budget Monitoring for 2015/16

92.1 The Committee considered a report by the Chief Financial Officer which set out the budget monitoring information as at the end of March 2015. The Group Finance Manager highlighted inaccuracies within the report's executive summary and confirmed that the remainder of the report was correct. The information showed an overspend for the County Council of £4,496k on service budgets. Following the offset of an underspend on other central budgets, this had reduced to £3m.

92.2 The Group Finance Manager reviewed the report and highlighted spend per service area. He made specific reference to the continued pressures on family support and the increase cost in agency staff, covering vacancies in social work. Members noted that while the budget for transport for Children with Special Educational Needs or Disability continued to be in the red, the overspend was reducing. From 2015/2016 this budget would be transferred from the Environment and the Economy Directorate to Children's Services,

thus increasing the overspend of the service. Officers were working hard to reduce the Directorate's overspend.

92.3 In response to members' concerns regarding the increasing cost of agency staff, officers highlighted the activities being carried out to recruit Social Services staff to the Authority, including the possibility of introducing incentive schemes. Members noted that recruitment was also an issue for other local authorities, this also impacted on Dorset County Council. Clarification was given to the qualifications required to be a social worker and officers advised that the County Council was flexible and supportive regarding training and further education to existing employees. It was also highlighted that a range of staff worked together to make the service a success, each with varying levels of experience and expertise.

92.4 Short and long term measures being taken to reduce the forecast overspend in other areas within family support were detailed. These measures would be captured within future Forward Together for Children updates to the Committee.

Recommended

93. That the Cabinet be recommended, taking into account the overall financial position of the County Council, to not carry forward the overspend into 2015/16.

Reason for Recommendation

94. Close monitoring of the budget position was an essential requirement to ensure that money and resources were used efficiently and effectively.

Forward Together for Children – update

95.1 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.

95.2 Members noted that the five year plan had already started and would end in 2020. The Committee would receive regular overview of its progress.

95.3 Reference was made to the conference on the Forward Together for Children Programme held on 11 June 2015 with stakeholders. In total 150 people attended the successful event, including many councillors. The outcome had been very positive. Staff events had also been fruitful and had re-energised and motivated them. It was recognised however, that the Authority could not do this alone, and all partners (including schools) had a part to play in the success of the Programme.

Resolved

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

Corporate Performance Monitoring Report Fourth Quarter 2014-15 (1 January – 31 March 2015)

97.1 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 final 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. The Policy and Performance Manager highlighted an inaccuracy within the report's executive summary, but assured the Committee that the remainder of the report was correct and that at year end, the service was largely on target.

Children's Services Overview Committee – 18 June 2015

97.2 A member highlighted that up-to-date information was required for the Committee's consideration. This was acknowledged and the Policy and Performance Manager advised that work was on-going to ensure this was resolved. However he asked members to recognise that most data was only available on a quarterly basis.

97.3 Reference was made to the percentage of 16-18 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEETS) and the implications for Dorset's economic growth and the skills agenda. Officers were asked to highlight where economic growth was located within the Corporate Plan and scorecard. Members were advised that the performance framework to support the 2015-18 Corporate Plan was in its early stages and there was a need to better match some measures to desired outcomes.

97.4 Members questioned how the collated information was used and what action officers were taking in response. The Head of Learning and Inclusion acknowledged that post 16 year olds did not feature as strongly as they should in relation to skills and jobs, and while many were achieving GCSEs, discussions were necessary with schools to focus studies in more appropriate subjects to develop a student's full potential in Dorset. The Director suggested that a report be provided so that members could debate how to improve the position for post 16 children.

97.5 Officers responded to additional questions for clarification purposes.

Resolved

98.1 That the corporate performance monitoring report for the fourth quarter of 2014-15 be noted;

98.2 That a further report in relation to the skills agenda and job opportunities for post 16 year olds, be provided for the Committee in January 2016.

Quality Assurance and Performance in Children's Services

99.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director for Children's Services that responded to a specific request for information from a member of the Committee. The report provided the detail that sat within the overarching Quality Assurance and Performance Framework. It set out the structure of the Quality Assurance and Performance Team and detailed its responsibilities, in addition to the other mechanisms for delivering a comprehensive quality assurance programme for Children's Services.

99.2 It was recognised that corporate performance indicators did not illustrate all of Children's Services indicators, of which there were at least 180 in number, hence the prevalence of performance reports to the Committee at each meeting. The Head of Strategy, Partnership and Performance highlighted key areas within the report and the areas of work carried out by the Safeguarding and Standards Team. She also referred to the initiatives carried out to review performance in the service and the lessons being learnt from complaints and serious case reviews.

99.3 A member raised a concern in relation to the commissioning of work and he asked whether Children's Services were informed of partner strategies such as the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), and the alignment of such strategies with the Authority. Officers confirmed that Public Health colleagues had sight of the CCG's performance score cards and elements were fed into the Children's Safeguarding Board. With any joint commissioning arrangement, officers would have access to data to enable scrutiny to take place. The Director assured the member that there was DCC representation at the different groups and discussions did take place to ensure alignment of strategies and score cards.

99.4 A member commented on the need for a different strategy to engage with young people who were becoming adults, in particular in regards to their changing

independence, needs such as housing and employment, and how the Authority was going to plan for these changes. The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, as Chairman of the Children's Trust Board, gave members an open invitation to attend the meeting to observe different partners working together. Members asked that they be made aware of any significant matters that came to the Board's attention. A member raised the possibility of receiving additional information in relation to the Board and its structure, possibly through a training session. He also questioned the language used in the report and asked for definitive information with targets, and timescales. The Director advised that the report was a basic review. However detailed information was available in a series of plans. The member would meet with the Head of Strategy, Partnership and Performance to consider these.

Resolved

100.1 That the reporting arrangements outlined in the Quality Assurance Framework be supported.

100.2 That the Children's Services Overview Committee be made aware of any significant matters that came to the Children's Trust Board's attention.

Review of Child and Adolescent Mental Health in Dorset

101.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director for Children's Services that updated members on the findings of a review of Pan-Dorset Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) provision across Dorset, Bournemouth and Poole and its impact upon Dorset. To address the findings of the review in the short term commissioners and providers have worked together to make immediate changes to the service specification. The report also made longer term recommendations and to take these forward it was proposed to set up an Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Strategy Task and Finish Group to develop a new strategy for Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Strategy. The Committee's support for this Group was requested. The Principal Programme Lead, NHS Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and the Locality Director, Poole and East Dorset of Dorset Healthcare attended the meeting to respond to member questions.

101.2 The Commissioning and Procurement Manager summarised the Pan-Dorset review, highlighting the key points and illustrating areas of concerns. In particular these included an urgent need for reducing the number of children who fail to attend appointments, reducing waiting times, increasing communications and engagement with young people, addressing service gaps and support around deliberate self harm. A number of positive features and practices were also highlighted as a result of the review, with Dorset comparing well against other South West authorities.

101.3 The Locality Director, Poole and East Dorset of Dorset Healthcare confirmed that self harm, anxiety and depression were at an all time high and she reviewed the challenges to partner organisations such as schools and social services. She advised that an extra £250k had been allocated by the CCG to CAMHS in order to improve access to services and a robust strategy had to be in place by September 2015 and agreed by the CCG. The Locality Director reiterated that although there were good elements within the review, improvements in access were essential in order to see a direct impact on engagement (including waiting times). Similar challenges were found in Bournemouth and Poole. The Principal Programme Lead, NHS Dorset CCG, stressed the importance of the Task and Finish Group to deliver early help via a focused improvement plan. There was an overarching need for all partners to work together to improve services.

101.4 Members noted that the Pan-Dorset review was commissioned by the Maternity, Reproductive and Family Health Clinical Commissioning Programme within NHS Dorset CCG, and that three months ago, Norman Lamb MP had produced a National

Children's Services Overview Committee – 18 June 2015

Review entitled "Future in mind - Promoting, protecting and improving our children and young people's mental health and wellbeing". The latter review suggested additional investment in mental health services was required nationally and that local areas would need to work together to develop a transformation plan in order to maximise opportunities to access any additional funding. Members asked for a copy of the link to the review.

101.5 It was recognised that family, in particular parent involvement was very important to children and young people's emotional wellbeing and engagement with mental health services. While statistics within the review were from 2012-2013, officers confirmed that cases of deliberate self harm were on the increase and could relate to both sexes, although there is a higher prevalence in girls. The Director advised that the Children's Safeguarding Board recently considered three serious case reviews that all related to teenagers self harming. This was a big issue that could only be resolved collectively.

101.6 The need to look at social media and counteract its sometimes negative influence, with measured support was highlighted. Members stated that having alternative websites was insufficient and responses should be made by alternative media such as twitter and Facebook. A member advised how her local school was educating parents to be more confident on social media and how to identify and respond to issues, via workshops led by the Police. Members asked that officers ensure information on help and support be disseminated. The Head of Strategy, Partnership and Performance confirmed that work was being undertaken with Bournemouth University regarding social media and it was recognised that officers had to be more flexible due to the fast moving ICT environment. Members requested that the action plan and recommendations include a reference to social media and/or the specific use of technology. In recognition of technological advances, this should be constantly reviewed.

101.7 Members commented on the review and raised concerns that the outcomes, forward plan and strategic links were not illustrated together and were challenging for the reader to establish. In addition there were no links to demographic areas, meaning potential links to mental health issues within areas of deprivation could not be established. Officers confirmed that additional work was being undertaken and a further report would be brought back to the Committee which would take into consideration members comments. As the Plan had to be agreed by the CCG in September, the report would be available for the next meeting of the Committee, in October 2015.

101.8 The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People advised members that at the next meeting of the Children's Trust Board a number of reports would be presented in relation to mental health issues. Following the meeting there would also be a workshop and she extended an open invitation to all members to attend. The meeting and workshop were to be held from 10.00 am on 22 June 2015 at the Dorset Youth Association Building, Dorchester.

Resolved

102.1 That the Authority's involvement in the proposed task and finish group be supported.

102.2 That the link to the review entitled "Future in mind - Promoting, protecting and improving our children and young people's mental health and wellbeing" be sent to members.

102.3 That a further report be presented to the Committee at its meeting in October 2015.

Reason for decisions

103. The work would directly impact on the child and adolescent mental health support across Dorset.

Work Programme

104.1 The Committee considered a report by the Chief Executive which detailed the updated work programme for 2015 and were asked request additional items through the Chairman.

104.2 Members noted that the provisional Citizen Panel Surveys would be removed from the work programme following the cessation of the survey. In addition, it was anticipated that a ½ day special meeting would be arranged to discuss the Forward Together for Children Programme.

104.3 Additional items to be added to the work programme were set out in minutes 98.2 and 102.3.

Noted

Schedule of Councillor Seminars and Events 2015

105.1 The Committee received a schedule of forthcoming seminars and events arranged for councillors in 2015.

105.2 The Chairman highlighted the Holistic Transport Review event was to be held on Friday 3 July 2015.

105.3 The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People informed members that the Child Sexual Exploitation seminar would also include an information sharing session about the multi-agency work being undertaken by officers of the County Council Children's Services and Dorset Police. This was in the wake of the Rotherham Borough Council Inquiry. She asked that a further email be sent to members to urge their attendance. A member asked that the relationship with other departments, such as licensing, be taken into consideration and he was informed that all District and Borough councils had been invited to the event.

Resolved

106. That a further email be sent to all members urging them to attend the all member seminar on 24 June – Child Sexual Exploitation; Chelsea's Choice.

Councillor Briefings

107. No subjects for future member briefings were identified.

Outside Bodies and Member Champions

Outside Bodies

108.1 The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People circulated a written update to members on the Dorset Safeguarding Children's Board, the Modernising Schools Programme Board and the Schools' Forum. She highlighted that the Dorset Safeguarding Children Board's annual report would be presented to the Committee's next meeting on 13 October 2015.

108.2 Members queried the lack of a formal feedback mechanism with the Children's Trust Board and asked that a copy of the Board's minutes be circulated to the Committee, albeit by email.

Resolved

109. That the minutes of the Children's Trust Board be circulated to the Children's Services Overview Committee by email.

Member Champions

110.1 There were no updates from Member Champions received at the meeting.

110.2 The Member Champion for Learning Disabilities asked that the appropriate officer liaise with him regarding his role.

110.3 A member highlighted that at the Environment Overview Committee held on 17 June 2015, it was resolved that an annual report be received from Member Champions. The Committee welcomed this approach.

Resolved

111.1 That the appropriate officer contact the Member Champion for Learning Disabilities.

111.2 That Member Champions be asked to produce an annual report for the Committee on the work undertaken in their roles.

Questions from County Councillors

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

Meeting Duration: 10.00am – 12.10pm