

Children and Young People Committee: Minutes

Date: 11 October 2022

Time: 2.00pm – 5.17pm

Venue: Red Kite Room, New Shire Hall, Alconbury Weald PE28 4YE

Present: Councillors D Ambrose Smith, A Bradnam, A Bulat, C Daunton, B Goodliffe (chair), S Hoy, J King, M King (vice chair), M McGuire, A Sharp, P Slatter, S Taylor and F Thompson

Co-opted Members:
Canon A Read, Church of England Diocese of Ely

95. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Hay and Prentice and from Dr Andy Stone, the Roman Catholic Diocese of East Anglia's nominee to the committee. Councillor Count also sent apologies as he had been due to substitute for Councillor Hay, but was unwell.

Councillor Daunton declared an interest at Item 12: Children's Mental Health Services as a County Council appointed governor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust.

96. Co-option of representative from the Roman Catholic Diocese of East Anglia

Dr Andy Stone, the Diocese of East Anglia's Director of Schools' Service, was co-opted as a non-elected member of the Children and Young People Committee.

97. Minutes – 5 July 2022 and Action Log

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 July 2022 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

The action log was reviewed. An update to the committee was requested outside of the meeting on the Wisbech Free School Secondary School. Action

Fenland SEND School Feasibility Study was added to the action log. This action would be kept open until a report came to committee. Action

98. Petitions and Public Questions

There were no petitions or public questions.

Decisions

99. Finance Monitoring Report August 2022

The Committee reviewed the financial position for expenditure within its remit to the end of August 2022. An outturn overspend of £271k was currently forecast against non-dedicated schools grant (DSG) budgets. There was an underlying forecast pressure of £11.2m relating to year end relating to high needs, and updated figures would be brought to the next meeting.

Cost of living pressures were impacting on capital schemes. It was proposed to seek the Strategy and Resources Committee's agreement to give delegated authority to the Section 151 officer for 12 months to authorise variances in costs up to 5% in order to avoid delays in progressing projects. Officers were satisfied that 5% would give sufficient tolerance at this stage.

In response to questions from Members, officers:

- Stated that conversations were continuing with the Department for Education (DfE) around addressing the cumulative DSG deficit.
- Offered to provide a separate reconciliation outside of the meeting setting out how the various figures and tables in the Finance Monitoring report tied up. Action

It was resolved to review and comment on the report.

100. Business Planning Proposals for 2023-28 Opening Update and Review

The report contained an appendix which was exempt from publication under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, in that it would not be in the public interest for this information to be disclosed - information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). The public interest in maintaining the exemption was deemed to outweigh the public interest in publication. The Chair asked whether any members wanted to discuss the exempt appendix. There were no requests to do so.

The Committee reviewed the opening business planning report for 2023-28. The production process had been complicated this year as known revenue gaps had increased since the previous year. The situation was challenging, with a funding gap of £28.5m currently forecast over the next year.

In response to questions from Members, officers:

- Stated that outdoor centres operated as income generators. A review of the current model was planned to look for any additional income generation opportunities or savings to ensure that the best model was in place. A member suggested that member involvement in this review would be appropriate.

- Confirmed that inflationary assumptions around wages were included in the calculations. However, current inflation levels were above the working assumptions which had been used. Officers undertook to provide a note to clarify whether these assumptions were based on the national living wage or real living wage. **Action**
- Stated that the provision of SEND places at Alconbury Weald school was a priority. Work was taking place to balance timescales with affordability. Project delays meant the budget would be under pressure due to the increase in building costs. A report on this would be brought to the next meeting to seek members' views.
- Confirmed a significant rise in school admissions and offered a note on the impact of this on particular districts and divisions outside of the meeting. A large proportion of this increase related to Ukrainian guests being hosted in the county in addition to migration from other parts of the UK which had taken up the surplus places which would normally exist. At the same time, other parts of the county were seeing drops in admission rates. Officers were working with schools to mitigate the impact.
Action
- Stated that an overall increase in demand for home to school transport was still anticipated, but that the increase was smaller than had been forecast previously.
- Stated that the illustrative DSG settlement did not at present include an uplift to cover the additional costs relating to increased energy costs and teachers' pay settlement.
- Stated that the price of placements for children in care were increasing nationally due to the lack of places available. At present, the additional funding required to fund placements in the next financial year looked likely to be lower than initially thought, although it would still represent an increase over previous years. This was due to the consistent decrease over time in the number of children in the Council's care due to the support provided through universal and early help services and the success of the Family Safeguarding, but the position was being closely monitored. The Government had increased the number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children each local authority would be expected to care for, but this additional cost would be funded centrally. The Director of Children's Services stated that any child who needed to be brought into care would be brought into care, and that this was not a financial decision. However, there was still a significant budget gap and officers needed to provide members with options for addressing this.

It was resolved to:

- a) Note the overview and context provided for the 2023 – 2028 business plan;
- b) Note the initial estimates made for demand, inflationary and other pressures; and
- c) Note overview and estimates made for the updated capital programme.

Key decisions

101. Early Years Pseudo Dynamic Purchasing System (KD2022/104)

The Committee was advised that the proposed early years (EY) pseudo dynamic purchasing system (PDPS) would open annually for applications to grow the number of providers available. Currently, 21 completed applications had been received. The potential value of the four contracts named in the report was over £500k, but this was not a cost to the Council as EY funding was part of the dedicated schools' grant. If approved, a report would be brought to the committee annually.

Councillor Thompson addressed the committee as the local member for Longstanton, Northstowe and Over. She set out the current situation in Oakington which meant that she was not sure that there was a demographic to support the proposed EY provision. She expressed the hope that the Council was being transparent about this with potential providers. Officers stated that there had been a lot of interest in the Oakington site from a wide range of providers. Demographic information and birth rate figures would be shared with potential providers, but they would also need to do their own due diligence. Oakington had always been a case of borderline need which was why expressions of interest had been sought to test the appetite of the market. If no applications were received the position would be reviewed.

Councillor Cox Condron had also asked to address the committee as the local member for Arbury. She was unable to attend the meeting in person, so her written comments were read out on her behalf. A copy is attached at Appendix 1.

In response to questions from Members, officers:

- Stated that subject to committee approval of the proposals it would only take a few days to finalise a provider for Arbury. There would then be a stand-still period to 22 October 2022, after which a call-off could be made and applications assessed. Depending on the number of applications received it was hoped a decision would be made in early to mid November.
- Acknowledged that staff shortages could impact of the viability of settings and the challenge which this created. Questions around staffing recruitment and retention were included as part of the PDPS.
- Stated that this was not a new pressure as the pupils were already being funded in other settings.

Individual Members raised the following issues:

- Welcomed the inclusion of Arbury in the framework, commenting that the area was sorely in need of provision.
- Welcomed the provisions for monitoring the operation of the framework set out in the report, particularly providers' Ofsted ratings.

- Commented that they were not keen to delegate decisions over £500k and asked whether an item should be placed on the agenda of the following meeting so that members were aware of the decisions that had been taken.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Delegate 'Authority to Award' to the Director of Education, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Children and Young People Committee, when deciding which providers meet the criteria to join the Pseudo Dynamic Purchasing System (PDPS).
- b) Delegate authority to the Director of Education, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Children and Young People Committee, to approve that call offs can be made from the Pseudo Dynamic Purchasing System when an opportunity arises at short notice, and currently including, but not limited to:
 - Arbury Pre-School
 - The Round House Primary Academy in Loves Farm, St Neots.
 - The Community Centre, Kester Way, Loves Farm, St Neots.
 - The mobile located on Oakington Primary School
- c) Delegate authority to the Director of Education, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Children and Young People Committee, to award contracts when a call off from the PDPS has been made and the most suitable provider has been identified.

Co-opted members of the committee were eligible to vote on this item.

102. Recommissioning Healthy Schools Service (KD2022/074)

The Committee was advised of a change to recommendation a) from a request to extend the current healthy schools' provider until 31 March 2025, rather than 31 March 2024 as stated in the published report. This would align it with proposals to extend the current Section 75 agreement for the Healthy Child Programme (HCP) to 31 March 2025 which would be brought to the next meeting. The HCP had been running for five years and its results had been positive, but it was considered timely to look at current provision in the light of the Covid experience and to establish whether any gaps existed.

In response to questions from Members, officers:

- Confirmed they had data on the effectiveness and value for money of the Healthy Schools Programme and offered to share this with the committee outside of the meeting. Action
- Stated that access to universal services were signposted through the Director of Education's regular newsletter
- Confirmed that it was essential for the voice of young people to be heard in order to inform the shape of service provision. A survey of Year 8-10 students was carried

out every two years to identify emerging needs and young people were directly involved through initiatives such as the junior ambassadors for active travel.

- Confirmed that the necessary resources were in place to carry out the planned review of the Healthy Schools Service and Healthy Child Programme. The delay was primarily due to covid.

Individual Members raised the following issues:

- Highlighted their wish to see recognition from potential providers of the importance of signposting users to services during the commissioning process.
- Noted that the same provider would be used from 2018-2025 if the proposed contract extension was agreed, and sought confirmation that this continued to provide good value for money. The Deputy Director of Public Health stated that the market was tested at the start of every procurement exercise. Other providers did exist, but not many had the specialisms required to work in schools. It took time to build the service and gain the trust of schools and the length of the contract should be seen in that context. The Head of Procurement and Commercial had confirmed that the proposed short extension to the Healthy Schools Programme could be made, but that no further extensions could be accommodated under existing procurement arrangements.
- Stated that they would expect set-up costs to be built into the initial contract period and that they did not generally favour rolling contracts on in the way proposed. However, in this case they understood that there was a planned review and the contract value was relatively small so they were content on this occasion to support the proposal

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Agree to extend the current contract with Everyone Health, the current Healthy Schools provider until 31 March 2025, to allow for the review and re-procurement as detailed in this paper. This short term extension is permitted under Public Contract Regulations (2015) Regulation 72.
- b) To review the Healthy Schools Service alongside school nursing and other school related services to identify a school-based service model that will contribute to improvements in health outcomes for children and young people.
- c) That the outcomes of the review are reported back to Committee along with the recommended commissioning approach.

Co-opted members of the committee were eligible to vote on this item

103. Commissioning Child Weight Management Services (KD2022/090)

The Committee's approval was sought to approve a competitive procurement to commission a three year Child Weight Management service, with the option of extending the contract for an additional two years with a break point at year four. It was

proposed that the service would be jointly commissioned with Peterborough City Council (PCC), subject to this being approved through PCC's own business planning process. The County Council would act as lead commissioner. Child obesity issues were widely recognised and a number of programmes were already in place to address this through universal services. The model proposed contained several tiers and would support those families with the need for additional support. It was designed to compliment the existing universal offer.

In response to questions from Members, officers:

- Stated that the way services would be shaped in response to the cost of living crisis would be challenging. The programme would include advice on how to eat healthily with little money and it was recognised that care would be needed in how the offer was presented and promoted to recognise the hardship being experienced by some families.
- Stated that most public health programmes were jointly commissioned with PCC and that PCC supported this proposal in principle. However, the programme was not dependent on PCC's support and that if Members approved the proposal the County would act as sole commissioner for Cambridgeshire if PCC chose not to take part.
- Advised that the contract cost to the Council for services in Cambridgeshire would be £1.75m. This cost was not dependent on whether a joint procurement was undertaken with PCC.

Individual Members raised the following issues:

- Proposed that the wording of recommendation c) should be revised to make clear that the Committee's decision to commission child weight management services was not subject to PCC's agreement. This would be consistent with the approach taken at a recent meeting of the Adults and Health Committee. With the consent of the meeting this revision was agreed.
- Questioned the recommendation to delegate authority to the Director of Public Health (DPH) to award a contract of such significant size and asked that this decision should be brought back to the committee. Officers clarified that the committee's approval was being sought for the contract to be let and to authorise the DPH to enact this committee decision. Consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee before the contract was let was a separate measure to ensure continued Member oversight of the process. With the consent of the meeting, it was agreed that recommendation d) should be amended so that the award of the contract would be made in consultation with CYP Spokes.
- Commented that the factors relating to weight management were complex and did not relate solely to financial constraints, highlighting in particular the links with mental health. The Deputy Director of Public health stated that the appendix to the report set out which services would be provided at each tier of intervention. Mental health and psychological factors would be addressed through the new service as part of the proposed multi-disciplinary support.

- Emphasised the importance of providers demonstrating how they would address any barriers to engagement with services, including language barriers.
- Welcomed the positive cross-party debate.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Approve a competitive procurement to commission Child Weight Management service with a contract duration of 3 years with the option of extending for an additional 2 years with a break point at year 4.
- b) Subject to approval by Peterborough City Council; to jointly commission the Child Weight Management Services with Peterborough City Council (PCC).
- c) Subject to ~~approval by~~ **agreement with** Peterborough City Council, that Cambridgeshire County Council act as lead commissioner and undertake the procurement. **Should PCC not agree, Cambridgeshire County Council will act as sole commissioner for Cambridgeshire.**

It was resolved to:

- d) Authorise the Director of Public Health, in consultation with ~~the Chair and Vice Chair of the Children and Young People Committee and~~ **CYP Spokes**, to award a contract up to the value of £2,275,000 to the successful provider, subject always to compliance with all required legal processes.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- e) Authorise Pathfinder Legal Services Ltd to draft and complete the necessary contract documentation.

Co-opted members of the committee were eligible to vote on this item.

The meeting adjourned from 3.59 to 4.11pm.

Decisions

104. Intensive Therapeutic Support Hub

The Committee was invited to endorse a proposed policy change within Children's Services in relation to the inclusion of a hub model into the portfolio of services for disabled children and to recommend two key decisions around the location and financing of the hub to the Strategy and Resources Committee for approval. The proposals recognised the interface between education and social care, and funding of £1m had been secured from the Department for Education (DfE) in 2022/23 with the opportunity to bid again in future years. The local authority needed to provide a capital asset to host the hub, and the Committee would be invited to support the proposed use of the Hawthorns in Cambridge.

In response to questions from individual members, officers:

- Stated that a business case had been taken to the Programme Board. If bids to the DfE in future years were unsuccessful the cost avoidances that would be achieved would effectively neutralise the future revenue cost. However, this project was part of a pilot scheme to inform national policy change so it was hoped that central government funding would continue. An application for Year 2 funding was currently in process and the outcome should be known by November.
- Offered a note outside of the meeting on the geographic location of the 200 children awaiting specialist placements. **Action**
- Acknowledged questions around the proposed use of a property in Cambridge to house the hub, given that the highest need might be in Fenland and the known issues around congestion in the city, including potential additional costs to if congestion charging was introduced. The Hawthorns had been proposed because it was an existing CCC asset which could be re-purposed within the timeline required by the DfE to receive the available grant. Need was spread across the county, so a central location was considered appropriate. There was no other suitable County Council asset available for this purpose which meant another property would need to be purchased if the Hawthorns was not used. The Chair asked for a briefing note on the other property assets available to house this service and their location.
Action
- Confirmed that the proposed Hub would be in addition to the existing capacity for respite care. The Hawthorns was a large property and education provision and respite provision would be separated.
- Stated that it was unlikely that the hub services would be made available to families outside of Cambridgeshire. This could be considered if capacity was available, but this was considered unlikely.
- Confirmed that work was underway to recruit to the hub's senior leadership team and that officers were working with NHS England to explore whether that body might also make a funding contribution.
- Stated that services would focus on 11 to 15 year olds, but that the potential age range had been set at 8 to 18/ 25 years so that it could be accessed by other children where appropriate. The setting manager would manage the mix of children accessing the setting.

Individual members raised the following issues:

- Suggested the proposals felt more like they were creating additional SEND capacity rather than a respite facility.
- Disputed the description of Cambridge as a central location within the county and expressed concern that locating the hub in Cambridge would lead to children with severe disabilities travelling long distances to access respite care. This would have

implications for the comfort and wellbeing of those children, as well as the financial implications of the transport costs. It would also increase vehicle movements and the associated emissions in Cambridge.

- Noted that the proposal was a pilot and suggested that consideration be given to the location of the next hub if it was successful to take account of need in other parts of the county. Officers confirmed that learning would be taken from the pilot project regardless of whether the DfE chose to continue with the scheme.

Co-opted members were eligible to vote on recommendations a) and b) only.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Endorse the inclusion of a hub model into the portfolio of services for disabled children.
- b) For the hub to be delivered within the portfolio of in-house provider services, as an internally commissioned service
- c) Support the key decision to the Strategy and Resources Committee for capital funding and prudential borrowing from Strategy and Resources Committee to develop a Council property asset.

It was resolved to:

- d) Support the key decision to Strategy & Resources to use The Hawthorns, a Cambridgeshire County Council property, to host the hub.

105. Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee Annual Report 2021-22

The Committee expressed its thanks to the members of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee and officers for their work during the period covered by the annual report.

The report provide details of the Sub-Committee's work during 2021/22, including its engagement with young people through meetings with the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers' Forum. The working relationship with Cambridgeshire Foster Carers' Association was positive and the Sub-Committee had advocated with NHS dentistry around the provision of services to children in care and with NHS England around the timeliness of initial health assessments.

The Chair of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee stated that the Sub-Committee was endeavouring to achieve active engagement with children and young people in the county's care and paid tribute to her predecessor Councillor Lis Every for the work done previously around this. The most recent meeting in September had been positive and highlighted the young people's wish to address the use of some terminology which they found unhelpful. The Sub-Committee would work with them on this.

In response to questions from individual members, officers:

- Acknowledged that there were a number of children and young people who had been in the Council's care for more than six years. This reflected the higher numbers of children in care which had been seen in the past, but it was important to recognise that being in care was not necessarily a negative thing. Everything possible was done to make it a positive experience which would improve those young people's outcomes.
- Stated that the target of reducing the number of children in the County's care to below 546 per 10,000 children was based on a number of factors including national figures, statistical neighbours and forecast demand. Officers worked hard to make this figure meaningful, but the Director of Children's Services emphasised that whilst taking a child into care remained the option of last resort a place would always be found for any child who needed that care.

Individual members raised the following issues:

- Highlighted the importance of the work done by foster carers and noted that a planned Sub-Committee training session on the role of foster carers had been made available to all elected Members in recognition of their role as corporate parents.
- Recognised that the number of initial health assessments completed on time remained low. This had been an area of focus for the Sub-Committee for some time, and particularly in relation to children being cared for outside of the county where the Council was reliant on other local authorities and the local health care providers. There had been an improvement since March and the current figure would be shared with Members outside of the meeting. However, it was important to note that this related to the timeliness of the assessments rather than suggesting they were not taking place. **Action**
- Emphasised the role of the Virtual School and suggested a stronger focus on this in future reports. The Director of Children's Services stated that the Sub-Committee took a thematic approach to its meetings and that these revolved around education, health and placement. The Headteacher of the Virtual School's annual report was considered by the Sub-Committee each year.
- Noted the work being done in support of care leavers not in employment, education or training (NEET) and the work which might also be done with the Combined Authority and Cambridgeshire Skills to enhance employability.
- Noted the work being done around accommodation issues for care leavers and their wish to continue to see this on the Sb-Committee's agenda.

The report was noted.

106. Children's Mental Health Services

Councillor Daunton declared an interest in this item as a County Council appointed governor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust. Minute 95 above also refers.

The Committee received a report from the Head of Children and Young People's Mental Health Commissioning and Transformation for NHS Cambridgeshire and Peterborough setting out the children's mental health strategy, services commissioned in support of children and young people's mental health and wellbeing and the identified priority areas. The Chair noted that there was some crossover with a scrutiny report on children's access to mental health support to the Adults and Health Committee the previous week which CYP Spokes had been invited to attend. However, given the importance of this issue to CYP members she had wanted to ensure the opportunity for it to be discussed by the whole committee.

Work had taken place across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to develop children and young people's mental health strategies with key stakeholders including young people and their families. Seven priority areas had been identified:

- i. Leadership, commissioning and governance
- ii. Access to timely help and treatment
- iii. A meaningful voice and influence for children, young people and their families
- iv. Capacity and choice of help and treatment options
- v. Reaching out to those most at risk
- vi. Workforce confidence, knowledge and skills
- vii. Clarity about the support available and how individuals can help themselves

The transition between child and adult services and early intervention were identified as additional areas of focus, alongside the national initiative on mental health support teams in schools.

In response to questions from individual members, officers:

- Stated that there were currently six mental health support teams in schools. Schools' involvement was voluntary, and they were not aware if the locations had been mapped against primary care network (PCN) or district council geographies. A list of schools which had taken up the offer of involvement from mental health support teams was offered outside of the meeting, with an indication of the district and division where they were located if possible. **Action**
- Stated that in-patient services were commissioned through provider collaboration. Efforts were made to accommodate patients near to their homes, but this was not always possible.
- Stated that children and young people in the care of local authorities other than Cambridgeshire who were placed within Cambridgeshire would have access to universal services within the county. Given the numbers involved this could place a

strain on local services, and was an area which would merit further discussion at some point

- Stated that emotional well-being teams did not deliver interventions themselves, but provided support to the professionals who did. The number and type of young people's needs they could support was dependent on their training.
- Stated that the scrutiny report to the Adults and Health Committee on [Children and Young People's Mental Health - Access to Support](#) provided more detail around waiting times for access to mental health services.

Individual members raised the following issues:

- Expressed shock at the national baseline target of providing support to 35% of children and young people with a mental health diagnosable need by the end of 2020/21.
- Suggested it would be helpful in future reports to see data included around gender, socio-economic background and location if that information could be collected from those accessing services. Officers stated that there was currently a slightly higher number of boys accessing mental health support amongst under 12s, and a slightly higher number of girls and young women amongst over 12s.

It was resolved to note the services commissioned for children's mental health and wellbeing and the children's mental health strategy and the priority areas.

107. Children and Young People Committee Agenda Plan, Training Plan and Appointments to Internal Advisory Groups and Panels and Outside Bodies

There were no changes to the published committee agenda or training plans.

A Member noted that a vacancy remained for a Conservative member on the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) and commented that this could compromise the work of the committee if it was not quorate.

On being proposed by Councillor Goodliffe, seconded by Councillor M King, it was resolved unanimously to:

Appoint Councillor L Nethsingha as Vice Chair of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee.

The Chair placed on record her thanks to the previous Vice Chair, Councillor Slatter.

The Committee noted the local authority school governor nominations for the period April to July 2022. The Committee's thanks were recorded to all those who gave their time and expertise to support schools in this way.

(Chair)

Appendix 1

Item 7: Early Years Pseudo Dynamic Purchasing System

Written comments from Councillor Cox Condron, Arbury

I am very pleased to see this recommendation coming to committee today. It was a great blow to Arbury parents to suddenly hear so very last minute that Arbury Pre School wasn't reopening this term. There are high levels of deprivation in Arbury ward, many residents already feel forgotten, and the current cost of living crisis means that families are already experiencing poverty, high stress and all that entails. The parents and carers of children registered to start at Arbury Pre School have struggled with the logistics of changing child care arrangements at such short notice – and those with younger children who were anticipating using the preschool in the future have also suffered this feeling uncertainty and stress when there is more than enough uncertainty and stress for many families already.

So I would like to voice my strong support for this recommendation on behalf of these families, in particular in relation to approving the call off and progressing awarding a new contract as soon as possible so that a childcare provider can be in place at Arbury Pre-School for the new term starting in January.

Thank you