

## **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE COMMITTEE: MINUTES**

**Date:** 7 July 2020

**Time:** 2.00pm – 3.47 pm

**Venue:** Meeting held remotely in accordance with The Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Meetings) (England) Regulations 2020

**Present:** Councillors S Bywater (Chairman), S Hoy, D Ambrose Smith, P Downes, L Every, A Hay, L Nethsingha, S Taylor, J Wisson and J Whitehead

Co-opted Members:

A Read      Church of England Diocese of Ely

**Apologies:** F Vettese      Roman Catholic Diocese of East Anglia

### **CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS**

#### **333. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Flavio Vettese.

#### **334. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **335. MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 23 JUNE 2020**

The minutes of the meeting on 23 June 2020 were approved as an accurate record. A copy would be signed by the Chairman when circumstances allowed.

#### **336. ACTION LOG**

The action log was noted.

#### **337. PETITIONS AND PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

No petitions of public questions were received.

### **KEY DECISION**

#### **338. HOUSING RELATED SUPPORT SERVICES**

The Committee considered a report that sought agreement to contract extensions for Housing Related Support Services.

Introducing the report officers explained that there had been an impact on the delivery timetable for the review which was outlined in 3.1 of the report. Officers confirmed that they were seeking an extension to the current contracts so that learning from COVID

could be incorporated into the process with a start date for the new contracts of January 2022.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Note the content of this report;
- b) Agree to the requested contract extension (2.3.2).

## **DECISIONS**

### **339. CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19: UPDATE**

The Committee received a report outlining the Council's response to COVID-19 and updating on activity.

Given the rapidly changing situation and the need to provide the committee and public with the most up to date information possible the Chairman had accepted this as a late report on the following grounds:

1. Reason for lateness: To allow the report to contain the most up to date information possible.
2. Reason for urgency: To enable the committee to be briefed on the current situation in relation to the Council's response to Covid-19 for those service for which it is responsible.

Introducing the report the Service Director: Education highlighted a number of key points in relation to education which included:

- There was no requirement for schools to open over the summer holidays.
- Guidance had been received from Government on the full opening of schools in September 2020. The Service Director: Education had met with Primary School Heads virtually to discuss the guidance and the challenges that they faced. He explained that the guidance was clear on protective bubbles and how transport should be provided
- The first stage of catch up funding had been announced along with the National Tuition Programme.

Individual Members raised the following issues in relation to the report:

- Queried what was necessary PPE in a Special Schools. The Service Director: Education explained that schools had grab packs for when a child developed COVID symptoms. He explained that where PPE was currently used for nappy changing etc. this would be used as normal.
- Commented that it would be difficult for secondary schools to reopen with a full intake with the present regulations. The Service Director: Education explained that the challenge of opening a secondary school was bigger in terms of managing distance between groups. He explained that ultimately the school had

to review their risk assessment and make a decision on whether they could adequately safeguard the students. He clarified that there were options to have staggered start and finish times and different ways of delivering meals. He explained that he would be meeting with the Head Teachers of Secondary schools virtually the next day to discuss the challenges.

- Thanked the Service Director: Education for the effective relationships that had been built with the academies and the daily bulletins that were issued.
- Expressed concern in relation to the workforce in terms of stress and anxiety and having a full complement of staff. The Service Director: Education explained that there had been a lot of staff absent because they were shielding and now this was coming to an end, it was crucial that staff were reassured and supported. He explained the Maintained Schools signed up to the Employee Assistance Programme and sought guidance from Occupational Health where necessary. He explained that schools would need to be flexible with their workforce and that staff could work across more than one bubble.
- Expressed concern in relation to missed opportunities in terms of effective blended learning as there may be times when schools would have to close again. Every child should have the opportunity to be on line and have a decent place to work. The Service Director: Education stated that secondary schools had been developing their online offers further and that they had just received laptops from government to distribute to pupils that were in need of equipment. He stated that schools had been loaning equipment where possible
- Queried what kind of childcare would be available for key workers in the summer holidays. The Service Director: Education explained that schools would continue the childcare offer where they could and then bubbles would be reset for September.
- Requested an update on the Early Years' sector. The Service Director: Education explained that they had worked closely with PACEY and they were looking at the possibility of supporting childminders financially to take on more children over the summer where feasible. He explained that children were still getting their funded hours and that the authority had not been notified of any closures currently. He agreed to give an update on the percentage of providers that would be running over the summer and further information for parents on where to go to for support. **ACTION:** Service Director: Education
- Questioned when the funding for pupil catch up would be made available by government and how much would each school receive? The Service Director: Education explained that allocations would be made by the end of term. He stated that they had not received any information about how the National Tutoring Programme would be rolled out yet, but that they were looking at how the authority would be able to implement some of this themselves.
- Noted that officers were working with schools to interpret the guidance and put measures in place. The Service Director: Education commented that letters would be going out to parents shortly detailing arrangements for September. He explained that copies of the letters would be circulated to the committee.  
**ACTION:** Service Director: Education. He also explained that he would be

setting up a Members briefing to go over the guidance and training that had been given to Head Teachers regarding the full opening of schools in September, and that an invite would be sent out to all Members following the meeting. **ACTION:** Service Director: Education

- Sought clarity on whether OFSTED inspections were still suspended. The Director: Education explained that routine OFSTED inspections were suspended for autumn and that there would only be inspections where there were concerns with a school or if a school had an inadequate rating. He explained that OFSTED would also be working with schools to get feedback in terms of recovery.
- Expressed concern in relation to fines being imposed for none attendance and questioned what the expectations were in terms of schools imposing the fines. The Service Director: Education explained that schools would work with parents and look at individual situations and look at the options around flexible schooling. He commented that fining would be a last resort.
- Expressed their thanks to all teaching and none teaching staff for their continued creativity and flexibility.

In a further overview of the report the Service Director: Children and Safeguarding highlighted a number of key points in relation to Children's Services which included:

- The position in children's services remained broadly unchanged since the last report to committee.
- It was expected that the service would see more referrals from October onwards.
- Had started to get more staff back into buildings and there was a plan to alternate the use of some buildings.
- The review commissioned from the organisation, ISOS, into how partner agencies in both authorities could improve support to vulnerable older children and young people at risk of involvement in criminal or sexual exploitation, had continuing to make progress. Members would receive a copy of the report when it was available. **ACTION:** Service Director: Children and Safeguarding

Individual Members raised the following issues in relation to the report:

- Raised concerns in relation to access to vulnerable children and whether the regular health inspections via health visitors had been able to take place. The Service Director: Children and Safeguarding explained that there had been an increase in contact and referrals and that they expected that more children would be referred around October time as teachers began to assess the situation when children were back in school. He explained that they had been working closely with health partners and that midwifery had continued with the most vulnerable continuing to be referred through to the unborn baby panels. The Executive Director: People and Communities stated that they had been working closely with Public Health and that caseloads were risk assessed and visits had taken place with the most vulnerable and that the remainder of visits were done virtually. She explained that she sat on the Safeguarding Board and that as part of their action

plan post COVID there was a strand on Children and Maternity and she was championing mental health and wellbeing.

- Discussed the Outdoor Centres and the current situation in terms of whether they were able to operate. The Service Director: Education stated that schools had been advised that no residential trips could take place in the autumn term. The Service Director: Children and Safeguarding explained that Grafham Water Centre was currently being used to support young people whose care placements had met with difficulties. He explained that currently one young person was using the facilities and that a few others were access day care support and that this was currently working very well and would be continued to be utilised in this way.
- Queried whether the anticipated saving in terms of the family safeguarding team would be reached. The Service Director: Children and Safeguarding explained that there had been challenges with recruiting and training practitioners in terms of the brand new model of practice. He explained that the recruitment to posts had largely been positive and that they had made firm offers, but that it had been more challenging to get people started in post. He clarified that training was being carried out online to get individuals up to speed.

It was resolved unanimously to:

note the continuing commitment of leaders and staff across children's services and partner agencies to ensure that the needs of all children and young people continue to be met.

#### **340. CHILDREN IN CARE NOT IN EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING**

The Committee considered a report that gave a brief overview of the relative performance in Cambridgeshire in relation to supporting young people in care and leaving care to remain in Education, Employment or Training [EET] and actions that were being taken to improve outcomes in this area, and a brief summary of potential risks resulting from the impact of Covid-19.

Given the rapidly changing situation and the need to provide the committee and public with the most up to date information possible the Chairman had accepted this as a late report on the following grounds:

1. Reason for lateness: To allow the report to contain the most up to date information possible.
2. Reason for urgency: To enable the committee to be briefed on the current situation in relation to supporting young people in care and care leavers to remain in education, employment and training. These are important outcomes for young people, and outcomes that may be adversely affected by the continuing impact of COVID-19.

Presenting the report the Service Director: Children and Safeguarding explained that Cambridgeshire performance historically in this areas had not been good but that it was an area in which the authority was making progress but that officers were acutely aware of the negative impacts that COVID-19 could have on this vulnerable group. He

explained that he planned to update the committee on a regular basis through the service director updates and that he would bring back a full report to committee in a year's time. **ACTION:** Service Director: Children and Safeguarding

Individual Members raised the following issues in relation to the report:

- Queried whether the statistics for NEETS in care could be considered against NEETS in the school system in general to see if there were any differences between the two cohorts. The Service Director: Children and Safeguarding agreed to review this as part of the update report back to committee. **ACTION:** Service Director: Children and Safeguarding
- Expressed concern in relation to the figures in the report and requested that officer take an action plan to the Corporate Parenting Sub Committee for young people in care to put actions in place over the next six months to support them particularly in the current situation. **ACTION:** Service Director: Children and Safeguarding
- Discussed the link between NEETS and problems with housing and mental health and asked that this be considered as part of the action plan. **ACTION:** Service Director: Children and Safeguarding
- Highlighted the support of Virtual School was key. Andrew Read agreed to make sure that the management board had this discussion as an item on their next Board meeting and that they were aware of the challenges ahead. **ACTION:** Andrew Read
- Queried whether the authority was working with Further Education colleagues on this as it sometimes took individuals longer than the age of 18 to get back into education. The Service Director: Children and Safeguarding stated that support was given to care leavers in terms of education and training until the age of 25 and that every care leaver had a pathway plan that covered access to training, employment and education.
- Noted the partnership with Timpsons and questioned whether there had been any discussions with other companies about partnerships. The Service Director: Children and Safeguarding explained that they had started to discuss this with the Chamber of Commerce pre COVID. The Chairman stated that a business seminar had been arranged but this was cancelled due to COVID but that this was still in the pipeline and they looked to reschedule this. A Member commented that there were ten young people at Cambridge Regional College that had Business mentors and that the Chairman was one of these mentors and that they hoped that if the pilot was successful that this could be rolled out.
- Queried whether officers could look into the factors further of care leavers that did well and if there were key differences so that targeted support could be given, talking to young people directly about what would help them.
- Agreed that the recommendation to the report be amended to request an interim report on any ongoing impacts of COVID-19 in this area for the February 2021 committee and a full report for the September 2021 Committee. **ACTION:** Service Director: Children and Safeguarding

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Note the progress being made in supporting more of our young people to remain in education or move into employment or training, and:
- b) Request an interim report on any ongoing impacts of COVID-19 in this area for the February 2021 committee and a full report for the September 2021 Committee.

### **341. FINANCE MONITORING REPORT**

The Committee received a report that gave an overview of the May 2020 Finance Monitoring Report for People And Communities Services (P&C).

Presenting the report the Head of Finance highlighted that the income generating services now sat back with Service Committees and that the pressures were reported on the Outdoor Centres and Cambridgeshire Music. He also highlighted the pressures in relation to the Attendance Service and Home to School Transport. He explained that there was a forecast deficit of £12.4 million on the high needs block which was a national issue. He explained that page 24 of the report gave a summary of the capital position

Individual Members raised the following issues in relation to the report:

- The Chairman explained that he had been having regular board meetings with the Outdoor Centre Managers and were reviewing scenarios going into August and September.
- Queried the figures in relation to 0-19 organisation and planning with a forecast overspend of £197K. The Head of Finance explained that this was due to the decision by Government not to issue penalty notice fines or initiate any legal proceedings on parents relating to school attendance at least until the end of the Summer Term.

It was resolved to:

- a) Review and comment on the report;
- b) Recommend the changes to the capital programme budgets from the Business Plan as summarised in Appendix C for approval by the General Purposes Committee:
  - i. Rephasing
  - ii. Scheme additions/reductions
  - iii. Additions/ reductions in funding

### **342. AGENDA PLAN, APPOINTMENTS AND TRAINING PLAN**

Members noted the agenda plan and training plan

### **343. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Members agreed that the reserve date for the August Committee would not be required. The committee would meet next on Tuesday 15 September at 2.00pm.

Chairman  
(date)