

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE COMMITTEE: MINUTES

Date: Tuesday, 18th November 2014

Time: 2.00p.m. - 4:45p.m.

Present: Councillors Ashcroft (substituting for Councillor Clapp), Downes, P Brown, S Bywater, D Divine, D Harty, M Leeke, L Nethsingha, F Onasanya, T Orgee (substituting for D Brown), M Rouse, S van de Kerkhove, J Whitehead (Chairwoman), J Wisson and F Yeulett; Mr P Rossi

Apologies: Councillors D Brown and P Clapp

41. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

42. MINUTES – 21ST OCTOBER 2014

The minutes of the meeting held on 21st October 2014 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairwoman.

The Committee was reminded that it had asked the Chairwoman and the Vice-Chairman, at the last meeting, to explore whether the City Deal or the Local Enterprise Partnership might be willing to contribute to addressing concerns around school places in Greater Cambridge. The Chairwoman reported that she had been assured that Section 106 money would be sufficient to fund the School Building Programme. It was hoped that the Local Enterprise Partnership would be able to provide money to fund work with needs.

43. PETITIONS

No petitions had been received.

44. CAMBRIDGESHIRE LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2013-14

The Committee received a report analysing the effectiveness of the multi-agency children's safeguarding system in Cambridgeshire. The report provided an outline of the Cambridgeshire Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) main activities and achievements during 2013-14, the effectiveness of safeguarding activity and of the LSCB in supporting it, an overview of LSCB safeguarding activity, and gaps and challenges in service development in the year ahead. Members were reminded that the work of the Board had been recognised by OFSTED as 'good' in the review carried out alongside the inspection of the Local Authority in June 2014.

During discussion, members made the following comments:

- queried whether the Safeguarding and Standards Unit (SASU) had the capacity to fully support the child protection process. The Executive Director informed the Committee that there had been a spike in activity from September to November 2013, which had impacted on the ability to schedule child protection conferences. As a result additional resource had been put into the Unit but had been reduced following the provision of Independent Reviewing Officers. It was acknowledged that the Service would need to consider capacity in the future.
- highlighted the need to engage Academy Schools in LSCB meetings. It was noted that the LSCB had involvement with Academies through the Children's Trust, the Education Child Protection Service and reports to Governing Bodies.
- acknowledged the importance of monitoring attendance at LSCB meetings to ensure representatives remained fully engaged. Members highlighted the use of substitute members. It was noted that the LSCB had worked hard to identify deputies. However, it was always a challenge to find people who were representative of an entire group such as District Councils and Voluntary Organisations.
- highlighted the impact of the increase in the number of Looked After Children on the challenges detailed in Section 3.24 of the report. Members were informed that there were systems to identify and manage increases in demand including a Demand Management Action Plan. The LSCB was also asking all agencies to identify how their proposed savings would impact on delivery.
- queried why some children and young people thought likely to be in private fostering arrangements were not being included in the figures for private fostering. It was acknowledged that this was a national issue. Members were informed that the LSCB had found it difficult to get this data as it relied on self-reporting. However, it did work regularly with local practice groups including professionals who visited homes. There was a particular issue in relation to Cambridge regarding Language Schools, which looked after children under the age of 18 for more than 28 days.
- queried the challenges regarding multi-agency participation in core groups. It was noted that the LSCB had undertaken an audit following the Peer Review. Members were informed that there was dedicated attendance from schools and Health Visitors. However, there was a need to identify the other agencies which should be involved and to define the nature of their role. The LSCB would be working with the SASU to ensure the right people attended.
- highlighted the need for the Local Authority (LA) and Police to share data before children went missing from home. Members were informed that a significant amount of work had taken place in this area and there was now more clarity regarding which children were missing and the reasons for absence. A return to work interview exemplar had been created and the Police and the Local Authority used a dashboard to assist. The Executive Director informed the Committee that this was a good example of the challenge role of the LSCB in ensuring

arrangements were as robust for children returning to their own homes as for Local Authority residential homes.

- queried the next stage for the report. Members were informed that the LSCB would continue to work to its business plan and priorities. It would also continue to listen to the voices of practitioners, children and young people, and there would be ongoing multi-agency audits. The Chairwoman asked for a copy of the updated business plan to be circulated to the Committee. **Action required.**

It was resolved unanimously to note the report.

44. CAMBRIDGESHIRE LOCAL AUTHORITY'S SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY

The Committee considered the final draft of the Local Authority's Strategy for School Improvement. The strategy addressed the role and responsibility of the LA, the growth and developing significance of school to school support and the protocols and procedures the LA followed when a school or academy was causing concern. Members were informed that the LA still had significant statutory responsibilities for school improvement for maintained schools. Although it was required to monitor the performance of Academies and Free Schools, it had no power of intervention. However, the influence of the LA should not be under-estimated as schools including academies still looked to it for support. Members were reminded that school improvement remained a big challenge with the rate of improvement currently too slow.

During discussion, members made the following comments:

- welcomed the strategy and the general direction of travel but highlighted the need to set out how the LA was going to achieve the aims and challenges in the strategy.
- the need to encourage schools to work together.
- highlighted the importance of making best use of local resources such as the University of Cambridge to research what could make a difference. It was suggested that the University of Cambridge and schools should collaborate to identify how improvements could be made in order to develop specific strategies. It was therefore proposed that the strategy should make reference to how the links to external research could be investigated. The Service Director: Learning acknowledged the need to give more emphasis to research. He explained that a considerable amount of classroom based research had been carried out by the Faculty of Education particularly in relation to narrowing the gap.
- the need to reflect in the introduction the difficulty of delivering a coherent strategy when the LA was responsible for achievement but had no powers of intervention if an Academy or Free School was not performing well. Members therefore queried whether school to school support would work on a voluntary basis without the LA to guide the process. The Service Director: Learning reported that he would include an appropriate set of words to reflect the challenge of a diverse system.
- queried the LA's powers in relation to Academies. Members were reminded that it had no powers of intervention. It could discuss any concerns about the

performance of Academies directly with the Regional Commissioner for Schools. The Commissioner could then broker in external support if necessary usually through another Academy Trust. Members were informed that he could broker support from who ever he wanted but the LA could not be an Academy sponsor.

- queried what was meant by “Teaching School Alliances” (TSAs) on page 28. Members were informed that there were 500 alliances nationally with seven in Cambridgeshire (one was independent of the LA). Members then queried the LA’s role in these alliances. It was noted that although Cambridgeshire Secondary Schools tended to be independent minded, there was an opportunity for the LA to work closely with TSAs particularly in relation to school improvement.
- the need to focus on outcomes on pages 22 and 23. The Service Director: Learning explained that the criteria used to classify schools triggered the level of support. It was noted that support where the LA intervened could involve an action plan which included monitoring, the brokering in of support advisers, and the school being set targets which were monitored by the LA Implementation Group. It was important to note that the LA had been very successful in removing schools from special measures such as Ramsey Junior School.
- queried how Local Members were informed if any school in their Division went in to special measures. The Service Director: Learning reported that he informed Local Members and kept them updated.
- queried what schools were doing to improve the quality of staff and teaching. It was noted that staff training needs should be addressed by School Professional Development Plans. A key part of the LA’s annual keep in touch visit was staff training. It was noted that all schools including Academies collated information relating to staff training and were challenged if they did not address the training needs of teachers and support staff. The Committee was of the view that increasing the skills and abilities of the teaching force should be reflected in the strategy.
- highlighted the challenge of recruiting and retaining teachers particularly in Fenland. The Service Director: Learning reminded Members that LA funding to support recruitment had been removed by the Department for Education, which was reporting only a 0.2% vacancy rate in the County. It was noted that this rate did not reflect reports from schools. The LA was therefore considering how it could address this challenge.
- queried how the “Count Me In Campaign” to identify as many pupils eligible for free school meals was progressing. The Service Director: Learning reported that the LA was a long way of ahead of where it was last year.

With the unanimous agreement of the Committee, it was proposed to add “subject to the inclusion of suggestions proposed at the meeting” at the end of the recommendation.

It was resolved unanimously:

to approve the Local Authority's Strategy for School Improvement subject to the inclusion of suggestions proposed at the meeting.

46. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE REVIEW OF THE FINAL DRAFT REVENUE BUSINESS PLANNING PROPOSALS FOR 2015/16 TO 2019/20

The Chairwoman reminded the Committee to refrain from any direct reference to information contained in the confidential item on the "Recommissioning of Early Help".

The Committee received an overview of the final draft revenue Children, Families and Adults (CFA) Service Business Planning proposals that were within the remit of the Children and Young People Committee. It was noted that the Committee was still being consulted on the proposals and was not required to make a decision at this stage. Members were reminded that this was the second time they had considered proposals following a presentation in October. Attention was drawn to page 13 detailing new savings proposals since the last meeting. Members were reminded that the context of the challenges facing the Service had not changed. Members also noted information relating to fees and charges and proposals for performance indicators to be included in the Council's Business Plan.

Members were advised that General Purposes Committee would be meeting on 2 December 2014 to consider the allocation of £2.5m to committees based on the following criteria: the highest risk to delivery; adverse impact; and invest to save. The Children and Young People Committee would consider the impact of this decision at its next meeting. The Executive Director updated the Committee on the General Purposes Committee workshop held on 14 November. He reported that the Service was looking to ameliorate, if it received additional funding, some of the new savings proposals, which included alternative options to prevent children going into care, some of the proposals in the confidential report and alternative funding needs in relation to admissions.

During discussion, members made the following comments:

- queried how the Service would improve parental engagement in the achievement of vulnerable groups of children and young people in schools and settings. The Executive Director reported that Section 5.9 reflected the work of the School Improvement Service and the services provided to support educational attainment. It was proposed to use Social Workers, Locality Teams and the Troubled Families Programme to improve parental engagement. The Service Director: Learning reported that the five bullets in 5.9 were objectives, which would be delivered by an Accelerated Achievement Vulnerable Groups Strategy Action Plan. Members commented that Children's Centres were key to looking at the child as part of a family.
- expressed concern that new savings proposals were being added to an already demanding budget. There was further concern that Children and Young People could be under budgeting. One Member suggested that the additional £2.5m

should be retained in reserves to assist Services which failed to make the necessary savings. The Chairwoman reported that there had been a general feeling at the workshop that Services wanted to know their budget plan by having the additional funding allocated to committees rather than included in a general pot in order to make the budget more achievable. The Executive Director raised the need to receive the funding to enable Services to plan and manage overspends. He informed the Committee that the Service had started looking at 2019/20 and was working back to identify what reductions should be made and when. The Chairwoman added that some savings proposed were not easily reversible.

- welcomed the inclusion of 7.24 “bringing together the management of transport budgets” but suggested that it would be hard to achieve and would not happen quickly.
- queried whether there was any scope to address out of county placements. The Executive Director raised the need for the Service to create options in relation to individuals. It was noted that there was no provision in county for young people with problematic sexualised behaviour. There was also a need to consider whether a community based service could meet the requirements of special educational needs packages. The views of the parents in relation to this issue were the biggest challenge so it was important that a family solution was provided.
- reported the possibility of asking some parents who could afford it to make a contribution to the LA if their child was a Looked After Child.
- queried whether too much funding had been removed from Children’s Centres particularly given a disappointing Ofsted report for the Sawston Children’s Centre. The Executive Director explained that no further reductions were proposed for Children’s Centres. The recent reductions were part of the last budget year savings. It was noted that Ofsted had commented on the resource level of Sawston but had not commented on funding following the inspection of two other centres.
- highlighted the need to clarify, once the Business Plan process had concluded, what the budget reductions would mean to the public i.e. this was what the Council would no longer do. Another Member raised the need to focus instead on what the Council could do. The Chairwoman suggested that it should be a combination of both and requested that the Committee receive a draft. The Executive Director reported that he would bring it to the next meeting. However, it was important to note that people’s experience of the proposals would differ. **Action Required.**
- highlighted the need to bear in the mind the opportunities available in the Localism Act.
- requested clarification of the performance indicator for percentage of Year 12 in learning. The Executive Director reported that this indicator reflected the number of young people in learning not apprenticeships, employment or training. The target would not be set at 100% as not every 16 year old wanted to remain in learning. It was suggested that this indicator should be rephrased to reflect that.

- queried the need to review the performance indicator relating to the proportion of people who use services who feel safe as it was currently too subjective.
- requested information on the number of assaults in the education system. **Action Required.**

With the unanimous agreement of the Committee, it was proposed to amend recommendation b) to delete the words “final” and “and endorse them” and delete recommendations d) and e).

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) note the overview and context provided for the 2015/16 to 2019/20 Business Plan revenue proposals for the CFA Service.
- b) comment on those draft revenue savings proposals that were within the remit of the Children and Young People’s Committee for 2015/16 to 2019/20.
- c) consider and endorse the proposed levels of fees and charges for the CFA Service that were in the remit of the Children and Young People’s Committee for 2015/16 to 2019/20.

47. SCHOOLS FUNDING FORMULA 2015/16

The Committee was advised of the Fairer Funding for Schools to be received in 2015/16. Cambridgeshire was scheduled to receive an overall increase of £23m. It was expected that the final figure could be higher based on the October 2014 pupil numbers. As a result of the Minimum Funding Levels to be applied, the initial Cambridgeshire Schools Block per pupil would increase by £311. However, it was important to note that this could differ in schools due to individual circumstances. The Committee was advised that the additional funding could not be used to support LA functions as it must be used to support pupils. Attention was drawn to a number of proposals in Section 3.3, which had been supported by Cambridgeshire Secondary and Primary Heads and Schools Forum. It was proposed that all Members be provided with a briefing on schools funding at a Members’ Seminar on 9 January.

During discussion, members made the following comments:

- expressed surprise that no additional funding had been transferred to the High Needs Block for 2015-16. It was noted that approximately £1.3m had been transferred from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block in 2014-15. The Executive Director added that Schools Forum had agreed this approach on the basis that another transfer might be needed in the future. It was also aware that the balances for special schools were high.

[Councillor Orgee declared a non-statutory disclosable interest under the Code of Conduct as a Governor of a special school]

- highlighted the need to link this report to the School Improvement Strategy report in relation to teaching training and recruitment. It was important to note that this

funding might only help schools just carry on rather than provide them with the resources to appoint new staff.

- expressed disappointment at the DfE's statement in 2.4. The Committee was reminded that the DfE had carried out a research project on the same subject in 2000-2002, the results of which had been rejected by the Government of the day. It was noted that the consultation on future funding arrangements had recently started. The Council had volunteered to be one of the 13 authorities to take part but its invitation had been declined.
- highlighted the need for clarity as to what funding could be allocated to the LA particularly as the Authority helped support schools... It was important to establish what the Government allocated to LAs against what it expected them to do. It was suggested that the F40 Group should lobby for LA services to be included in a Fair Funding Formula. The Chairwoman also suggested that it could be argued that the LA was a provider.

In conclusion, the Committee was content to approve the recommendation but some Members had reservations regarding the lack of funding allocated to the High Needs Block.

It was resolved unanimously to:

endorse the proposed approach for the local schools funding formula, prior to final approval in January.

48. OFSTED SAFEGUARDING INSPECTION REPORT AND ACTION PLAN

The Committee received a report detailing the outcome of the Ofsted inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers and the review of the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board, which took place in June 2014. The overall judgement was "good" but there was one area which required improvement and this was "Children who need help and protection". Attention was drawn to an action plan developed in response to the inspection findings. It had been acknowledged that there were other areas, not covered by the inspection which would also benefit from increased improvement focus. The Improvement Board would therefore transition into a Next Steps Board to continue the improvement activity.

The Chairwoman, on behalf of the Committee, congratulated everyone concerned for their hard work. She reported that together with the Vice-Chairman she was a member of the Improvement Board. During discussion, members made the following comments:

- reported that a number of people had commented on how unfair the previous improvement inspection had been. However, it was important that the Service did not become complacent.
- queried the impact of the Unit Social Work Model on the inspection. Members were informed that the Model had contributed significantly to the positive inspection as it

focused on attention to practice and enabled newly qualified staff to feel well supported.

- queried whether there was anything Adult Services could learn from the inspection. The Executive Director reported that although the areas were obviously different, the Service was looking at the importance of quality social work practice. The Service Director: Older People was in particular considering how agencies worked around the person.
- queried action regarding the housing of young people to prevent homelessness. The Service Director: Children's Social Care reported that numbers were increasing. She was working with the Service Director: Enhanced and Preventative Services to prevent homelessness. Accommodation for 16-17 year olds was increasing but Ofsted was aware of the issue in the City. In response to a suggestion from Members, it was agreed investigate the provision of accommodation for young people in the new housing developments in the City. **Action Required.**
- noted that the action plan would cover the relationship with the Health Service and in particular the Mental Health Trust.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) note the achievement of an overall rating of Good in relation to services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers.
- b) note and comment on the action plan that had been developed in response to the areas for improvement identified in the Ofsted report.
- c) note the establishment of the Next Steps Board which would continue to provide oversight and scrutiny of continued improvement.

49. FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT – SEPTEMBER 2014

The Committee received a report setting out financial and performance information for Children, Families and Adults as at the end of September 2014. Attention was drawn to the forecast overspend of £921k and the main revenue changes since the last report in particular the Catering, Cleaning and Grounds Service and Home to School Transport (Special). There had been some slippage in the Capital Programme, and one CFA service performance indicator was shown as red. Following a motion to full Council on deprivation, the Committee was also asked to agree the key performance indicators that were relevant to multiple deprivation and to comment on how it would like to set targets.

During discussion, members made the following comments:

- expressed concern that the LA could do very little to prevent a number of large secondary academies slipping from "good " to "requires improvements". The Executive Director reported that he would be meeting with the Regional Commissioner Academies on 1 December where he would raise this issue.

Members queried whether the situation was worse than before. The Executive Director agreed to check. **Action required.**

- highlighted the need to also mention remits and roles to the Regional Commissioner.
- requested information on the number of children receiving free school meals rather than just the percentage. It was also suggested that maps should be included when reporting key performance indicators. Members requested a map showing schools and their Ofsted categories and historical differences. **Action required.**

It was resolved unanimously to review and comment on the report.

50. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE COMMITTEE AGENDA PLAN AND APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

Members received the agenda plan for the Children and Young People Committee, and noted changes that had been made since publication.

It was resolved to note the agenda plan, including the updates reported orally at the meeting.

51. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was resolved that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it contained exempt information under Paragraphs 3 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and 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) and information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.

52. APPROVAL OF FORMAL CONSULTATION ON THE RECOMMISSIONING OF EARLY HELP – ENHANCED AND PREVENTATIVE SERVICES

The Committee considered a report detailing proposals for the County Council's future early help services. It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) review the draft formal consultation document and comment on the proposed changes to the provision of early help services in Enhanced and Preventative Services
- b) offer any revisions prior to the formal consultation being launched.
- c) agree to the launch of the formal consultation on the recommissioning of early help services subject to any revisions.

Chairwoman