

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE COMMITTEE: MINUTES

Date: Tuesday 8 November 2016

Time: 2.00pm – 4.20pm

Present: Councillors J Whitehead (Chairwoman), D Brown (Vice Chairman), P Brown, S Bywater, D Divine, P Downes, L Nethsingha, S Taylor, J Wisson and F Yeulett (substituting for Councillor D Harty)

Co-optee: R Beeson

Apologies: Councillors D Harty (Councillor Yeulett substituting), M Leeke, M Loynes and Z Moghadas; F Vettese

215. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies were noted as recorded above. There were no declarations of interest.

216. MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 11 OCTOBER 2016 AND ACTION LOG

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairwoman. The Action Log was noted.

The Vice-Chairman commented that numerous actions had “in progress” as their status on the Action Log, and some had been outstanding for some time. The Executive Director committed to reviewing the Action Log at her management teams in future, and ensure that it was as up-to-date as possible prior to publication.

With reference to the action associated with Minute 199 (Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children), it was confirmed that the letter been drafted and this action was now complete.

With reference to the action to contact Cllr P Brown regarding Community Infrastructure Levy in Huntingdon (Minute 200), the Service Director: Learning agreed to follow this up with the relevant Head of Service. **Action required.**

A Member asked if there had been any progress at GPC following the recommendation from the CYP Committee in October about the funding gap for Looked After Children. The Chairwoman and Vice-Chairman confirmed that they had spoken in favour of this proposal at GPC, and felt that the case had been well made. It would need to be considered along with other proposals as part of the Business Planning process, but there seemed to be general agreement by GPC that the money was needed.

217. PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

218. CHILDREN'S CHANGE PROGRAMME

The Committee received a report from the Interim Director for Children's Social Care and Lead for Children's Services Transformation, providing Members with an overview of proposed changes to Children's Services. Two additional papers, outlining current and proposed management structures, were tabled.

The report outlined proposed thematic workstreams to address needs and support client groups across the county. These included:

- One integrated front door and portal for services;
- Localised integrated services incorporating Family Centres, Targeted Youth and Family Work and Social Work;
- Lifelong Integrated Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Service;
- Specialisms and development of Partners in Practice (PIP) and service developments supported by Transformation Bids.

One of the main changes would be for the posts of Service Director: Enhanced and Preventative Services and Service Director: Children's Social Care to effectively be merged, with the support of an Assistant Director, providing cover and operational support. There would also be a reduction from fourteen Locality teams to seven teams (two each in Huntingdonshire and Fenland; one each in South Cambridgeshire, East Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City). It was stressed that the proposals were still being formulated and were subject to change.

In discussion:

- a Member asked how the new arrangements would impact on the current Locality teams. It was confirmed that there had been consultation with all Locality teams, and by bringing together specialist family support and children's social care would be enhance provision. There would be no reduction in front line services. Critically, whilst reflecting best practice/evidence nationally, teams would be resourced to meet local needs;
- Members noted that the proposed configuration for the EDT (Emergency Duty Team) was the same as the current structure;
- Members noted the proposed arrangements for the multi-agency safeguarding hub, where staff would share the same office and data. It was confirmed that the Education Navigators would be current employees from similar roles, who offer advice to schools on safeguarding issues, and there would be a two way process i.e. feeding information and expertise both in and out of schools, and examples were given how this would work in practice. It was acknowledged that whilst there had been similar processes in place, this would provide a more focused and efficient mechanism in an area of great need;
- it was confirmed that there may be compulsory redundancies, but where possible voluntary redundancies and redeployment would be used;
- Members discussed the benefits of the whole life unit approach for some older Looked After Children;
- Members noted that a Training Needs Analysis had been undertaken, and staff had also been asked to identify any particular concerns going forward. Practice leader

roles were also being developed, and two specialist roles focusing on permanency planning and court work;

- Members noted that while the number of offices were reducing, there was no expectation that families would need to travel, or lose access to services locally – most work was undertaken with families in their own homes. It was agreed that more information was required on exactly how Locality Teams would change.

Action required;

- A number of Members reinforced the importance of Local Members, and stressed that it was critical all Members understood the processes, and greater clarity was required in some areas, especially on the role of Educator Navigators. It was suggested that it would be useful to have case studies, a Member Seminar item, and an easy to understand guide on the processes involved for those Members who did not attend seminars. The Chairwoman suggested that a workshop, or a more interactive forum may be more appropriate than a seminar slot;
- A number of Members requested a detailed statement of the new staffing structure and the proposed redundancies be brought back to Committee. **Action required.**

A Member commented that whilst understanding the rationale of combining directorates, would capacity be lost in that process, especially as there would be a reduction of seven locality managers, and also social work team leaders? Officers confirmed that the number of Directors would reduce by one (but with a new Assistant Director post), and Heads of Service would reduce by three. There would be a reduction of five or six Direct Reports/Locality Managers, with some moving to new District Manager posts, if suitably qualified. The consultation document would be issued to staff at the end of November, and it was difficult to be more specific on exact arrangements before the results of the consultation were taken into consideration. It was anticipated that savings of around £500,000 would be achieved.

The Chairwoman stressed that it was vital that combining posts did not result in staff working unreasonably long hours. Officers reassured her that this would not be the case, and that many of the savings would be achieved by synergies and efficiencies.

It was noted that in a discussion with staff, a total of 14 internal referral processes had been logged, which represented substantial wastage and risk. There were also a number of different assessments many families had to go through, often with different staff. For this reason, the focus was on streamlining services and committing to one point of access.

There was a discussion on the large number of moves that some Looked After Children had to go through, and the measures being proposed to address this i.e. having a very experienced and effective team, and specialist foster carers who can manage and support the most challenging young people.

It was resolved unanimously to:

1. agree the overall direction of travel of the proposals setting out how early help and targeted services can be integrated so that the whole system works together to improve outcomes for children and enables them to thrive.

219. YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICE PEER REVIEW

The Committee considered a report from the Service Director: Enhanced and Preventative Services on the findings of the Youth Offending Service Peer Review. It was noted that Cambridgeshire had already been acknowledged nationally as having many areas of good practice and performance in Youth Offending Services (YOS).

The review team found that the YOS was a well performing service with impressive reoffending data, low rate of first time entrants and minimal use of custody. Staff were enthusiastic and there was a good work culture.

However, a number of key areas for development were also identified, including improving post-16 education provision for YOS, disparities in the accommodation offer, and ownership of a youth justice vision. It was also suggested that it would be good to have a standard offer for young people who came out of custody.

The Committee congratulated officers for this excellent report. In discussion, individual Members raised the following issues:

- queried the relationship with Academies, specifically on the exclusion of YOS clients. Officers explained that regrettably some Academies took a zero tolerance approach to YOS clients, but they outlined the measures the YOS team was taking, including meeting with County Heads to discuss how the YOS team can support Academies and the importance of picking up issues at an early stage, before relationships break down. Whilst permanent exclusions were unusual, the level of fixed term exclusions by Academies was worrying;
- welcomed the use of robust and early interventions to stop young people going into custody;
- discussed YOS issues in Fenland, and noted that this was not a particular problem. What was an area for concern was the increasing drug and gang exploitation from other areas e.g. London, and the impact of this was primarily on young people in Cambridge and Huntingdonshire.

It was resolved to:

1. endorse the Peer Review recommendations, strengths and improvements.

220. TOTAL TRANSPORT – CHANGING DAY CENTRE SESSION TIMES

The Committee received a report from the Executive Director (Economy, Transport and Environment) setting out the issues that would be presented to the General Purposes Committee (GPC) on 29 November 2016. The recommendations on the report to that Committee would reflect the feedback received from both the Adults and Children & Young People Committees.

GPC agreed to the implementation of two phases of Total Transport proposals in July 2016. GPC also requested a further report on the likely impact, costs and savings of providing school transport for pupils with special education needs and disabilities (SEND) through the Flexible Minibus Service. Whilst this offered financial savings, it would also require changes to session times at Bedford House and Larkfield Day centres in Ely, and at The Café.

Since July, officers had engaged with around two-thirds of staff and service users. Whilst around 80% of service users were able to cope with the changes in times, not all were happy with the proposed changes, and the impact for a small number were significant. It was therefore concluded that whilst the proposals would make savings, this would lead to costs elsewhere, and could make the service inflexible.

The Chairwoman thanked officers for the thorough report, and the fantastic work that stood behind this report. Officers paid tribute to the support of other colleagues, especially in the East Cambridgeshire Locality Team. Members agreed with the proposed approach set out in the concluding sections of the report. Members also agreed that whilst the pilot had encountered difficulties, there was scope to use the model successfully elsewhere for other client groups. There were also suggestions of how minibuses could be used, e.g. by introducing transport to poorly-served rural communities, or to GP surgeries. The opportunities and challenges for these proposals were discussed. It was noted that a particular challenge was that any proposal to utilise transport more would not save money, although it would make better use of existing resources.

It was resolved to:

1. endorse the proposed approach of not changing day centre times due to the significant impact this would have, with only a limited potential saving;
2. note the alternative approach of considering the Flexible Minibus Service as an enabler for residents, helping them maintain their independence and to access community-based solutions.

221. FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT – SEPTEMBER 2016

The Committee considered a report by the Strategic Finance Manager providing an update on the finance and performance position for Children, Families and Adult Services (CFA) at the end of September 2016.

- CFA Services was forecasting a worsening overspend of £2,012,000 at the end of September, mainly resulting from higher than budgeted Legal costs and in Adoption Allowances;
- the Looked After Children (LAC) Placement budget was reporting an increased forecast of £3,000,000;
- the Schools Partnership Service was now forecasting an underspend on £196,000 due to the use of grant funding for Education Support for Looked After Children (ESLAC).

The Executive Director advised that the format of the Finance & Performance reports was being reviewed, so that the 'Main Issues' section would not only highlight overspends and underspends, but set out how these financial challenges were being addressed. There was a discussion among Members as to whether they wanted to continue to review the full report, or would prefer to receive just a summary/headline data. A number of Members commented that they found the detailed sections very useful, so it was agreed that the Committee would continue to receive the full report as part of the Committee agenda.

Turning to the Capital Expenditure and Funding section, there was a discussion about overspends on particular schemes, and it was suggested that the reasons for some of the overspends should really have been identified at the beginning of the process. It was also noted that there had been slippage on a number of schemes because housing development was not being progressed as quickly as originally anticipated. Officers explained that whilst parties worked together very closely on the timing of developments, the Capital plan was based on when Outline Planning Consent for developments was accepted.

A Member commented that the commitment to “*eradicate the achievement gap between vulnerable groups of children and young people and their peers*” was unattainable, as only around 20% of change in children’s lives came through education systems. The Service Director: Learning commented that whilst eradicating the gap and ensuring all children achieve their potential was the Council’s objective, he acknowledged that this was ambitious and it may be more appropriate to use an alternative to ‘eradicate’.

A Member observed that whilst 17 out of 30 Secondary schools were judged to be Good or Outstanding by Ofsted, the figure was much higher for Nursery and Primary Schools. The Chairwoman commented that the Council had powers of intervention in most Nursery and Primary Schools (as most were Maintained), whilst all Secondary schools in the county were Academies, and the Council had no intervention powers.

With reference to the escalating Legal costs, a Member asked how confident officers were that the implementation of the Children’s Change Programme (CCP) would improve performance by targeting the right families at the right time, thus reducing the Council’s exposure to legal costs. The Executive Director commented that early intervention was the key to reducing costs in this area, and agreed to look at the Council’s practices in further detail. **Action required.**

It was resolved to:

1. review and comment on the report.

222. AGENDA PLAN, APPOINTMENTS AND COMMITTEE TRAINING PLAN 2016-17

The Committee reviewed the Forward Agenda Plan for the Children and Young People Service Committee which was published on 1 November 2016. It was noted that since that date, the following item had been moved from the December to the January meeting: *Fenland Secondary School Review – Phase 2 consultation*.

Councillor P Brown advised that he had been appointed to the Adoption Panel some years ago but had not been asked to attend any meetings. The Executive Director agreed to check the current arrangements for the Adoption Panel. **Action required.**

It was resolved to:

1. note the Agenda Plan;
2. note the Committee Training Plan 2016/17.

223. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Committee resolved unanimously that the press and public be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that the agenda contains exempt information under Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as it refers to information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

224. CAMBRIDGESHIRE CATERING AND CLEANING SERVICES

The Committee considered a confidential report about alternative operating models for Cambridgeshire's Catering and Cleaning Services (CCS), to ensure its sustainable future.

It was resolved to:

agree the HCL operating model be implemented, subject to due diligence and Member approval.

Chairwoman