

Children and Young People Committee: Minutes

Date: 8 October 2024

Time: 2.00 pm - 4.35 pm

Venue: Red Kite Room, New Shire Hall, Alconbury Weald

Present: Councillors Ambrose-Smith, Bradnam, Count, Coutts, Daunton, Goodliffe (Chair), Gowing, Hay, Hoy, Meschini, Sharp, Slatter, Thompson and Taylor.

Co-opted Members:
Jon Young, Church of England Diocese of Ely

228. Apologies for absence and declarations of interest

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mike Atkins, Councillor Alex Bulat (substituted by Councillor Elisa Meschini), Councillor Maria King (substituted by Councillor Piers Coutts), Councillor Mark Goldsack (substituted by Councillor Steve Count) and Dr Andy Stone.

Members noted that Councillor Maria King had replaced Councillor Piers Coutts on the Committee, with Councillor Coutts remaining as a substitute.

There were no declarations of interest.

229. Minutes - 10 September 2024 and minutes action log

The minutes of the meeting on 10 September 2024 were approved as an accurate record.

Members commented on the following actions:

- Action 203: Education Contracts - Undertook to provide a briefing note on progress around the education transport transformation programme and improved practices Response: CEF DMT met on 12 September and agreed to defer the report until February 2025 and an provide an update report will be provided to CYP Spokes in November 24. Briefing also required for all Committee members. **Action Required**
- Action 225: Education Capital Projects - Clarified that a note updating on Waterbeach Primary School would be provided to Members outside of the meeting (linked to action 206) **Action Required**

- Action 226: Children, Education and Families Risk Report - Stated that the authority was working with the Combined Authority on a number of transport pilots. The Chair clarified that a note on the pilots would be circulated to the Committee. **Action Required**

The minutes action log was noted.

230. Petitions and public questions

There were no public questions or petitions.

231. Healthy Child Programme Commissioning Approach

The committee received a report that followed an initial report to committee on 12 March 2024 where approval had been granted to commission an integrated Healthy Child Programme (HCP) across both Cambridgeshire and Peterborough local authority areas. This was to maintain the stability of this service, to allow for improvements in delivery to be consolidated and to avoid a dip in performance.

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

- expressed concern in relation to performance against two key performance indicators that were being presented to the Adults and Health Committee later in the week, that related to the programme around the health visiting mandated checks for the percentage of children receiving their 6-8 week review by 8 weeks and children receiving their 2-2.5 year review. Members were informed that the indicators would be reviewed as part of the commissioning process and would be aligned to the national benchmarks.
- asked that the information on the school nursing offer was made clear on the Cambridgeshire Community Services Website for parents and carers. Members noted that the website included information on the nursing offer and mental health support. Information on childhood immunisations could be found on the Cambridgeshire Integrated Care System website and links to both websites would be circulated to members for reference. **Action Required.**
- queried the percentage link to performance of 3% outlined at 4.8 of the report and how this would be implemented and sought assurances that this would be linked to better outcomes and service improvement. Members learnt that performance would be reviewed at quarterly contractual performance meetings and agreed as part of an annual development plan.
- sought assurance that Members in Peterborough had seen and agreed to the report recommendations. Members heard that the original report was approved in March at Peterborough Cabinet, and that a similar report had been taken to Peterborough Cabinet two weeks ago which had been approved. Currently Cambridgeshire was the lead commissioner, but from April 2025 each authority would have their own section 75 agreement.

- noted that the CCS emotional wellbeing service worked closely with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Foundation Trust (CPFT) who were the lead provider of the YOUnited service. This service offered help to children and young people with their emotional wellbeing and mental health. It was available to those up to the age of 25 and offered a range of support including therapies, counselling and guided self-help.

The chair proposed the following minor amendments to the report recommendations which were agreed unanimously by members:

- b) add the words 'NHS Trust' after Cambridgeshire Community Services
- c) add the words 'Cambridgeshire Community Services' before NHS Trust
- d) add the words 'a committee report on progress to committee before' after the words 'in consultation with the Chair and Vice-chair of the Children & Young People's Committee with'

It was resolved unanimously:

- a) To commission a Universal 0-19 HCP including Health Visiting and School Nursing that follows national commissioning guidance, has a focus on improving outcomes and reducing inequalities and allows flexibility to adapt to local needs by working in place-based integrated teams with other local authority (Education, Social Care and Community), Public Health and NHS services.
- b) For Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) to enter into a Section 75 Partnering Arrangement with Cambridgeshire Community Services NHS Trust (CCS) for delivery of this service starting on 1st April 2025 for a duration of 2 years with the option to extend for 2+2 years (Total 6 years).
- c) To agree the annual budget of £9,126,108 for 25-26 of which 3% shall only be paid to the Cambridgeshire Community Services (CCS) NHS Trust subject to the achievement of performance/outcome targets agreed as part of the Section 75 Partnering Agreement's Annual Development Plan. The Annual budget may be subject to inflationary changes in subsequent years.
- d) To delegate responsibility for awarding and executing the Section 75 Partnering Arrangement for the provision of the Healthy Child Programme starting 1st April 2025 to the Executive Director Adults, Health and Commissioning in consultation with the Chair and Vice-chair of the Children & Young People's Committee with a committee report on progress to committee before the option to extend the arrangement after each 2-year period for a total of 6 years to 31st March 2031.

232. Music Education Hub Funding Consortium Agreement

The committee received a report that outlined the new national Music Education Hub Funding Process set out by the Department for Education that covered both the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Authority areas as a single Hub.

An application to lead the new Hub was made, by agreement between the local authorities, through a consortium bid in the Autumn of 2023. The successful award made in April 2024 could only be drawn down with a formal Consortium agreement in place between the two authorities. This has been drafted and agreed with the involvement of legal teams. The report outlined the nature of the work the investment supported and the impact on existing provision were this not to be continued. The Consortium agreement would enable the lead teams for music education to support existing provision and providers without disruption for children and young people and identify and facilitate new opportunities and development across the County. It would enable the further development of the infrastructure that supported access to musical instrument learning, ensemble participation, experiential projects and support for school music provision development.

Individual members raised the following points in relation to the report:

- welcomed the successful application and extended gratitude to officers for their work in pulling the bid together.
- noted that as part of the new governance arrangements for the consortium Councillor Thompson would sit on the Programme Board and Councillor Atkins on the Strategic Hub Board.
- sought clarity on the outreach work that had taken place in Fenland and learnt that the 'First Access Programme', group instrument learning, was delivered in 2023-24 at Thomas Clarkson Academy to 400 students with a performance at the end and included instrument loans, provision has grown by 38% in 2024-25 in Fenland. Also, that 34% of Fenland Schools had engaged in the CPD workshop programme in 2023-24 and the Rap and Literacy School had a project planned in Fenland in 2025. Officers agreed to produce a briefing on the range of projects that had taken place and were planned across the county, by district, for members. **Action Required.** A member stated that she did not feel that music provision in Fenland was sufficient and did not reflect the Arts Councils prioritisation of Fenland and stated that she was keen on promoting arts projects in Fenland and was not aware of the music provision. She asked for local members to be kept up to speed with projects and officers offered further dialogue individually with local members, were required. Another member stated that more work should be done with the corporate leadership team to look at achieving better educational outcomes and targeting areas of high deprivation through music outreach in the longer term.
- highlighted the benefits of digital music in terms of better value for money.
- questioned how the music education hub worked with libraries and district council youth community development officers. A communications programme had been developed and officers explained they would circulate further details on this following the meeting. **Action Required.**

- queried whether there were any synergies between the Library Presents Programme and the Music Education Hub programme as they were both Arts Council funded.
- questioned whether the new hub would enhance workforce development and CPD and new careers in music education and heard that this was a key focus through the programme and when the board was fully established a further briefing on progress would be brought to committee. **Action Required**

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Approve the Consortium Agreement between Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Authorities to enable Cambridgeshire County Council to access and distribute the funding awarded by the Department of Education via the Arts Council of England.

233. Ofsted Action plan and update on Sector Led Improvement Programme

The committee considered a report that provided an overview of the sector led improvement work across Children Services and outlined an action plan following the Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children Services (ILACS) in March 2024.

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

- highlighted that the actions in relation to placement sufficiency for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and homelessness 16-17 ensuring access to advocacy did not have any progress against timescales but were highlighted to be completed by December 2024. The Executive Director of Children, Education and Families explained that the action plan was a dynamic document and that a larger action tracker sat behind this document and that progress against both actions was ongoing. In particular, there was a lot of work taking place with unaccompanied asylum-seeking children as this was the largest area for newly looked after children in Cambridgeshire. A special team has been developed to support unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, looking at their needs and working with the national transfer scheme. He explained that in relation to 16-17 homelessness and access to advocacy, the authority was working with the districts to ensure that the information and advice that they were giving was recorded and work was ongoing to increase the advocacy offer. The Chair commented that both herself and the member champion for asylum seekers had recently visited the unaccompanied asylum seekers team and welcomed the work they were doing.
- sought clarity on what the authority was putting in place in terms of enhanced support preparation for young care leavers from the age of 14. The Executive Director of Children, Education and Families stated that officers had asked care leavers what support they would have welcomed at 14 to help them prepare to leave care. The service was also working with foster carers to support them to share the information and had also increased the number of personal advisors in

the care leavers team. Members noted that the care leavers local offer page on the website had recently been updated to include updated information.

- commented that all of the success criteria should be populated with a measurable target so that the committee could track the progress. The Executive Director of Children, Education and Families explained that the report was a summary for OFSTED who had come back to say that they were satisfied with the report and that as stated previously there was a more detailed underlying action tracker that sat below this document which contained this information.
- requested further detail on Section 3 assessments and the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), new MASH screening template in place from the end of August. Was this in place and was it working. Members learnt that there had been a lot of work happening in the MASH in terms of reviewing processes and focusing on early help and prevention which had included making changes to decision makers so that referrals could be made quickly into the early help hub, and this has included a lot of work with partners to enhance the quality of triaging and information sharing processes.
- queried how the training on the key six areas identified in the action plan had been progressing. The Executive Director of Children, Education and Families explained that a range of training had been carried out and Essex had led on some of this training. The training was varied and included whole team training days as well as bitesize training and this was all built into the audit processes and had a full quality assurance programme for the year.
- expressed concern in relation to out of hours support for foster carers not being sufficient and whether there was work underway to improve this. The Executive Director of Children, Education and Families explained that there was an out of hours advice line for foster carers and when further support was required the county wide Emergency Duty team which included support for children and adults could be contacted and social work staff could deal with child protection issues. He explained that there would be some instances when the police would need to be called.
- the Executive Director of Children, Education and Families highlighted that the service had previously been shared with Peterborough and that their inspection outcome was inadequate, and Cambridgeshire's was required improvement. He explained that the staff in Cambridgeshire had a good level of practice and that he was confident in the trajectory and working towards a good rating for the next graded inspection. He thanked Dee Revens for her work on the plan.

It was resolved to note the report.

234. Finance Monitoring Report – August 2024

The committee received the finance monitoring report up to the end of August 2024.

Officers raised the following points in relation to the report:

- the Directorate was currently forecasting a 5% overspend which equated to £7.3 million, driven by increasing placement costs for children with complex needs and increased demand for home to school transport due to the rise in children with complex needs and a limited supply market. There was a programme in place to review home to school transport to help drive down costs over the medium term.
- Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) budgets continued to forecast an overspend of £12 million, with the cumulative deficit being over £52 million. Work was ongoing to address this issue with the Department of Education through the Safety Valve Programme, with a reset of this work due in the Autumn.
- maintained school deficits were outlined in in appendix 6 of the report and officers were working with 30 schools on deficit programmes.

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

- discussed the spend on unregulated placements being unsustainable. The Executive Director for Children Education and Families explained that there was a significant supply issue of regulated placements and between 4-6 children a month were placed in unregulated placements. He stated that over the total estate there were 220 regulate placements with 50-60 children waiting on these placements on any given day. The authority was constantly looking for regulated placements and the development of the authority's residential strategy looked to bring some of these placements in house for those children with particularly complex needs. A member questioned who was overseeing the Deprivation of Liberty (DoLs) and unregulated placements process. The Executive Director for Children, Education and Families explained that the authority oversaw this process and there was an unregulated care panel that reviewed the placements on a weekly basis and worked with providers who wished to apply to be regulated placements. Children were moved from DoLs settings were the authority felt they were not getting the correct care and the placements were reviewed on a weekly basis by the panel and the oversight of an independent reviewing officer. A member highlighted that at the last committee meeting members were asked to approve plans to use unused homes to provide additional suitable settings for children with complex needs within the county as part of the residential strategy.
- sought details of the amount of one of grant carried forward for the targeted support for children in social care budget. Officers to come back to members outside of the meeting with the figures. **Action Required.**
- queried how the mainstream home to school transport budget was being affected by school placements for children across county borders and placements outside catchment areas, due to lack of secondary school places. Officers acknowledged that the problem was multi-faceted with the need to focus on the

capital programme to build on school places where there was capacity constraints and constrained local supply for transport services and a bulge in numbers of children in specific age groups in parts of the county.

- questioned how home to school transport contracts were negotiated due to the variations in the market and queried whether there were any plans in place to tackle the overspend on home to school transport. The Executive Director for Children, Education and Families commented that an independent review of home to school transport was due to take place and was currently out to procurement. Officers would come back to committee with the results of this review. Most of the demand increases were in relation to SEND transport and an insufficiency of special school places, with two new special schools due to be built by the Department of Education still in train. The number of EHCPs were increasing year on year with 113 local authorities overspent on the high needs block and this was not a new problem, and it was extremely difficult to predict demand.
- queried if there was a general issue with the design of schools as a number of the capital projects were delayed due to issues with design. The Executive Director for Children, Education and Families explained that for a number of the projects the original costs had been hit with inflationary changes which then impacted on the design.

It was resolved to note the report.

235. Children and Young People's Corporate Performance Report

The committee considered an update on the performance monitoring information for the 2024/25 quarter 1 period, covering April 1st to June 30th.

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

- expressed concern in relation to a number of indicators that were showing as red in particular indicator 1: percentage of children whose referral to social care occurred within 12 months of a previous referral which was showing a decline in performance; Indicator 2: Number of children with a Child Protection Plan every 10,000 population under 18; Indicator 10: Ofsted- pupils attending schools that are judged as Good or Outstanding (Special Schools) and Indicator 128: Percentage of Education, Health and Care Plan assessments (EHCPs) completed within timescale as this was a statutory duty but performance was in decline. A member stated that the authority needed to be concerned about these indicators now as it was his view that if this continued it would lead to government intervention in the future. The Executive Director for Children Education and Families explained that the authority was currently assessing too many children too frequently and 64% of the assessments carried out were resulting in no further action or referral to targeted support. The changes that had been made to the MASH would mean that children would get their needs met through targeted support and members should see an improvement in performance against this indicator. He explained that the target for indicator 2 was incredibly high with the England average being 42.1 and the council target of 21.1, and in the eastern region the council was third out of 11 authorities in terms of

performance against this indicator. He stated that there were far fewer children in care in Cambridgeshire (47.8) than the England average (67) every 10,000 population under 18. Officers explained that Indicator 10 in relation to special schools, 92.5% of the schools were rated good or better. There were 14 special schools, 4 being rated less than good (2 academies and 2 maintained schools). Officers highlighted that in relation to indicator 128, the report showed 5% of EHCPs completed in the timescales when the report was, this now currently stood at 19.5% which was still not good enough. Officers explained that the system for recording the EHCPs was not fit for purpose and the authority was currently implementing a new system and training staff. There was also the fundamental reason in relation to the lack of capacity around Educational Psychologists which was a national issue. The authority had just secured some locum Educational Psychologists and there would be a SEND end to end review and introducing an Inclusion for All Framework. This will be a needs lead approach supporting all Cambridgeshire Schools to be inclusive so that needs are identified and met earlier and not necessarily reliant on the EHCP process. Cultural change takes time, and an Inclusion summit was due to take place on 18 November to define what was meant by inclusive practice in Cambridgeshire and look at how this could be embedded.

- highlighted that indicator 130: Keys stage 2 reading, writing and maths combined to the expected standard (all children) was below target last time committee received a report and this was now further below target and asked officers to explain what was being done to improve performance in this area. Officers stated that this was below the national average and that writing was the biggest problem and a lot of children post covid were starting school with greater needs and not taking advantage of the childcare offer so not arriving school ready. The service was looking at the most impacted groups and targeting resources starting earlier on through trauma informed practice. A bid had also been submitted with the Education Endowment Fund and officers were waiting to see if this is successful.

It was resolved to note the report.

236. Children and Young People Committee agenda plan, training plan, committee appointments and Local Authority school governor appointments

It was resolved to note the Agenda Plan and Training plan.

Chair