

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE COMMITTEE: MINUTES

Date: Tuesday, 10th March 2015

Time: 2.00pm – 4.40pm

Present: Councillors D Brown (Vice-Chairman), S Bywater, P Clapp, D Divine, D Harty, G Kenney, M Leeke, L Nethsingha, F Onasanya, T Orgee (substituting for Cllr P Brown), M Rouse, P Topping, S van de Kerkhove, S van de Ven (substituting for Cllr Downes), J Whitehead (Chairwoman), J Wisson and F Yeulett

Apologies: Councillors P Brown and P Downes

73. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Two members declared an interest in agenda item 7 (minute 79), Councillor Topping as a governor of the University Technical College (UTC) Cambridge, and Councillor van de Ven as the wife of a governor of Comberton Academy Trust.

74. MINUTES 13th JANUARY 2015 AND ACTION LOG

The minutes of the meeting held on 13th January 2015 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairwoman.

The Action Log was noted.

75. PETITIONS

No petitions had been received.

76. FORMAL CONSULTATION ON THE RECOMMISSIONING OF EARLY HELP SERVICES

The Committee considered a report presenting the proposed response to the formal consultation on the re-commissioning of early help services and seeking the Committee's agreement to the publication and implementation of the response. Members noted that the formal consultation response document included the feedback and questions received during the consultation process and set out the final plans to re-commission the Council's early help services.

Turning first to Appendix 2, which set out the specific issues and responses in relation to **sensory services**, members noted that the proposal to develop an integrated Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Specialist Service had met with considerable opposition and a petition to Council requesting that the Committee reconsider these proposals. The concerns raised had focussed mainly on whether the Council could give assurance that the quality of service and speed of access to services would be maintained. Two further options had been developed in response to these concerns, one proposing a partially integrated service, and the other proposing the retention of a central sensory service. In the course of very constructive discussion with officers, parents had set out the case that there was a low incidence of needing sensory support, but those who required such support often had a high level of need. The Committee was now being recommended to consider Option 3, set out at section 4 (page 7) of Appendix 2, the retention of the Central Sensory Service.

Mr George Holroyd addressed the Committee, introducing himself as the father of a blind child who was receiving excellent support from Council services. Speaking on behalf of some of the other parents, he very much welcomed the final proposal on sensory services and particularly thanked the Service Director: Enhanced and Preventative Services for listening to parents. He said that concerns remained round matching the skill set of the QTVI [Qualified Teacher of the Visually Impaired] to the particular child; the amount of QTVI support that children received (0.3% of a QTVI's time against a national quality standard of 0.4%); and how IT was provided (using the cheapest provider meant that equipment did not always work). Mr Holroyd reported that a major benefit of the consultation process had been a massive increase in parent-to-parents links.

In answer to members' questions, Mr Holroyd added that

- he, his wife and several other parents would be happy to formalise liaison arrangements with officers on a periodic basis
- the IT equipment problems had not been entirely solved; because Cambridgeshire used the cheapest supplier for each piece of specialist equipment the resulting mixture of products did not necessarily talk to each other, resulting in service visits being needed, at a cost
- the sensory services consultation had felt rather rushed, because sensory services were not included in the consultation until December, but once parents had made their views known, the consultation period had been extended as they had requested.

It was suggested that a cost benefit analysis might usefully be run to look at current spending and what the overall cost of buying the right equipment in the first place would be. The Service Director said that she was already considering doing such an analysis, and if necessary escalating the matter if procurement issues proved to be an obstacle.

Discussing the recommended option (Appendix 2, page 7, section 4), members

- asked whether the proposed structure was a risk in that it provided two points of access to services whereas integration would provide a single point of access, and asked what was known about other parents' views on the proposal.

Officers advised that further discussion with parents of children with a visual or hearing impairment had shown that they needed a single-need referral to work well, and the systems to be such that any other needs would also be identified. While it was not possible to talk to 600 parents, over the next 12 months efforts would be made to try to understand the needs of those parents who had not replied to the consultation

- noted that the requirement to make further savings in the future meant that no one service could be said to be out of scope for future economies, but there were changes and efficiencies which could be made that would reduce costs and improve outcomes
- thanked officers for their speedy response to parents' concerns.

The Committee unanimously accepted the recommendation (Appendix 2, section 5, page 7) to agree option 3, which would see no structural change for sensory services.

The Committee then turned to decisions to be made in relation to **Locality Work** (Appendix 3, paragraph 4.4, page 23). Members noted that 14 locality teams would be retained, some changes were proposed in management and senior practitioner roles, and the Information Adviser and Guidance Adviser roles would be removed from the new

structure, though this last change was being postponed for a year in the hope that incoming traded work from schools would generate finance to support these roles. No reductions were being proposed in family workers or young people's workers.

In the course of discussion, members

- asked about the impact on staff of the proposal to delay implementing reductions, and noted that the delay would give them the opportunity to seek other employment, though it was hoped that it would be possible to retain them through other opportunities
- noted that the five full-time equivalent senior social worker posts would be removed, and that there would be a loss of about 50% of youth development coordinator posts
- enquired what work was being done with major businesses and employers to provide opportunities such as apprenticeships for young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), pointing out that local members have knowledge of local employers so could assist in this work.

The Committee unanimously accepted the decisions relating to Locality Work (Appendix 3, paragraph 4.4, pages 23-26).

The Committee then turned to decisions to be made in relation to **SEND Specialist Service** (Appendix 3, paragraph 5.3, page 32). Members noted that it was proposed to bring SEND specialist services together into seven integrated teams, which it was hoped would make it easier for e.g. schools to find the best support for a child.

In answer to questions about the deletion of Area Senior Educational Psychologist posts, members noted that the proposal was aimed at making better use of a resource, not at saving money. The expectation was that it would be possible to manage efficiencies in management without making redundancies, and to make good use of educational psychologists' skills and leadership.

The Committee unanimously endorsed the decisions relating to SEND Specialist Service (Appendix 3, paragraph 5.3, page 32).

The Committee then turned to decisions to be made in relation to **Countywide Services** (Appendix 3, paragraph 6.6, pages 40-42). Members noted that efforts were being made to reduce and rationalise central teams, and to concentrate on the services' core purpose, the 0-19 agenda, the family work offer, and NEET attendance.

In the course of discussing these proposals, members

- drew attention to the risk involved in reducing work with youth; if efforts to get schools more involved in providing funding were unsuccessful, the result could be a build-up of expensive problems for the future
- noted that the Council had in the past worked with the Prince's Trust, and raised the possibility of doing so again
- asked whether the aim of the Children's Centre Ofsted Inspection Support Manager would be to improve Ofsted findings or improve children's centres. Members were advised that the aim was to improve the centres, and to equip them to answer questions from Ofsted.

- drew attention to the fact that many schools were now academies, and asked about the effect of this on provision of services. Members noted that youth provision and work was offered in targeted areas of need, and that a service of identifying children at risk of NEET was currently provided free of charge. There was no expectation that academies would necessarily fund this, though if schools were not prepared to accept the work as a traded service in future, there was a risk that the service would cease and this expertise be lost.

The Committee unanimously endorsed the decisions relating to Countywide Services (Appendix 3, paragraph 6.6, pages 40-42).

The Committee then turned to decisions to be made in relation to **Intensive Services** (Appendix 3, paragraph 7.5, page 46), noting that the intention was slightly to reduce the number of officer posts and locate youth offending workers in locality teams, she facilitate cooperative working. The Committee unanimously accepted these decisions.

The Committee then turned to **Workforce Development, Community Capacity and Traded Services** (Appendix 3, pages 47-51). Members raised the question of liaison with town and parish councils, and noted that the role of the Youth and Community Coordinator would include linking with other bodies.

The Committee had no revisions to offer to the formal consultation on the recommissioning of early help services, and noted that the Early Help Strategy draft (Appendix 1) would be brought to Committee for final endorsement at a future meeting. Members thanked the Service Director: Enhanced and Preventative Services and her team for their effort and their level of engagement in carrying out this piece of work.

It was resolved unanimously:

- a) to consider and offer any revisions to the response to the formal consultation on the recommissioning of early help services;
- b) to agree to the publication and implementation of the response to the formal consultation on the recommissioning of early help services;
- c) to note the Early Help Strategy draft included as Appendix 1 to the report.

77. ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW PRIMARY SCHOOL IN ALCONBURY WEALD

The Committee considered a report on the outcome of the process adopted by the Council to discharge the statutory requirement, under the Education Act 2011, to seek an Academy or Free School sponsor for the first primary school to serve the Alconbury Weald development. The report sought the Committee's endorsement of the Diocese of Ely Multi Academy Trust as the Council's preferred sponsor for this new primary school.

Members noted that this school would be the first of three primary schools and one secondary school to serve the Alconbury Weald development, where 5,000 new homes were planned. It was reported that Department for Education (DfE) officials had commented favourably on the level of public engagement in the Council's process.

It was resolved with two abstentions:

to endorse the Diocese of Ely Multi Academy Trust as the Council's preferred sponsor for the first primary school to serve Alconbury Weald.

78. CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS FOR TWO SCHOOLS SERVING THE PRIMARY SECTOR IN MARCH

The Committee considered a report on the future governance arrangements for two schools serving the Primary sector in March. The Chairwoman advised that she had exercised her discretion to allow it to be considered at this meeting, as the external consultation did not finish until 27th February, and time was needed for the report to reflect the results of the consultation.

Members noted that the proposal to close Maple Grove Infant School and extend the age range of Westwood Community Junior School, and subsequently expand the newly created Westwood Primary school, had arisen following an Ofsted inspection of both schools which had found the infant school inadequate and the junior school to be good across all areas. The schools were on adjacent sites, split only by a residential road, Maple Grove; the proposed expansion of the newly-created primary school from September 2016 was required to meet the rising demand for school places within the catchment area, and had already been being planned, in consultation with the Infant and Junior Schools, at the time of the inspection.

In the course of considering the proposal, members

- reported being very impressed by headteacher, staff and pupils on a recent visit to Westwood Junior School, drawing attention to the good links already existing between infant and junior school, and the potential for increased work with vulnerable families and pre-school children in the combined school
- expressed thanks to the headteacher and governors of the junior school for being willing to take on this complex change, and sought assurance that they would receive all possible support from the Local Authority to ensure that the new school maintained the high standards achieved by Westwood Community Junior School. Officers assured members that they would be continuing to support the staff and governors of the new school for some time
- congratulated officers on arriving at an innovative response to the Ofsted findings
- expressed some concern at the overall size of the proposed school, though it would be mitigated by the split site operation, and requested that the effects of the large size school be monitored. Officers pointed out that how the school was led and managed would be a significant factor in the pupil experience, and assured members that monitoring and support would be provided to the school.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) note the consultation responses;
- b) agree publication on 13th March 2015 of the statutory notices required to give effect to the proposal to close Maple Grove Infant School and extend the age range of Westwood Junior School, March to become an all-through primary school;

- c) make an exception to the Council's current policy on the maximum size of primary schools and publish a second statutory notice to increase the published admission number (PAN) of the resulting Westwood Primary School from 90 (3 forms of entry (FE)) to 120 (4FE) with effect from September 2016; and
- d) delegate final approval for the implementation of the proposals following expiry of the statutory notices in (b) and (c) above to the Executive Director for Children, Families and Adults, in consultation with the Chairwoman and Vice-Chairman of the Children and Young People Committee.

79. RESPONSE TO REQUESTS BY OWN ADMISSION AUTHORITIES TO CHANGE THEIR CATCHMENT AREAS

The Committee received a report on the implications of governing bodies and academy trusts which have responsibility for their own admission arrangements (own admission authority schools) seeking to change their catchment areas. Were such changes to be recognised by the Council for home to school transport purposes, it would have implications for the already-overstretched school transport budget, as transport was only provided to the child's nearest or catchment school.

The report sought the Committee's endorsement of a proposal that the process set out in the report for responding to such changes should be formally adopted as Council policy with immediate effect. Members noted that there was a need to formalise a procedure that had been in place for some time because of the recent decision of Barnabas Oley Primary School and Comberton Village College to give Barnabas Oley pupils priority for admission to the village college, despite another secondary school being the named catchment school for these pupils.

In the course of discussion, members

- expressed support for the proposed procedure, stressing the importance of informing parents consistently about the transport implications of admission to a school, and making it absolutely clear that free home to school transport would not be provided for a non-catchment school. Officers advised that it would be possible to draft a letter for schools to distribute to parents who might be choosing a non-catchment school, so that parents would be absolutely clear on the transport implications of their decision
- supported the recommendation of including the local member(s) in considering the implications of a proposed change in catchment area, pointing out that some changes could affect several electoral divisions
- noted that the only schools without geographical catchment areas were the two Roman Catholic primary schools, St Bede's Inter-Church School, and the University Technical College (UTC). In the case of the UTC, free transport for those aged 14-16 was provided only if it was the nearest school, whilst entitlement to subsidised transport for those aged over 16 was based on whether it was their nearest appropriate centre. Transport to church schools was provided only on statutory grounds, not on denominational grounds
- expressed concern at the potential for widespread changes to catchment areas, particularly in Cambridge, where the prevalence of cycling meant that transport was less of a factor when choosing a school than in rural areas

- suggested that the Committee write to the DfE expressing concern at the increased fragmentation of the coordinated admissions process. Officers undertook to take a draft letter to Spokes for consideration. **Action required**

It was resolved unanimously to:

to support the recommendation that the Council should adopt the process set out in Section 2.8 of the report before Committee for responding to school governing body or academy trust (own admission authority schools) proposals to change their catchment areas with immediate effect.

80. MULTI SYSTEMIC THERAPY MUTUAL

The Committee considered a report on the proposed direction of travel for Multi Systemic Therapy (MST) services. Members noted that it was proposed that these intensive services for adolescents might best be undertaken in future by a traded company outside the Council. Such a company would be fully independent of the Council but seeking still to work with the Council to deliver services to young people.

Discussing the report, members

- expressed concern at the lack of information about the costs of the current service and suggested that this made financial planning difficult
- requested that a business plan be included with the report next time the matter was brought to Committee for consideration
- noted that current spending on MST services was £350k per team and about £16k per child, and that a future company would need about five teams in order to break even
- queried the cost of evaluation as a proportion of the Department for Education grant. Officers advised that a properly-conducted evaluation would represent value for money at £70k, as this was about the market rate for such work
- expressed concern at the possible implications of changes in the national political scene for the proposal. Members noted that the view of the Cabinet Office was that there was wide cross-party support for such transfers of services to a trading company
- asked that there be clear lines of accountability if such a company were to be set up, as the traded company would still be spending public money
- pointed out that it should be made clear that if the traded company were to fail, staff would have no right to local authority employment. Officers advised that it would be possible to have a trading company hosted by the local authority, but this would be more expensive than a fully independent one
- commented that it would be of great benefit to the Council, in view of other pressures on the CYP budget, if it proved possible to save money and attract funding through establishing a trading company.

It was resolved by a majority:

- a) to agree to the preparatory and developmental work being undertaken for the creation of a spin out company;
- b) to agree to a further report being presented in the autumn for a key decision on the future arrangements for Multi Systemic Therapy services.

81. “BREAKING THE CYCLE 2” CAMBRIDGESHIRE’S CHILD POVERTY STRATEGY

The Committee received a report presenting Cambridgeshire’s second Child Poverty Strategy and noted that, like the first Child Poverty Strategy, if approved it would be implemented through the authority’s partnership arrangements. Speaking as Chairman of the Child Poverty Champions Group, Councillor Bywater thanked the Strategy Manager for her work on the strategy, which he described as a work in progress and a response to an ongoing challenge.

In the course of discussion, members

- commented on the apparent lack of pledges from schools and noted that the Children’s Trust had engaged with schools and health providers in the course of its work on child poverty; there were also other initiatives directed at deprived children
- suggested that it might be helpful to seek greater engagement from schools through the Cambridgeshire Secondary Heads Forum
- pointed out that, while the strategy referred frequently to the importance of communities, it would be helpful if it could also mention the importance of joined-up working by public sector organisations such as district councils and the Fire Service. Officers undertook to pursue this suggestion. **Action required**

The Chairwoman thanked the Child Poverty Champions Group for its work on the strategy.

It was resolved unanimously:

to approve and adopt the strategy.

82. FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Committee considered the Finance and Performance report for Children’s, Families and Adults (CFA), outlining the financial and performance position as at the end of January 2015. The report included areas covered by the Adults Committee.

Discussing the report, members

- drew attention to the lack of success of bids to the Department for Education (DfE) for capital funding for maintenance of school buildings and the likelihood of schools seeking help with maintenance from the Local Authority instead. The Committee was advised that, though there had been an uplift in funding for general needs, funding for the maintenance of schools had been reduced. Officers were raising the matter with the DfE, because some maintenance issues such as roofs or boilers could lead to the closure of a school building; there was unease around the country about funding for buildings maintenance

- expressed concern at the slipping of a number of large secondary academies from Ofsted judgement 'good' to 'requires improvement'. Officers advised that there had been some generally disappointing inspection outcomes. In accordance with guidance, the Executive Director: Children, Families and Adults was writing the Regional Schools Commissioner setting out the Local Authority's concerns, and asking what action the Commissioner would be taking to address the situation. The Chair of Cambridgeshire Secondary Heads Forum would also be invited to any resulting meeting with the Commissioner
- asked whether there were any trends observable to explain the inspection outcomes, the Executive Director said there seemed to be a re-calibration of what Ofsted was looking for. He had suggested to the new Regional Director for Ofsted that it would be useful to undertake some work with him on analysis of Ofsted findings.

It was resolved unanimously to note the report.

83. 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 confirmed that the Committee would not meet on the reserve date of 9th April 2015.

Members also considered appointments to two new groups, the Northstowe "4 plus 4" group (an informal group of four members each from the County Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council established to steer the spending of Section 106 funding for Northstowe), and the Members Reference Group for the CFA Management Information Systems Procurement Project.

The Committee noted that the purpose of the Members Reference Group was to oversee the CFA Management Information Systems Procurement Project, and to ensure that there was sufficient management of risk and of communication with front-line staff. (The Terms of Reference, circulated at the meeting, are attached to these minutes as Appendix A.) Three elected members were being sought to serve on this group, but because several potential members were not present only one definite nomination was made. Further members were suggested and it was decided that their agreement to serving should be sought. **Action required**

It was resolved unanimously:

- 1) to note the agenda plan;
- 2) to appoint Councillor Whitehead to the "4 plus 4" group;
- 3) to appoint Councillor Clapp to a reference group for the procurement of a new Management Information system for Children, Families & Adults
- 4) to seek agreement from Councillors Dent, Manning and Van der Kerkhove to serve on the reference group for the procurement of a new Management Information system for Children, Families & Adults.

Chairwoman