

PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the People Scrutiny Committee held at Council Chamber - County Hall, Lewes on 27 November 2018.

PRESENT: Councillors Angharad Davies (Chair), Michael Ensor, Roy Galley, Tom Liddiard, Laurie Loe, Jim Sheppard, John Ungar (Vice Chair), Trevor Webb, Francis Whetstone and Mr Matthew Jones

Mr Matthew Jones, Parent Governor Representative
Mrs Ruth Cumming, Assistant Director (Teaching and Learning), Diocese of Chichester.

LEAD MEMBERS: Councillor Bob Standley, Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability.
Councillor Sylvia Tidy, Lead Member for Children and Families.
Councillor Carl Maynard, Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health.

ALSO PRESENT Councillor Keith Glazier, Leader of the Council
Councillor David Elkin, Deputy Leader of the Council
Becky Shaw, Chief Executive
Stuart Gallimore, Director of Children's Services
Keith Hinkley, Director of Adult Social Care
Lou Carter, Assistant Director (Performance and Planning)
Fiona Wright, Assistant Director (Education & ISEND)
Jessica Stubbings, Senior Manager, Partnerships and Governance
Vicky Smith, Integrated Care Manager System Strategic Manager
Kirstie Battrick, Staff Officer.

17 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 1 OCTOBER 2018

17.1 RESOLVED to agree the minutes of the previous meeting as a correct record.

18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

18.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Charles Clark and Kathryn Field and Simon Parr, Catholic Diocese Representative and Nicola Boulter, Parent Governor Representative

19 URGENT ITEMS

19.1 There were none.

20 RECONCILING POLICY, PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES (RPPR) 2019/20

20.1 The Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council introduced the report and provided an overview of the current context within which the RPPR process has been undertaken. This included reference to the purpose of the Core Offer, the Medium Term Financial Plan and the proposed savings (as set out in the report considered by Cabinet on 13 November 2018).

Reference was also made to a number of continuing areas of uncertainty and the impact this is having on budget planning. The Leader also highlighted the significant work undertaken to raise awareness at the national level regarding the particular funding pressures facing East Sussex County Council.

20.2 The key points discussed by the Committee are summarized below:

Core Offer - Customer Service (Appendix 1 to Appendix A)

20.3 The Committee noted the commentary under the Customer Service section in the Core Offer which states that 'we will expect people to use the online resources available and will provide automated responses wherever possible, so people may not always get an individualised reply to enquires'. Members accepted that a move to providing resources online is overall a desirable development that will benefit the majority of service users. However, the Committee asked how the needs of individuals who might struggle to access online resources will be addressed. In response the Committee were assured that all Departments accept the need to ensure that appropriate mitigations are in place to meet the needs of individuals who are not able to access services online.

Standards and Learning Effectiveness Service (SLES) proposed savings (Appendix 3 to Appendix A)

20.4 In response to a question regarding the savings proposals for SLES, the Director of Children's Services informed the Committee that the savings plan 'captures' the continued direction of travel for the Department – as millions of pounds have already been removed from its budget. The Department is therefore trying to ensure its services are effectively organised in the context of the ongoing budget reductions. This includes, for example, seeing what can be done to share resources and responsibilities and planning the implementation of savings so that services and schools are given as much time as possible to adapt to reduced levels of support.

Core Offer descriptions

20.5 The Committee asked for clarification regarding the descriptions in Appendix A relating to partnerships and school improvement support as set out in Appendix 1 (pages 21 and 22 of the agenda) and Appendix 3 (page 31 of the agenda). In response the Department confirmed that whilst the descriptions use 'light touch' language, the wording in both appendices is intended to convey the same meanings with regard to the impact of the proposed savings. The Department confirmed further clarification would be provided to Members at the RPPR Board meeting.

Savings Gap

20.6 The Committee noted that despite the savings set out in the Core Offer, the report identified a further £10.8m deficit for 2019/20. As a result the Committee asked for more detail regarding how the Council believes it will achieve this additional saving and what has been done to assess the impact of these savings and the associated risks. In response, the Chief Executive informed the Committee that the report provides 'high level' detail which aims to help the reader easily identify key issues; that further detail is available on the Council's website; and that additional commentary would become available, but that the timing of this was dependent on a range of factors such as the detail contained within the Local Government Finance Settlement.

Refuges

20.7 The Committee asked for clarification as to what the Council's response would be if its bid to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (for funding for domestic abuse services) was not successful. In response, the Director of Adult Social Care confirmed that the

Department had already planned for this scenario and that if the bid did not succeed, the service would be reduced to the levels set out in its report to Cabinet (26 June 2018). The Committee also asked for clarification as to what proportion of women who access East Sussex refuges were from within the county. In response, the Director undertook to supply the requested data separately to relevant Members.

Homeless

20.8 The Committee discussed its concerns regarding the proposed reduction in ASC funding in this area and its impact on the number of beds available for homeless people. In response, the Director of Adult Social Care informed the Committee that the Department are working to ensure it makes the best use of its resources in this area and that significant commitments have already been made to help support people in this group. Furthermore, the Committee were informed that the provider of this service has submitted a bid for additional external funding which, if successful, would allow the organisation to sustain the existing services in East Sussex.

Assessment and Care Management Staff

20.9 The Committee discussed the impact of the loss of experienced staff within the Assessment and Care Management service and what mitigations had been put in place by the Department. In response, the Committee were informed that the Department went through a process that sought to balance the levels of skills and experience within the service. The process followed by the Department was also informed by its decision to seek to protect frontline social workers and the most skilled practitioners. The Department has sought to be clear about the impact of these savings and the associated potential risks.

HIV Support Service

20.10 The Committee discussed signposting relating to HIV support services as some members of the public had provided feedback regarding the visibility of this support. In response the Director commented that he believed the pathways and signposting are clear. However, he welcomed the feedback and undertook to discuss the matter in more detail with the relevant Member.

20.11 RESOLVED to:

- 1) note the Core Offer proposals, MTFP and savings plans for 2019/20 to 2021/22 and the additional information provided in Appendix B to the report; and
- 2) agree that the People Scrutiny RPPR Board will be comprised of all People Scrutiny Committee members who wish to attend.

21 SCRUTINY REVIEW OF SCHOOLS COPING WITH CHANGE - REPORT OF THE REVIEW BOARD

21.1 The Children's Services Scrutiny Committee agreed on 27 November 2017 to appoint a 'Schools Coping with Change – the Way Forward' Scrutiny Review Board. Subsequent to this and following the Council's review of its scrutiny arrangements, the People Scrutiny Committee reaffirmed its commitment to the review at its meeting on 25 June 2018. The Board consisted of Councillors Roy Galley, Kathryn Field, Laurie Loe, Francis Whetstone and Matthew Jones, Parent Governor Representative. Councillor Galley was elected as the Chair of the Review Board. Following earlier changes to the membership of the Committee, Councillors Stephen Shing and Alan Shuttleworth and Nicola Boulter also contributed to the work of the Review.

21.2 Councillor Galley introduced the report by discussing the context of the review and highlighting some of the Board's key findings. This included reference to the Board's finding that in a school-led system, it will be increasingly difficult for schools to 'stand-alone'. As a result, the Board concluded it was now a matter of urgency that relevant schools start taking forward plans to form partnerships that will help ensure their sustainability. The report also put forward suggestions as to how the Local Authority could develop its pre-existing policies regarding formal partnership arrangements. On behalf of his fellow board members, Councillor Galley also thanked the range of professionals who assisted the Board with the review process. This included senior members of staff and governors from local schools and academies, representatives of the Diocese of Chichester and the Regional Schools Commissioner. The Board also thanked relevant officers from the Children's Services Department for their support and advice throughout the review process.

21.3 Matthew Jones, Parent Governor Representative, also commented that having an undertaken a cross-referencing process, he was satisfied that all of the recommendations were fully supported by the detailed evidence considered by the Board. Mr Jones also commented that the Board had a very clear understanding the level of change within the system. The Board's recommendations were therefore aimed at helping schools adapt to an evolving educational environment where there will much less support available from the Local Authority.

21.4 The Director of Children's Services welcomed the report's reflection of the complex and challenging environment which all schools and the Children's Services Department have been responding to in recent years. Whilst welcoming this aspect of the report, the Director also discussed the challenges the Department would face implementing some of the recommendations. This includes the Department's view that recent evidence indicates that formal federation partnerships may not deliver savings on a scale that would help protect schools at risk. The Director also asked the Committee for its views regarding the effective size for a federation. The Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability, also questioned aspects of the recommendations in that they appeared to him to revert to a now outdated view of the role of the local authority. The Lead Member also commented that a number of the recommendations appeared to be proposing similar actions.

21.5 In response, Councillor Galley informed the Committee that the Board were keen to ensure that its recommendations were grounded in the reality of the current difficult financial environment. The Board believe the evidence presented to them indicated that some schools had not fully appreciated the scale of the challenges before them. As a result, the Board agreed there was scope to further develop the work already being undertaken by the Department to encourage a more proactive, realistic response from schools. The Board also heard evidence from a number of sources which supported its recommendations regarding the promotion of formal partnerships as a possible solution to the challenges facing schools.

21.6 The Committee then discussed the Board's report and recommendations. A summary of the discussion points is set out below:

- **Letter to the Secretary of State.** Some Members of the Committee questioned the effectiveness of making representations to the Secretary of State and asked that if a letter was despatched, it should ensure the wording accurately reflects the current legal responsibilities of the Local Authority. Other comments included support for a letter to be produced and despatched given the consensus view regarding the ongoing uncertainty within the school system.
- **Core Offer.** A number of members expressed support for the Department's views regarding the feasibility of implementing some of the recommendations (given the impact of the proposed savings set out in the Core Offer). In particular some Member questioned whether Cabinet would support a number of the recommendations given the proposed savings plans and their potential impact on support for school improvement and the development of formal school partnerships. In response, Councillor Galley

commented that it is his view that the recommendations were developed with the Core Offer in mind and the potential future severe reduction of school improvement support services; that the recommendations propose relatively small adjustments to the Department's current policies and that such adjustments were based on evidence from school leaders themselves.

21.7 Given the differing views expressed by Members of the Committee, the Chair proposed Members vote on whether the report should be referred to Cabinet for its consideration in the format before the Committee or whether the report should instead be referred back to the Board so that the issues outlined above could be clarified in a revised report. The Committee voted by a majority of 7 votes to 3 for the report to be referred to Cabinet and Full Council in its current format. However, given the views of both the Department and some Members, Councillor Galley undertook to provide further clarity about the context of the recommendations and the Board's views on the limited nature of the activities it is suggesting the Department take forward.

21.8 RESOLVED:

- 1) to agree the report of the Review Board and to submit the report to Cabinet on 22 January 2018 for comment and to Full Council for approval on 5 February 2018.
- 2) that further clarification regarding the scope of the Board's recommendations is provided.

22 PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

22.1 The Committee discussed its Work Programme which is comprised of a number of ongoing scrutiny reviews, reference groups and planned reports.

Current Scrutiny Reviews

22.2 In relation to the 'Changing Care Market' review, Councillor Ensor provided an update on the Board's activities. This included discussing the Board's initial evidence gathering regarding public expectations, community resilience and issues relating to workforce planning. The Director of Adult Social Care informed the Committee that the Department agrees that these areas do have the potential to produce effective scrutiny recommendations. However, the Director also informed the Committee of his concerns about the capacity of the Department to support a scrutiny review which looked in detail at these significant areas simultaneously. Having discussed this point, the Committee concluded that it would take steps to ensure these concerns are taken into account when considering scrutiny activity that requires substantial departmental support.

22.3 In terms of the Schools Coping with Change review, and subject to some further clarifications regarding the scope of the recommendations (as set out in Minute 22), the Committee agreed to approve that the Board's report is submitted to Cabinet for its consideration on 22 January 2019 and Full Council on 5 February 2019.

Initial Scoping Reviews

22.4 In relation to the 'Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children' Initial Scoping Board, the Committee agreed that there is sufficient merit in a review of the areas identified by the Board. The Committee therefore RESOLVED to:

- (1) Appoint Councillors Field, Webb and Whetstone to conduct a review of the Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children; and

- (2) Appoint Councillor Field to act as Chair of the Review Board.

Suggested Topics

22.5 The Committee reviewed the list of suggested topics on its Work Programme and RESOLVED to:

- (1) remove the 'CQC Area Review' suggested topic. The Committee noted that the Changing Care Market review is considering key aspects of this subject area.
- (2) Elective Home Education. The Committee agreed to keep this item as a potential scrutiny topic as the Government has not yet responded to the outcome of its consultation with Local Authorities.
- (3) Isolation/Loneliness. The Committee were informed that a briefing on the impact of the Government's recently published national strategy document is being prepared for Members.

Reference Groups

22.6 Councillor Ungar provided the Committee with an update on the matters discussed at the last meeting of the East Sussex Better Together Strategic Commissioning Board.

Future Committee Agenda Items

22.7 The Committee noted the items listed for its future committee meetings.

23 UPDATE REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCALITY WORKING

23.1 Following a request made at its previous meeting, the Committee considered an update report on progress with the implementation of locality working. The report was introduced by the Integrated Care System Strategic Development Manager who highlighted a number of key issues to the Committee, including:

- that the service has undergone a complex process which has sought to identify the best approach to achieving financial recovery and future system sustainability.
- that following independent reviews, the critical operational focus for locality working for 2018/19 and 2019/20 will be to better enable:
 - Performance management of patient flows
 - Oversight of care coordination and proactive case management
 - The contribution to be made at a local level to achieving system wide financial stability.
- A review of the Locality Networks was undertaken in August 2018 to see if they were meeting their intended aim and inform how the networks could be improved. There was unanimous feedback that the network meetings were considered successful and were valued as an opportunity to network, share ideas and learning about what is happening in the local area, and build relationships, partnerships and collaborative working.
- That work is now being undertaken to revise and reset the Department's ESBT plans for delivering further integration. This reset exercise will set out the programmes of work that will deliver measurable change over the next 6-18 months.

23.2 The Committee welcomed the report. A summary of the key discussion points is set out below:

- In response to a question raised by the Committee, it was clarified that the Locality Link Worker (LLW) team don't work directly with clients. Instead the LLW team work as a bridge between Locality Planning and Deliver Groups (LPDG) and the wider Locality Networks (which bring together local people, organisations and communities to share relevant knowledge, insight and experience).
- In response to a query about the type of work undertaken by locality teams, the Committee were provided with the example of the practical steps being taken to engage local GPs in a dialogue which aims to improve signposting to appropriate services and community based support.

23.3 RESOLVED – the Committee agreed to note:

- (1) the progress made to date and the need to prioritise the health and care workforce on implementing key measurable improvements to integrated community services to support financial recovery, in partnership with General Practice and the Voluntary Community Sector (VCS); and
- (2) the intention to review locality working arrangements in 6 months to collectively agree what will add further value in managing patient flow, care coordination and proactive case management, and the contribution of localities to achieving system wide financial sustainability.

The meeting ended at 4.35pm.

Councillor Angharad Davies
Chair