

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee held in the Council Chamber at County Hall, Lewes on 26 September 2016.

Present	Councillors Kathryn Field (Chair), Stephen Shing (Vice Chair), Peter Charlton, Claire Dowling, Kim Forward, Roy Galley, Alan Shuttleworth and Barry Taylor. Dr Ann Holt (Church of England Representative) Simon Parr (Roman Catholic Diocese Representative) Councillor Julian Peterson (Borough and District Representative) Nicola Boulter (Parent Governor Representative).
Lead Members:	Councillor Sylvia Tidy (Lead Member Children & Families / designated statutory Lead Member for Children's Services); Councillor Nick Bennett (Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability)
Other Members	Councillor David Elkin (Deputy Leader of the Council and Lead Member for Resources),
Also present	Becky Shaw, Chief Executive, Stuart Gallimore, Director of Children's Services; Louise Carter, Assistant Director (Communication, Planning and Performance) Liz Rugg, Assistant Director (Early Help and Social Care) Fiona Wright, Assistant Director (Education & ISEND), Amanda Watson, Planning and Performance Manager, Mark Whiffin, Head of Finance, Samantha Williams, Assistant Director (Planning, Performance and Engagement), Tania Riedel, Youth Offending Team Manager, Lucy Spencer, Strategy and Partnership Officer, Reg Hooke, Independent Chair of the LSCB, Douglas Sinclair, Head of Children's Safeguards & Quality Assurance, Sally Williams, LSCB Manager, Caroline McKiddie, Partnership Manager: Education, Employment & Training. Stuart McKeown, Senior Democratic Services Advisor.

9 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27 JUNE 2016

9.1 RESOLVED – to confirm as a correct record the minutes of the last Committee meeting held on 27 June 2016.

10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

10.1 It was noted that Councillor Peter Charlton was substituting for Councillor Francis Whetstone.

11 URGENT ITEMS

11.1 No urgent items were notified.

12 RECONCILING POLICY, PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES (RPPR) 2016/17

12.1 The Chief Executive, Becky Shaw, and the Director of Children's Services, Stuart Gallimore, introduced the report by providing an overview of the context of the current RPPR process.

12.2 The Committee then discussed the areas of search before them and sought more information about the following items:

- Revenue Budget. The Committee asked for more detailed information about progress with Children's Services review of all its costs across the department (which it is undertaking in response to a projected overspend for the year of approximately £4million);
- Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability (ISEND). Further clarification was sought regarding the increased costs the ISEND service is experiencing. The Committee were specifically interested in:
 - whether more could be done to manage public expectations about the level of special educational needs support available; and
 - delays in converting statements to Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and the additional costs this may incur.
- Mental Health and Young People. More detail was requested about the impact of the savings plan on the provision of services relating to Mental Health and Young People. In particular the Committee asked about progress with the integration of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHs) with the local Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs).
- Children's Centres. Further clarification was requested about the impact of the savings plan on Children's Centres. In particular, the Committee asked for more information about the extent of the integration between Children's and Health Services and whether more could be done to maximize this collaboration.
- Troubled Families. More detail was requested about the impact of the savings plan on the delivery of services for Troubled Families.

12.3 RESOLVED to:

- 1) agree the key areas of interest/lines of enquiry for scrutiny as set out in paragraph 12.2 and to ensure these are reflected in the Committee's future work programme.
- 2) establish a scrutiny review board to consider the developing portfolio plans and savings proposals as they emerge in December and to submit scrutiny's final comments on them to Cabinet in January 2017.

13 ANNUAL REVIEW OF SAFER COMMUNITIES PERFORMANCE

13.1 Samantha Williams, Assistant Director (Planning, Performance and Engagement) introduced the report and highlighted to the Committee some of the specific work streams within the East Sussex Safer Communities Partnership Business Plan for 2016/17 to 2018/19. Within the 'Serious Organised Crime' work stream this included, for example, a Sussex Police led awareness-raising campaign relating to vulnerable young people and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE). This campaign focused on helping parents and relevant professionals who come into

contact with young people (as well as young people themselves) understand both what CSE is and how they can help prevent abuse from happening. The campaign reached a wide audience with, for example, over a million views by adults and young people of billboards and other material placed in public spaces.

13.2 Lucy Spencer (Strategy and Partnership Officer) updated the Committee about duties introduced in July 2015, which included requirements relating to increased levels of partnership working. The Committee were also provided with an overview of activities undertaken by the Council in response to these new duties. This included detail about:

- the establishment of a Prevent Board in East Sussex. The Board is made up of specified bodies, including the Probation and Youth Offending services and Borough and District Councils. On an annual basis the Board considers the recommendations made to it via the Counter Terrorism Local Profile, which is drawn up every year by Sussex Police. East Sussex is a low priority level area for violent extremism and radicalization. So whilst a significant work has been undertaken to comply with the new duties, East Sussex County Council has not had to deal with the high number of referrals experienced by some other local authorities.
- training has been provided to East Sussex County Council staff, local district and borough council officers and colleagues within Public Health. Schools have also been provided with significant levels of support as this is a new area for them.
- Referral mechanisms have been established where there is a concern about extremism. Referrals are made in accordance with the 'Channel Programme' (Channel is a national programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism). For children it has been established that referrals are made via the Council's Single Point of Advice mechanism (a 'Single Point of Advice' team has been put in place by the Council for managing all initial contacts to Children's Services. The aim of this being to help the Department respond efficiently so that children and their families are provided with support and interventions quickly).
- Resources have been dedicated to ensuring that IT equipment within the Council and in schools have the appropriate filters in place.
- Over 40 young people have been referred to the Prevent board. However, none of the young people in this group met the threshold for a 'Channel' intervention.
- A pilot programme called 'Think, Protect, Connect' has been developed. This programme takes young people through a six-part workshop that looks at identity, a sense of belonging, challenging online messages and understanding what propaganda is. The workshop will be delivered to 30 schools next year. It is hoped to have the programme cited on the Department for Education's website for other schools nationally to have access to.
- A 40 minute e-learning module has been developed for use by Children's Services staff and voluntary organisations.

13.3 The Committee welcomed the report and discussed a number of items. A summary of the key discussion points and responses from officers are set out below:

- The Committee asked whether some of the future actions summarized within the work streams were specific enough and whether greater clarity could be provided in future. In response, the Committee were informed by Samantha Williams that as next year's Plan is developed it will be possible to provide more detail regarding targets and benchmarks.
- A further question was asked about what advice was being provided to young people about the inappropriate/unsafe use of mobile phones. In response, it was explained that whilst there is an element of personal responsibility here,

work (within the Road Safety work stream) is being undertaken to develop an understanding of the behaviour of young people within specified high risk groups. This understanding could then be used to develop strategies that would aim to positively influence young people's behaviour and hopefully reduce the risk that, for example, they are involved in a road accident as a result of being distracted by using their mobile phone.

- More information was requested about the reason behind the positive statistic that the numbers of young people being held in custody overnight was reducing. In response, Tania Riedel (Youth Offending Team Manager) explained that the fall in this figure was the result in part of early intervention activities being undertaken by the Police and in partnership with the Youth Offending team. Such interventions might involve, for example, community resolution/restorative justice type activities that mean the need to detain a young person in a police cell is avoided. Furthermore, and to avoid an overnight stay, if a young person is unavoidably held in a police cell, work is undertaken to place them in an appropriate and safe environment as quickly as possible.

13.4 RESOLVED – 1) to note the performance in 2015/16 and the priorities and issues identified for 2016/17.

2) that due to the levels of scrutiny work already under way, to not add any further specific items to the Committee's work programme at this time, but to review the situation after the local elections next spring.

14 LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN'S BOARD (LSCB) ANNUAL REPORT

14.1 Reg Hooke, Independent Chair of the East Sussex Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) introduced the annual report for 2015/16 by providing an overview of the key issues covered therein. This included reference to Section 1 of the report which provides an overview of the most vulnerable groups in East Sussex. Mr Hooke highlighted that this section includes data indicating positive trends relating to both reductions in the numbers of children on Protection Plans and in the numbers of Looked After Children.

14.2 The Committee thanked the LSCB for the accessible nature of the report and the clear way in which key information was presented. The Committee then discussed a range of issues and asked a number of questions, a summary of which is provided below:

- **Electively Home Educated Children.** The Committee noted the increase in the numbers of children being home educated. Whilst the Committee recognised the right of parents to home educate and that this in itself is not a risk factor for abuse or neglect, some members noted that there is a risk these children can become invisible to local services. In response, the Committee heard that the LSCB have scrutinized this subject area and that the Board were reassured by the effective approach being taken by the Local Authority to conduct appropriate risk assessments.
- **Substance Misuse.** The Committee noted there has been a 10% increase in the number of young people presenting to treatment services. This is in contrast to the 7% reduction in young people's treatment presentations at the national level. In response, the Committee were informed that the LSCB share the Committee's concerns about this increase and that as a result, the Board will be considering this issue in more detail. The Committee were also informed that the Children's Services Department recognise the importance of reducing the rates of substance misuse amongst young people and that the Department will be working closely with colleagues in Public Health to improve outcomes.
- **Chelsea's Choice.** The Committee asked whether the production would be rolled out more widely to schools across the county (Chelsea's Choice is a 40

minute production performed to children aged 12 years and over by the AlterEgo Theatre Company and highlights issues relating to child sexual exploitation). The Committee also asked whether members could view the production themselves. In response Douglas Sinclair, explained that the 'Chelsea's Choice' is a production funded by Eastbourne Borough Council and that discussions are ongoing with other borough and district council's to have the production shown at other schools in those areas. As it is a production and not a video, the actors involved are able to take part in a question and answer session with the children viewing the production. This helps the production have an effective impact on its audience. Subject to the agreement of the institution acting as host, an undertaking was also given to notify members of the Committee when future performances of the production were taking place locally.

14.3 RESOLVED to –

- 1) Note the report; and
- 2) Where appropriate, that members are to be notified of when 'Chelsea's Choice' was being performed at local schools so that Committee member attendance could be arranged.

15 RAISING THE PARTICIPATION AGE MONITORING REPORT

15.1 The Committee established a 'Raising the Participation Age' (RPA) Review Board to examine if East Sussex County Council was meeting relevant statutory duties and whether improvements could be made to increase the levels of participation of young people in education, employment and training. The report updated the Committee on the Action Plan adopted by the Children's Services Department following the presentation of the final report to Cabinet in January 2016. Fiona Wright (Assistant Director) and Caroline McKiddie (Participation Manager Education, Employment & Training) welcomed the progress highlighted within the report and provided an overview of some of the key developments since this item was last considered by the Committee.

15.2 In response the Committee welcomed the report and raised a number of questions in relation to the Action Plan (set out in Appendix 2 of the report). A summary of the Committee's questions, together with responses from the Department are set out below:

- **Investors in Careers (IIC).** The Committee noted the high number of secondary schools that have achieved IIC accreditation. However, it was noted that a number of schools are due for review and the Committee asked for clarification as to whether this had been taken on board by the relevant schools. It was also noted that a number of academies did not appear to have engaged with the Council over IIC accreditation and that there appears to be a lack of information about the engagement of Colleges. The Committee therefore asked if it could be provided with further information on these points. In response, the Committee were informed there is an officer who devotes a substantial amount of their time to support the re-accreditation process and so this is being actively worked on. A further development is that the Department for Education (DfE) are bringing out statutory advice which it is hoped will include guidance on kite-marking in this area. It is hoped therefore that good levels of engagement will continue given both the officer support on offer and revised statutory guidance.
- **Governor Champions.** The Committee asked for an update regarding progress with appointing Governor Champions and whether, if further Champions were in place, this could also help increase the number of institutions seeking IIC accreditation. In response, the Committee were informed that the Department had undertaken a number of activities to promote the role of the Governor Champion. This included attending a

number of governor briefings and contributing to governor newsletters. There is also Department for Education guidance which the Children's Services Department anticipate will support its work in this area. However, as things stand further developmental and promotional work relating to the Governor Champion role is required.

- **Employability Passport.** Given the Employability Passport pilot had now finished, the Committee asked for feedback about the effectiveness of the project. In response it was explained that the project had been successful and was well-received by young people. However, as the project was paper-based many of the young people involved expressed a strong preference for an online option. With this in mind, the Committee were informed that the Department are exploring the possibility of using a system employed by Sussex Downs College called 'Mozilla Badges' and that meetings to discuss this were imminent. Overall therefore the feedback is that the Passport is viewed as useful and that it is wanted, but that it needs to be more accessible.
- **Careers Fair.** The Committee wanted to know about the impact of Careers Fairs and whether schools are engaging with this process. In response, it was explained that the Department had received mixed views about the effectiveness of Careers Fairs, with some being more viewed as more successful than others. The general feedback was that Careers Fairs need to be more engaging. One way of achieving this could be to arrange a Careers Fair involving the Enterprise Adviser Network. This would allow businesses to be involved with the process and would help make such events more relevant and engaging.
- **Placements for Young People.** The Committee welcomed the increase in the number of Young People who have been offered a work placement. However, the Committee asked for clarification on whether further places were still required.
- **Post 16 Travel Support.** With regard to Recommendation 7, the Committee asked for details of the numbers of young people who took up the bursary funds on offer to help improve access to post-16 provision. In response, the Committee were informed that the Department do not have access to data on this as this is information held by the Education Funding Agency. The Committee were also informed about early discussions relating to the possibility of making post-16 provision more accessible. The Committee asked for feedback on these discussions.

15.3 RESOLVED: to ask for further feedback on the issues raised in paragraph 15.2 when this item is brought back to the Committee for its 12 month monitoring report.

16 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

16.1 The Committee reviewed its work programme, noting the following:

- At its November meeting the Committee will be provided with an update on the county-wide roll out of the Integrated Progress Review pilot (this relates to Recommendation 2 of the Action Plan produced by the Children's Services Department in response to the recommendations arising from the Scrutiny Review of Early Years Attainment).
- The 12 month monitoring report on the implementation of the recommendations arising from the Scrutiny Review of Raising the Participation Age is scheduled to be considered by the Committee at its March meeting.

16.2 RESOLVED to update the work programme in line with paragraphs 12.3, 13.4, 14.3 and 15.3.

17 FORWARD PLAN

17.1 The Committee noted the Forward Plan for the period 1 September to 31 December 2016.

(The meeting ended at 11.40 am).

The date of the next meeting is Monday 28 November 2016.

COUNCILLOR KATHRYN FIELD
Chair

This page is intentionally left blank