

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee held at Council Chamber, County Hall, Lewes on 28 November 2016.

Present Councillors Kathryn Field (Chair), Stephen Shing (Vice Chair), Jim Sheppard, Claire Dowling, Kim Forward, Roy Galley, Mike Pursglove, Alan Shuttleworth and Barry Taylor.

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 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), Mark Whiffin, Head of Finance, Ruth Szulecki, Early Years Development Manager.

Stuart McKeown, Senior Democratic Services Adviser.

18 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 SEPTEMBER 2016

18.1 RESOLVED – to confirm as a correct record the minutes of the last Committee meeting held on 26 September 2016.

19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

19.1 Apologies were received from Dr Ann Holt (Church of England Representative). It was also noted that Councillor Jim Sheppard was substituting for Councillor Francis Whetstone.

20 URGENT ITEMS

20.1 No urgent items were notified.

21 RECONCILING POLICY, PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES (RPPR)

21.1 The Director of Children's Services, Stuart Gallimore, introduced the report by providing an overview of the context of the current RPPR process.

21.2 The Committee then discussed the areas of search before them and reiterated their request that written responses be provided to the items raised at its meeting in September. These items are listed below, together with any further requests raised at the November meeting of the Committee:

- **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);
- **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. In particular, the Committee noted the Department's comments about the scope for making further improvements for the 0-5 age group within this service area and the Early Help service. The Committee therefore asked for further information from the Department regarding its plans for this age group in relation to these two services.
- **Looked After Children.** The Committee were concerned about the reference under the Impact Assessment column for this service which indicates that the proposed reduction in staffing levels will mean there is an increased risk of young people being subjected to Child Sexual Exploitation. Further clarification was therefore sought from the Department about this proposed area of savings and their potential impact.
- **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.
 - In addition to this, and following the discussion about the overspend for the ISEND budget, the Committee requested that a report be brought to its March meeting setting out in more detail the reasons behind the high level of demand the ISEND service is experiencing.

21.3 The Committee also discussed a number of other issues. A summary of these issues, together with responses from officers are set out below:

- **Troubled Families.** The Committee were informed that a total of 1,382 families had been engaged by the Troubled Families service, with 505 'payment by results' agreed by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). It was explained that 'payment by results' refers to a scheme whereby local authorities can claim funding from the DCLG when it can be shown an intervention by the local authority has resulted in pre-determined positive outcomes for the family which received assistance. In response to a request for clarification about how positive outcomes are assessed, the Committee were informed that the Department have an outcomes framework which identifies the improvements a family need to make to enable a claim to be made by the

authority. It was also clarified that for some outcomes evidence is needed to show that the outcomes are sustained over a given period of time e.g school attendance levels.

- Music Service. It was clarified to the Committee that it is legitimate for schools to use the pupil premium to part-fund music lessons for children on free school meals.
- Home to School Transport. In response to a query, it was clarified that the Department continues to monitor the impact of the savings already made to this budget. Furthermore, the Committee were informed that the Department is reviewing transport arrangements for children that are transported to school because they cannot walk safely to school. This review includes, for example, considering whether footpaths and bridleways could be used in some areas as safe home to school walking routes.
- Locality services. A question was raised as to whether staff in the Early Help hub would have the relevant experience and knowledge to effectively redirect families. In response, the Department confirmed that staff are provided with training and support to ensure that all families are provided with appropriate advice and guidance.

21.4 RESOLVED to:

- 1) to request that the additional information requested at the September meeting, together with the further requests outlined above in paragraph 21.2, be provided to the Committee for the RPPR Board meeting on 13 December 2016; and
- 2) that the work programme be amended to include reference to the Committee's request that a report providing more detail about the reasons behind the high level of demand the ISEND service is experiencing be brought to its March 2017.

22 SCRUTINY REVIEW OF EARLY YEARS ATTAINMENT

22.1 The Committee were provided with an update on the implementation of the Integrated Progress Review for children aged 27 months.

22.2 The Committee noted the report.

23 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

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

- that in relation to minute 21.4 (3), a report providing more detail about the reasons behind the high level of demand the ISEND service is experiencing be brought to the March 2017 meeting of the Committee.

24 FORWARD PLAN

24.1 The Committee noted the Forward Plan for the period 1 November 2016 to 28 February 2017.

(The meeting ended at 11.25 am)