

PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the People Scrutiny Committee held in the Council Chamber - County Hall, Lewes on 7 March 2019.

PRESENT Councillors Charles Clark, Angharad Davies (Chair), Michael Ensor, Roy Galley, Tom Liddiard, Laurie Loe, John Ungar (Vice Chair), Trevor Webb, Francis Whetstone.

Simon Parr (Catholic Diocese Representative)
Mandy Watson (Diocese of Chichester Representative)
Nicola Boulter (Parent Governor Representative)

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.

ALSO PRESENT Becky Shaw, Chief Executive
Keith Hinkley, Director of Adult Social Care and Health
Samantha Williams, Assistant Director of Planning, Performance and Engagement
Kenny McKay, Strategic Commissioning Manager (Mental Health)
Stuart Gallimore, Director of Children's Services
Fiona Wright, Assistant Director (Education & ISEND)
Mark Whiffin, Head of Finance
Catherine Dooley, Senior Manager: Standards and Learning Effectiveness (5-19)
Stuart McKeown, Senior Democratic Services Adviser

24 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

24.1 RESOLVED: to agree the minutes of the previous meeting.

25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

25.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Kathryn Field and Jim Sheppard, Matthew Jones, Parent Governor Representative, and Trevor Cristin, Diocese of Chichester representative.

26 DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS

26.1 Councillor Webb declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest as he is a Trustee of Invest St Leonards (with regard to Agenda item 5 and item 28 of these Minutes).

27 URGENT ITEMS

27.1 There were none.

28 BRIEFING ON PREVENTION

28.1 The Director of Adult Social Care and Health introduced this discussion item by providing an overview to the Committee of some of the most significant prevention issues facing the Council. In the context of the NHS Long Term Plan this included:

- **Financial challenges.** The financial pressures on local government mean resources are becoming increasingly focused on meeting immediate eligible need and targeted prevention, as set out in the Core Offer.
- **Public Health Grant.** The grant continues to be ring-fenced and work is underway through the Reconciling Policy Performance and Resources process to ensure the County Council's investments are achieving the best possible health and wellbeing outcomes for East Sussex residents and deliver the Core Offer.
- **Challenges with providing evidence of the benefits of investments in prevention.** Justifying investment in preventative services is not straightforward due to the difficulty in attributing improvements in health and wellbeing to specific initiatives. For example, evidence indicates that social isolation can impact on mental health and well-being, but this does not necessarily equate to investment in these areas directly reducing demand for support from statutory services. Furthermore, prevention initiatives often take a long time to produce noticeable results. For example, reducing obesity in children is only likely to have a significant impact over a twenty year plus timeframe.

28.2 Further points were made in response to questions from the Committee:

- **Evidence base for the Department's initiatives.** In seeking to understand both the need for support and the impact of its initiatives, the Committee were informed that the Department relies on a range of different data sources for its information. For example, the Department employs a quantitative method which helps it develop evidence-based initiatives. A key source of this data is the Joint Strategic Needs and Assets Assessment (JSNAA) tool. The Department also values feedback from the public. Various mechanisms are therefore employed to help engage with individuals and record their views on what they think might make a difference.
- **Partnership working and prevention.** The Department acknowledged that prevention is a complex area involving a range of different agencies and that this can be confusing for individual service users. However, and within its financial and legal constraints, a key strategy for the Department is the development of good working relationships with other agencies. For example, the Department is working with Borough and District Councils to improve pathways. With regard to individuals needing assistance, Committee Members were also encouraged to visit the Health and Social Care Connect website and also direct members of the public to this platform. This website offers both the public and professionals a single point of access for adult health and social care enquiries, assessments, services and referrals.

28.3 RESOLVED: to note the report.

29 UPDATE ON COMMISSIONED COMMUNITY PROVISION (MENTAL HEALTH)) COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES EAST SUSSEX BETTER TOGETHER (ESBT) MH TRANSFORMATIONAL CARE

29.1 The report was introduced by the Strategic Commissioning Manager (Mental Health) who provided further detail about the different elements within this service area.

29.2 The Committee welcomed the report and in response to specific questions, the following responses were provided to Members of the Committee:

- with regard to Peer Support, Members were informed that providers of peer support can be paid staff who may also have other roles at Southdown House. They can also be volunteers (who have access to an accredited Level 2 Peer Mentoring Training course).
- with regard to the amber status for the Personality Disorder service, the Committee were informed that building full membership had been a lengthier process than originally anticipated. However, the Department believes it is now on course to achieve full membership this spring.
- With regard to the amber status for the Staying Well service, the Department plans to undertake more work to promote the benefits of the service among clinical teams. This in turn, it is hoped, will increase the rate of referrals.

29.3 RESOLVED: to note the report.

30 SCRUTINY REVIEW - CHANGING CARE MARKET: INFORMATION AND SIGNPOSTING

30.1 The People Scrutiny Committee had previously agreed to undertake a series of planned scrutiny reviews which would look at challenges relating to the changing care market. With this in mind, a Board was established to undertake a review of issues relating to 'Information and Signposting'. The Board consisted of Councillors Angharad Davies, Michael Ensor, Roy Galley, John Ungar and Jim Sheppard. Councillor Ensor was elected as the Chair of the Review Board.

30.2 Councillor Ensor introduced the report by discussing the context of the review and highlighting some of the Board's key findings. This included highlighting the review's focus on the area of public expectations and understanding of the care market and the Council's role in providing information, advice and signposting.

30.3 The report was welcomed by both the Committee and the Department.

30.4 RESOLVED:

to agree the report of the Review Board and to submit the report to Cabinet 23 April 2019 for comment and to Full Council for approval on 14 May 2019.

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

31.1 The Committee discussed its input into the Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources process and possible future improvements. The Committee's comments included:

- some Members would like more information to understand the potential impact of proposed savings.
- other Members commented on the support officers had provided to them and that individual Members are able to ask Departments for more detail if there is a specific area they have an interest in.

31.2 RESOLVED - the Committee agreed to note the report.

32 PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

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

Current Scrutiny Reviews

32.2 In relation to the ongoing series of reviews relating to the changing care market, the Committee agreed that a 'Adult Social Care Workforce' Review Board should be established. The review will focus on issues relating to:

- the recruitment and retention challenges in the independent sector; and
- with regard to future workforce needs, the effectiveness of the Council's partnership with other organisations such as schools and colleges.

32.3 The Committee therefore RESOLVED to:

- (1) Appoint Councillors Clarke, Ensor, Ungar and Webb to conduct a scrutiny review of issues relating to the Adult Social Care Workforce.
- (2) Appoint Councillor Webb to act as Chair of the Changing Care Market: Adult Social Care Workforce Review Board.
- (3) Agree the Terms of Reference for the review.

32.4 With regard to the ongoing scrutiny review of Support for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, the Committee were provided with an overview by Councillor Webb of some of the key developments to date.

32.5 In relation to the Scrutiny Review of Schools Coping with Change, the Committee agreed the wording of a letter to be signed by Councillor Davies and subsequently despatched to the Secretary of State for Education. In accordance with Recommendation 1 of the final report of the scrutiny review, the letter seeks clarification from the Secretary of State regarding his stance on the academy programme and the promotion of formal partnership arrangements.

Suggested Topics

32.6 In response to recent reports in the national media, the Committee discussed knife crime and its potential links to young people who are permanently excluded from school. Following further discussion, the Committee agreed that its primary focus is a concern about the numbers of young people who are not being educated in a formal school setting in East Sussex.

32.7 In response, the Director of Children's Services acknowledged the Committee's concerns regarding both permanent exclusion and knife crime and the potential impact both issues can have on young people and the wider community. However, and based on information supplied by Sussex Police, the current evidence available to the Department does not indicate that East Sussex is disproportionately affected by knife crime. The Director also noted that the causes of knife crime are complex. Nonetheless the Department does consider knife crime to be a serious issue and recognises that this is a significant concern for many young people in the county. The Director also suggested to the Committee that if there were to be a scrutiny review, the most effective area for the Committee to focus its attention on would be the challenges relating to permanent exclusion.

32.8 In response to the Director's comments, the Committee requested that the Department provides Members with data relating to the rates of exclusion and school attendance in the county.

32.9 RESOLVED to:

request the Children's Services Department to provide the information set out in paragraph 32.8.

32.10 Elective Home Education: The Committee agreed to retain this item as a potential scrutiny topic and were informed that a Private Member's Bill is due for its next reading imminently (March 2019). The Committee was also informed that the Department expects new guidance to follow the Bill.

Reference Groups - Strategic Commissioning Review of Early Help Reference Group

32.11 The Committee was informed that the next meeting of this group will take place on 14 May 2019. The meeting would provide an opportunity for the Members of the Reference Group to feed a scrutiny perspective into the review process (ahead of the Lead Member for Children and Families considering the findings of the strategic review and taking a decision as to whether to proceed with a consultation on the draft Children's Services Early Help Strategy on 20 May 2019).

Future Committee Agenda Items

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

33 STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE) ANNUAL REPORT - TO FOLLOW.

33.1 Councillor Roy Galley, as Chair of the Standing Advisory Committee on Religious Education (SACRE), introduced the report and highlighted a number of issues for the attention of the Committee.

33.2 The key issue discussed by the Committee related to SACRE's views regarding 'the level and range' of religious education (RE) provision in some secondary schools in East Sussex. SACRE is clear that it has been provided with evidence that a number of secondary schools in the county are performing well in this respect. However, SACRE also believes some schools may not be meeting the required standard for the provision of RE. As a result, and in order to inform further monitoring and support in this area, the Committee were informed that SACRE will work on putting together a strong evidence base of standards and provision in schools for its next meeting in June 2019.

33.3 In support of SACRE's initiatives in this area, some Members of the Committee expressed concern over what they believe may be a de-valuing of RE at some schools. In response, the Department informed the Committee that whilst it can provide some limited support and guidance in this area, it is a matter for individual schools to determine how they approach RE provision. The Department therefore welcomes the initiative of an academy Headteacher who has undertaken to lead a discussion on this subject with their fellow school leaders. It is hoped that the results of this discussion will provide a firmer evidence base, which in turn will allow for a more informed discussion about RE provision at the secondary level.

33.4 In response to a question about whether SACRE had been 'short changed' regarding its funding, the Committee was informed that funding for SACRE comes from the Central Schools Block and that there are no further proposed reductions in service spend.

33.5 RESOLVED to note:

- i) the work of SACRE in supporting schools and improving the quality of religious education, especially in maintained Secondary schools; and
- ii) the three year Development Plan for SACRE.

The meeting ended at 1.07 pm.

Councillor Angharad Davies
Chair