

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee held at County Hall, Lewes on 21 March 2016.

Present Councillors Kathryn Field (Chair), Angharad Davies, Claire Dowling, Michael Ensor, Roy Galley, Stephen Shing (Vice Chair) and Alan Shuttleworth.

Councillor Johanna Howell (District and Borough Council Representative) Simon Parr (Roman Catholic Diocese Representative) and 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 Councillors David Elkin (Deputy Leader of the Council and Lead Member for Resources) and Councillor Rosalyn St Pierre.

Also present Stuart Gallimore, Director of Children's Services; Louise Carter, Assistant Director (Communication, Planning and Performance), Louisa Havers, (Head of Performance and Engagement – Adult Social Care); Mark Whiffin, Head of Finance and Julie Dougill, Senior Manager, Leadership and Governor Services.

Temporary Chief Superintendent, Diane Roskilly and PC Caroline Adams (Youth Attendance Division), Sussex Police.

Stuart McKeown, Senior Democratic Services Advisor.

1 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23 NOVEMBER 2015

1.1 RESOLVED – to confirm as a correct record the minutes of the last Committee meeting held on 23 November 2015.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Peter Charlton, Councillor Kim Forward and Dr Anne Holt (Church of England Diocese Representative).

3 URGENT ITEMS

3.1 No urgent matters were notified.

4 SUSSEX LOCAL POLICING MODEL AND YOUNG PEOPLE

4.1 Temporary Chief Superintendent Diane Roskilly and PC Caroline Adams (Youth Attendance

Division) provided an update on the Sussex Local Policing Model, with particular reference to young people. This followed a request made by the Committee at its meeting in September 2015 at which Members expressed concern about the impact of proposed Sussex Police budget savings on community policing. In particular, the Committee felt community policing had helped prevent young people from becoming involved in criminal activity and was a valuable source of intelligence for the Police. The Committee were therefore interested to learn more about those aspects of Sussex Police's plans for community policing which might affect young people.

4.2 The update from Temporary Chief Superintendent Di Roskilly and PC Caroline Adams included the following comments:

- Whilst the government had announced that additional savings of £60 million would not be required, Sussex Police still need to achieve savings totalling £35 million (which follows a total of £50 million of savings already made).
- Given the scale of the savings and that 80% of the budget is spent on staff, no area of policing will be untouched. The additional savings need to be achieved at a time of increased demand for resources relating to cyber-crime, counter-terrorism, fire arms officers and combating child sexual exploitation (CSE).
- To enable it to achieve its core goal of catching criminals and protecting the vulnerable at a time of significantly reduced resources, Sussex Police are developing a strategy of reducing demand. In support of this, for example, the force have a Resolution Centre (which employs experienced staff) which, where appropriate to do so, aims to deal with issues at source, rather than always despatching officers to attend to the caller in person.
- Sussex Police are changing the role of its Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs). This change means PCSOs will be upskilled so they have more ability and powers to tackle problem solving in local communities. For example, they will have more powers around young people and licensing so they will be better placed to deal with under-age drinking. Also PCSOs will be deployed in a more targeted manner, based on intelligence and where there is a perceived, 'Threat, Harm and Risk'.
- An 'investigations framework' is also being introduced which will give officers more discretion as to what course of action they should take in response to an incident which they have been called on to attend. So, for example, in the past an arrest would normally have been made where parents had called the police because of their teenage child's aggressive behaviour at home. This would have happened even if the parent had only wanted the police in attendance so as to calm the situation. In future, police officers will take into account the wishes of the parent as to whether an arrest is necessary.
- With regard to young people, the principle of treating children as children first and not unnecessarily criminalising them will be fundamental. Building trust and confidence with young people is vital and one of the areas this has been achieved is via schools officers. Sussex Police are therefore currently looking at that role and how this can be taken forward into the future.
- Missing Children. There are a large number of 'out of area' children placed in Sussex. Significant work is being done therefore with partner agencies so as to ensure Sussex Police are aware of the young people in the area and that appropriate risk assessments are made.
- Looked After Children. This is an area the service are focusing on. Operation Stepping Stone has been recently launched to help raise awareness amongst officers of the specific problems children in care face. The aim being to avoid unnecessarily criminalising children in this group.
- Cyber Crime and Young People. This is a growth area and one where the Police and Crime Commissioner has, at a time of savings for other areas, increased resources for. This increase in resource has resulted in the expansion of the force's specialist investigation units where officers deal with child abuse cases and serious sexual offences.

4.3 Temporary Chief Superintendent Di Roskilly concluded her remarks by saying Sussex Police are facing significant savings and need to re-shape its services. However the service is confident that as it reduces demand it will be able to provide an effective service that is available to people

when they need it and protect those that are most vulnerable. Sussex Police also appreciate that all agencies are having to operate with reduced resources. The service therefore will continue to maintain and build upon the excellent local partnerships it has with other agencies in Sussex to try and ensure no child or young person 'falls through the gap'.

4.4. The Committee thanked both Temporary Chief Superintendent Di Roskilly and PC Caroline Adams for their comments and discussed a number of issues, which included:

- In response to a request for more detailed information about the extent of emerging threats, such as cybercrime, the Committee were informed that detailed statistical data was not available for the meeting. However, evidence indicates that young people exhibit similar types of behaviour both on and offline. This suggests therefore that recognising vulnerability is key and that targeting police resources at vulnerable young people would have the most impact. The Committee were also informed that 25% of all calls taken by the Police relate to children and young people and that the majority of these calls relate to vulnerability, rather than to criminal activity.
- A concern about police officers having discretion to close down investigations and whether this decision making process was subject to effective oversight. In response the Committee were informed that Sussex Police are trying to move away from a situation where too much supervision is provided and to trust in the professionalism of individual officers to make informed judgements about the best course of action. Officers would always have a 'Threat, Harm and Risk' approach informing their decision making process. They will also always take into account whether the incident involves a vulnerable person. The Committee were also assured that there would always be a supervisor on hand to provide support if needed.
- A general concern that some of the key benefits of community policing are under threat by the proposed re-focusing of police resources. These benefits include the production of intelligence and a role in helping to prevent young people from engaging in criminal activity. In response, the Committee were informed that Sussex Police will have in a place a named prevention team who will be multi-skilled and who local people will be able to call on. Sussex Police agree that community intelligence is extremely important and the service is therefore investigating other ways it can still maintain this communication with local people.
- A request was made for further statistical information to be circulated to the Committee outside of the meeting. The information requested included data on the number of missing young people in Sussex and the scale of CSE in Sussex.

5 RECONCILING POLICY, PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES (RPPR) 2015/16

5.1 The Committee were invited to review its input into the Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources process and to identify any lessons for future improvements. The Committee were reminded by the Chair that the item before them was an opportunity to comment on the process itself and, for example, the quality of the information presented to them.

5.2 **RESOLVED:** It was resolved to agree that the information provided to the Committee was sufficient and that overall the Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources process functioned well.

6 STANDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

6.1 Councillor Roy Galley as Chair of the Standing Advisory Committee on Religious Education (SACRE) introduced the report and highlighted a number of key issues, which included:

- There is an increased work programme this year given the statutory requirement to perform a review of the syllabus.
- A number of national developments, including the Government's White Paper 'Educational Excellence Everywhere'. It was noted that the white paper does not specifically mention religious education. Given this and the whitepaper's proposed increase in the number of academies, Councillor Galley also commented that this might in future create further uncertainty about access to religious education for young people.
- The variable levels of take up (and attainment) for the religious education GCSE.
- SACRE is hoping to carry out a significant number of school visits over the coming year (focusing on secondary schools), so as to develop an understanding of what the key are issues are from the perspective of both teachers and students with regard to the provision of religious education.

6.2 The Committee asked how the recommendations from SACRE will be applied to academies. In response the Committee were informed by Julie Dougill (Senior Manager, Leadership and Governor Services) that although the government whitepaper does not specifically mention religious education, it does reference the national curriculum. It is therefore anticipated that more detailed work on this area by the government may address this point in due course. Furthermore, many academies in East Sussex are following the agreed syllabus.

6.3 The Committee commented on the widely varying levels of take up of the Religious Education GCSE course at different schools in East Sussex. In response, Julie Dougill informed the Committee that it was accepted that there is a concern on this point and that this was one of the reasons why SACRE had decided to focus on secondary schools.

6.4 RESOLVED:- It was resolved to agree the recommendations of the report to:

- 1) note the work of SACRE in improving the quality of religious education, collective worship and pupils' spiritual, moral, social, cultural development and British Values 2015-2016;
- 2) note the ongoing three year development plan for SACRE; and
- 3) continue to support SACRE in its role in promoting British values.

7 CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

7.1 The Committee discussed the work programme and potential areas for future scrutiny reviews. The discussion included reference to the following items.

7.2 The Committee were informed that following an initial meeting, the Key Stage 1 Educational Attainment Review Board had decided to reduce the scope of the review with a view to producing two or three recommendations relating to a specific subject area within the Key Stage.

7.3 Away Day discussion. Whilst not part of the work programme, the Committee discussed arrangements for two future 'Away Days', out of which further scrutiny reviews might arise. The Committee agreed therefore that arrangements be made for the following sessions:

- July Away Day. Following on from the presentation by Sussex Police, the Committee expressed concerns about the potential safeguarding threats children and young people maybe being exposed to in relation to their online activities and associated issues relating to their mental health and well-being. The Committee asked therefore that an informal meeting (Away Day) be arranged at which these issues could be discussed.

- October Away Day. The Committee agreed it would like to discuss at an Away Day the Government White Paper 'Educational Excellence Everywhere'.

8 FORWARD PLAN

8.1 The Committee noted the Forward plan for the period 3 March to 30 June 2016.

(The meeting ended at 11.05 am)

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