

AT A MEETING of the Children and Young People Select Committee of
HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL held at The Castle, Winchester on
Wednesday, 18 September 2019

Chairman:
p Councillor Kirsty North

Vice-Chairman
p Councillor Ray Bolton

p Councillor Jackie Branson
p Councillor Ann Briggs
p Councillor Zilliah Brooks
p Councillor Fran Carpenter
p Councillor Peter Edgar MBE
a Councillor Marge Harvey
a Councillor Pal Hayre

p Councillor Wayne Irish
p Councillor Gavin James
p Councillor Neville Penman
p Councillor Jackie Porter
a Councillor Robert Taylor
p Councillor Malcolm Wade
p Councillor Michael Westbrook

Co-opted Members

p Ian Brewerton, Secondary School Parent Governor Representative
p Gareth Davies, Primary School Parent Governor Representative
p Robert Sanders, Church of England Schools Representative
VACANT, Special School Parent Governor Representative
VACANT Roman Catholic Schools Representative

In attendance at the invitation of the Chairman:

Councillor Patricia Stallard, Executive Lead Member for Children's Services and Young People
Councillor Roz Chadd, Executive Member for Education and Skills

101. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Harvey, Hayre and Taylor. Councillor Burgess was in attendance as the Conservative Deputy Member.

102. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter considered at the meeting they must declare that interest at the time of the relevant debate and, having regard to the circumstances described in Part 3, Paragraph 1.5 of the County Council's Members' Code of Conduct, leave the meeting while the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with Paragraph 1.6 of the Code. Furthermore Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Non-Pecuniary interest in a matter being considered at the meeting they

considered whether such interest should be declared, and having regard to Part 5, Paragraph 2 of the Code, considered whether it was appropriate to leave the meeting whilst the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with the Code.

No declarations were made.

103. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8 May 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Matters arising from the minutes:

It was noted that the title 'Councillor' was missing in the attendance list in relation to Gavin James and Kirsty North.

104. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations on this occasion.

105. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Pal Hayre and Councillor Peter Edgar onto the Children and Young People Select Committee.

The Chairman also announced that Ruth Snook had resigned as a special schools parent governor, and she extended her appreciation to Ruth for her contribution to the work of the Committee. The Chairman confirmed that nominations would be sought for a special schools parent governor to become a co-opted member of the Committee, and this would be put forward for formal appointment at a future Council meeting.

106. TRANSFORMATION TO 2021 – REVENUE SAVINGS PROPOSALS

The Committee received a report and presentation from the Director of Children's Services, which provided an overview of the revenue savings proposals for Transformation to 2021 (see Item 6 in the Minute Book).

Officers led Members through the slides and attention was drawn to the recent Government spending review which didn't provide certainty beyond 2021, in the light of rising demand and the cost of children's social care. The key issues facing the County Council were explained and the additional funding for schools was noted. It was heard that there was no detail at the moment in relation to Government funding and children with complex needs and disabilities, but the Government would be reviewing special education needs (SEN) next year.

It was heard that T21 would be challenging with a need to ensure sufficient capacity to lead and maintain an adaptable and strong workforce. The savings targets for children's services were explained in relation to the various work

streams, and it was anticipated that there would be some staff reductions but almost all through 'natural wastage' rather than redundancies.

Members were led through the various work stream savings proposals which included government funding, home to school transport and admin efficiencies. In relation to proposal 3 – Transforming Social Care, it was explained that the department would continue to increase the numbers of children who could remain at home safely. Officers also drew Members attention to the challenges around foster care placements and external organisations who were driving the cost up.

It was heard that there would be a public consultation in due course in relation to scope to achieve savings to the short breaks programme and focus on core priorities for parents and carers. Attention was drawn to the fact that short breaks was the only service within children's services which was still discretionary.

The significant shortfall in health contributions from the Clinical Commissioning Groups was highlighted at proposal 7, and it was heard that this amounted to £1.8 million and was shown as an income stream. It was heard that in relation to youth offending, youth crime had reduced consistently in the last ten years, and there were legitimate efficiencies which could be made which wouldn't compromise the high standard of the service.

The spend in Hampshire per child was explained and it was heard that in relation to other authorities, the spend in Hampshire per child was low at £540 and on a par with another Ofsted rated Outstanding local authority

Members heard that there were risks that the department couldn't anticipate in the future such as emerging forms of abuse, and national issues that could heighten anxiety at a local level. Officers highlighted the consultation 'Serving Hampshire – Balancing the Budget 2019' which gave Hampshire residents and stakeholders the chance to comment on ways to balance the County Council budget, and it was heard that out of the 5432 responses, 52% of respondents agreed that the County Council should continue with its current financial strategy which included prioritising the needs of vulnerable groups, including children. Officers concluded by highlighting the key messages of Transformation to 2021 and it was also noted that significant reductions in spend had been delivered to date.

In response to questions, Members heard:

- Additional Government funding of £8.1million to support social care in 2018/19, and the Medium Term Financial Strategy has budgeted for this income to recur and will be used towards the department's savings target.
- That in terms of foster care places, a number of Hampshire children were placed in other authority areas but these would be local to the child. For example a child who lived in Havant could be placed in a Portsmouth foster home.
- That work was underway to better manage the foster market locally in Hampshire, but continued increased placement costs for children in care with independent foster care agencies remained a challenge as demand outstrips supply.

- That the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner has received significant funding for serious violence reduction and this should continue for the next 2/3 years. More preventive work through youth offending with the possibility of funding being given to assist with this was highlighted.
- That it would be ensured that there would be a range of early years provision and quality of provision as part of the early years statutory responsibility.
- The use of technology in relation to childminders and money from providers will help to achieve admin efficiencies and release a vacant job position as a result.
- That with the increase in the numbers of children in care, it could be argued that there was a need for more children's homes, but this could risk substituting family care in a foster care environment for residential care which may not be in the best interest of an individual child.

The Chairman moved to debate and the following arguments were heard:

- That Members need to show support to Executive Members and Officers in planning these changes.
- That the Council can't continue to keep cutting services, especially in relation to children, and funding needs to be increased and not reduced.

The Chairman moved to the substantive recommendation as set out in the paper:

That the Children and Young People Select Committee consider the detailed savings proposals and support the recommendations being proposed to the Executive Lead Member in Section 2 of the report.

A vote was taken on the proposed recommendation:

For: 9
 Against: 4
 Abstained: 1

RESOLVED:

That the Children and Young People Select Committee considered the detailed savings proposals and supported the recommendations being proposed to the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services and Young People in Section 2 of the report.

107. **AUTISM ASSESSMENT SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

The Committee received a presentation on Autism Assessment Services for children and young people from representatives of Hampshire and Isle of Wight Partnership of Clinical Commissioning Groups (Item 7 in the Minute Book).

Members were led through the presentation slides and the current situation in relation to autism assessment services was explained and it was heard that £1million had been invested into the service by the CCGs during the period 2018/19. Members also heard details about the NHS long term plan and noted that following the Demand and Capacity Peer Review of CAMHS, it had been recommended that autism assessment should not return to CAMHS.

The background to the Autism Pioneer Programme was also explained as well as the drivers for the increase in referrals and the scope of the programme. In relation to the main findings, it was heard that these included a desire for a new way of working and joined up working across other services. Officers explained the summary of recommendations which included developing services for both CAMHS and Autism and neurodiversity. Members noted that in relation to education support and provision, schools have access to a range of advice and guidance to help meet the needs of children with autism. Officers concluded by highlighting the options appraisal for a future autism assessment service, and it was also heard that additional funding of £1.7million for 2020/21 was being considered with a view to bringing down waiting times to 6 months.

In response to questions, Members heard:

- That work was ongoing with schools to raise awareness around autism, including the use of visual stimulus.
- That schools were responsible for their own professional development, and educational psychologists have been leading on training, but there wasn't a guarantee that all schools would use this. At a primary level the autism ambassador in schools was likely to be the SENCO lead.
- In assisting families, organisations such as Autism Hampshire and Barnardo's have co-produced autism literature with the help of parents and young people. There was a keenness to develop YouTube clips.
- If a child presented autism symptoms, then they should be able to access relevant services without a diagnosis, and this was being embedded in schools and across the network, but some parents prefer to have the diagnosis.
- That there has been an increase in assessments for adult autism, as some parents have recognised similar traits in themselves which their children present.
- That there has been an increase in demand for the assessment service, and this has been heightened by the increase in age for access to services for children and young people to 25 years old.
- That an Education, Health and Care Plan was designed to provide a holistic plan until the age of 25 years.

It was proposed that a further update be presented to the Committee in 12 months' time and this was agreed by Members.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the Children and Young People Select Committee received and noted the overview provided in the presentation.
- b) That the Children and Young People Committee requested that a further update be brought to the Committee in 12 months' time, to include progress made on reducing waiting times for assessments.

108. **ANNUAL SAFEGUARDING REPORT - CHILDREN'S SERVICES 2018-19**

The Committee received the Annual Safeguarding Report – Children's Services 2018/19 (Item 8 in the Minute Book) for pre-scrutiny before being presented to Cabinet on the 10 December, from representatives of the Director of Children's Services. A presentation also accompanied the report.

Officers introduced the item by drawing Members attention to the full Ofsted inspection of Children's Services in April/May 2019 which gave an overall judgement of 'Outstanding' and outstanding in each of the three domains, with two areas to develop further. It was noted that Hampshire County Council was one of only two Local Authorities to receive this overall judgement, and this provided a high level of assurance about the standard of the Service as a whole.

Members were taken through the presentation slides and various issues were highlighted which included County Lines and national developments. It was heard that in relation to County Lines, this was not just a Hampshire issue, but a growing national concern. The work of the Willow Team was highlighted in relation to this and it was noted that the multi-agency team continued to work closely with Hampshire Constabulary in disrupting County Lines activity. In relation to national developments, officers explained how unaccompanied asylum-seeking children were looked after, and it was noted that after the age of 18, the Authority was still responsible but they didn't count against the government set targets.

Officers highlighted the number of full time looked after children in recent years as set out at page 11 of the presentation, and it was noted that in August 2019, the number of children in care was lower than it was in September 2018. It was explained that more children were being kept safely at home, especially the teenage cohort.

Attention was drawn to the work undertaken in relation to the recruitment and retention of social workers in Hampshire. It was heard that the career life of a social worker averaged seven years and work had been successful in building resilience with the implementation of a protected two year programme for newly qualified social workers. Officers also highlighted work undertaken in developing the Hampshire Approach which would enable more children to be kept at home through resilience working with families.

Officers outlined future challenges and the number of children entering the care system was seen to be a continual challenge for the department, with the annual

cost for a child in care approximately £60,000. The increase in social media use amongst children and young people and online abuse was also seen as a growing challenge both regionally and nationally.

In response to questions, Members heard:

- That the cost of children in care differed according to where the child was placed, with an independent foster home averaging £60,000 a year and non-county residential care averaging £150,000 a week.
- Work was ongoing to ensure where appropriate, children were placed in foster care which provided a family environment rather than residential care.
- Many unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) were placed in communities with people from their own country as a means of providing support in areas such as language. Access to further education, employment and accommodation were also provided.
- That the family support service was now working with more children than ever before, as was the whole professional network.
- That child exploitation through technology and online abuse was a continuing concern.
- That work was ongoing which was looking at how best to prepare children during the transition to adulthood and equip them with the relevant skills to live independently. It was recognised that some young people wouldn't be ready to live independently, and in these cases higher cost placements were funded.
- That Councillors who sit at both a district and borough as well as County level could help to raise issues at a local level in relation to commissioning accommodation for care leavers.

The Vice-Chairman raised that he was pleased with the comments received from Ofsted and to see the continued progress made despite the savings required. The leadership and staffing quality were also praised.

RESOLVED:

That the Children and Young People Select Committee noted and supported the recommendations being proposed to Cabinet in the attached report.

109. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Director of Transformation and Governance presented the Committee's work programme (see Item 9 in the Minute Book).

A question was raised about the Committee receiving an item on educational attainment in relation to disadvantaged children, and it was explained that this would be included in the next educational attainment annual report.

RESOLVED:

That the Children and Young People Select Committee agreed the work programme including the amendment as outlined above.

Chairman,