

AT A MEETING of the Children and Young People Select Committee of
HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL held at The Castle, Winchester on Monday,
15th January, 2018

Chairman:
p Councillor Ray Bolton

Vice Chairman:
p Councillor Roz Chadd

p Councillor Jackie Branson
p Councillor Zilliah Brooks
p Councillor Fran Carpenter
p Councillor Steve Forster
p Councillor Marge Harvey
p Councillor Wayne Irish
p Councillor Gavin James
p Councillor Kirsty Locke

p Councillor Kirsty Locke
p Councillor Russell Oppenheimer
p Councillor Neville Penman
p Councillor Jackie Porter
p Councillor Robert Taylor
p Councillor Malcolm Wade
p Councillor Michael Westbrook

Co-opted Members:

p Ian Brewerton, Secondary School Parent Governor Representative
p Jane Longman, Special School Parent Governor Representative
VACANT, Primary School Parent Governor Representative
VACANT, Church of England Schools Representative
VACANT Roman Catholic Schools Representative

In attendance at the invitation of the Chairman:

p Councillor Peter Edgar – Executive Member for Education
p Councillor Keith Mans – Executive Lead Member for Children’s Services
p Rob Sanders, Deputy Director of Education, Church of England

33. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies were received.

34. 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.

Cllr Jackie Porter declared a non-pecuniary interest in Items 6 and 9, as she is the Chair of a Pre-School that receives special educational needs funding, and in Item 8, as she is a Chairman of Trustees in one of the organisations receiving funding for overnight respite services.

Cllr Robert Taylor declared a pecuniary interest in Item 8, as he is a paid part-time employee of Sebastian's Action Trust, who received funding for providing an overnight respite pilot.

Cllr Malcolm Wade made a non-pecuniary interest, as he is a Trustee of an organisation that has previously received a grant from Children's Services.

Cllr Peter Edgar, the Executive Member for Education, who has a standing invitation to attend and speak to the Committee, noted a non-pecuniary interest, which is that he is a lifelong member of the National Association of Head Teachers.

35. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

36. DEPUTATIONS

The Committee received two deputations on Item 8 'Proposal to close overnight residential respite homes for children with disabilities as the County Council moves towards a wider range of overnight respite services'.

Ms Gail Bedding, Chief Executive of the Hampshire Parent Carer Network, made a deputation requesting that the County Council pause making a decision on closing the overnight residential respite homes until the alternative options had been outlined to parents and carers.

Ms Marie-Louise Johnson made a deputation asking members to consider the equalities impact on children with disabilities when considering the report, and requested that the recommendations be reconsidered.

37. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman did not make any announcements to the meeting.

38. REVENUE BUDGET FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES 2018/19

The Director of Children's Services and a representative of the Director of Corporate Resources attended before the Committee in order to present the revenue budget for Children's Services for 2018/19 (see report and presentation, Item 6 in the Minute Book).

The presentation outlined the overall County Council financial position. The local government grant settlement announced in 2016 provided provisional figures for authorities for the following three financial years, including 2018/19, to aid

financial planning, and the settlement for 2018/19 was mostly unchanged compared to the forecast position. Since this time, however, a pay offer had been made for local government workers of 2% per annum, and changes to the lower pay grades to reflect the move to the National Living Wage. This element was not costed in the finance settlement, and therefore consideration would need to be given as to how to meet this ongoing cost pressure.

There would be a significant draw down from the Grant Equalisation Reserve in 2018/19 in order to support the savings required as part of Transformation to 2019. In a change from previous years, the Government had changed the Council Tax precept cap, enabling a potential increase of 2.99% without consultation, plus 2% for social care. This development would be discussed by Cabinet in February.

A fair funding review had been announced by Government, which would see a consultation on how local government would be financed in future. This review promised to implement any changes by 2020/21. Also announced was a green paper on funding adult social care, although this would not result in any new funding in this area for 2018/19.

An overview of the Council's reserves strategy and financial position was provided, which set out that of the £524.2m held, approximately £79.4m, or 15.1% of the reserves, were truly 'available' to support one-off spending, although most of this was already allocated.

Members received an update on progress against the 'Transformation to 2019' proposals, as requested in November 2017. As previously noted, Children's Services would be receiving cashflow support from County Treasurers to enable delivery of the £30m of savings required from the Department. This was in part due to the need to phase the savings up to 2022/23, owing to efficiencies for the most part being linked to work around 'partners in practice' and safely reducing the number of looked after children. As part of the Transformation to 2019 programme, the Department would be leading two consultations; one on short breaks activities, and one on home to school transport.

Members heard details on the proposed 2018/19 budget for Children's Services. The priorities for the Department remained the same and had been essential in focusing resource where it was most needed. Many of the key Departmental issues and challenges were not new and had previously been discussed with the Committee. The Department would continue to work to manage increasing demand for children's services, working hard to continue to keep children safe. As previously reported, the issue of unaccompanied asylum seekers was an additional factor impacting on the budget, as the budget accompanying such children were estimated to only cover half of the specialist support costs incurred through their placements. Overviews were also provided of work ongoing within the children with disabilities and home to school transport services.

The main factor impacting on Children's Services continued to be the rising demand for services against a backdrop of reducing resources, with the number of children in care continuing to increase. An overview was provided to Members of how the new resilience-based model developed through 'partners in practice'

would work, and how the number of children in care could be safely reduced, although places would always be available for children who required them.

In considering the more detailed Children's Services revenue budget, and in response to questions, Members heard:

- That almost all of the organisations involved within the 'partners in practice' work operated within the Hampshire boundary, as most were community services and not hospital-based.
- Within the first phase of the 'partners in practice' work, the Department had reviewed the resource needed to make the new model successful, and as part of this had set up a graduate scheme for social workers. This scheme recruited newly-qualified social workers, and provided them with a clear training programme which enabled them to be trained, move around service areas to get a good overview of the social worker role, and to assist on cases. At the end of January 2018, 19 new social workers would graduate from this scheme, with a further 20 due to finish at the end of May, and a further 20 in October. This scheme was proving very popular, and would help tackle the overspend on agency workers by providing 'home grown' talented social workers.
- A placement would be made available to any child whose needs required this support; the aspiration of the new model was to implement early interventions through multi-disciplinary working reducing the likelihood of children needing more specialist care, as preventative work could help tackle the issues before they become critical. Of the current cohort of looked after children, 40% were teenagers. As historic data showed that those over 13 do not fare as well in life as their peers outside of the care system, it was important to safely reduce the number of older children in care, returning them to their families where this was safe and appropriate. The solution to doing this was to provide greater support to families earlier on, learning from programmes such as Troubled Families where this model had been very successful.

RESOLVED

That the Children and Young People Select Committee support the recommendation being proposed to the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services in section 1, page 1 of the report.

39. CAPITAL PROGRAMME FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES 2018/19 - 2020/21

The Director of Children's Services and his representatives attended before the Committee in order to present the capital programme for Children's Services for 2018/19 – 2020/21 (see report and presentation, Item 7 in the Minute Book).

The Capital Programme for Children's Services continued to be an exciting investment for Hampshire, as this was the most significant schools construction activity for over 30 years, and the largest nationally. To date, an additional 8,088 school places had been built, and it was proposed that provision be made for a further 9,632 primary and secondary places. Overall, the pupil number trends showed that the pressure on primary school places was starting to plateau in some areas of the county. However, an increase was now starting to be seen in secondary schools as children progressed through the education system.

The pupil forecasting model includes new housing figures provided by the planning authorities in Hampshire, so proposed new schools to serve housing developments were dependent on housing schemes going ahead. Any slippage in new housing developments would also be reflected in the programme.

The County Council had received approval from the Department for Education for a new 125 place free school in Basingstoke, which will accommodate children with special communication needs and those on the autistic spectrum. This was one of only 20 Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) schools approved in a recent free school initiative. In addition to this, national funding of £215m has been made available for SEND for which Hampshire is expected to receive £3.7m.

There would be a pressure on the Capital Programme over a five year period, owing to additional need, inflation challenges and concerns regarding construction. The County Council did not have any live schemes being delivered in partnership with Carillion, and the Department would be looking at any historic schemes to see if there will be an impact on the County Council.

The County Council is contributing to the government review of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), and would specifically be lobbying on the restrictions around pooling schemes to pay for major infrastructure projects.

On the 2018/19 to 2020/21 Capital Programme, in response to questions, Members heard:

- Some schemes previously proposed may slip or be suspended if the pupil numbers forecast do not come to fruition. In the case of the Trosnant Schools in Havant, investment would still be taking place, but not at the capacity previously planned due to pupil numbers in Leigh Park not increasing to the number previously forecast.
- Where applicable the Department uses Section 106 funding for new school buildings and expansions, secured through major housing developments. CIL funds tended to be small investments and there was a limit on how many of these could be pooled, although they were on occasion used for school expansions and improvements. If this was required, negotiations would be held within the County Council to agree what proportion of CIL funding would be used for schools.
- The school places plan took its forecasting from housing developments with planning permission, or those developments that were large scale and nearing planning permission. There were a number of speculative projects the Department were aware of, but had not yet been agreed, and therefore they did not currently appear in the places plan. The Department regularly meets with the Local Planning Authorities to ensure the plan is up to date.

It was agreed that any Member could contact the officers to review the planning numbers considered in the report for their District areas.

Although a recorded vote was not requested on the recommendation, those Members who abstained from voting for the recommendation noted that they had

done so as Item 8 had not yet been considered, which may have a related capital programme impact.

RESOLVED

That the Children and Young People Select Committee support the recommendation being proposed to the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services in section 1, page 1 of the report.

40. PROPOSALS TO CLOSE TWO OVERNIGHT RESIDENTIAL RESPITE HOMES FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES AS THE COUNTY COUNCIL MOVES TOWARDS A WIDER RANGE OF OVERNIGHT RESPITE SERVICES.

The Director of Children's Services and his representatives attended before the Committee in order to speak to the 'Proposals to close two overnight residential respite homes for children with disabilities as the County Council moves towards a wider range of overnight respite services' item (see Item 8 in the Minute Book).

The report set out the outcomes of the public consultation heard on the proposals to close two overnight residential respite homes – Merrydale in Kings Worthy (Winchester) and Sunbeams in Aldershot – and to offer a wider sustainable overnight respite service to disabled children and their families. The closure would impact on 35 children and their families currently using these centres.

The report in the Committee's papers would be considered by the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services at his decision day later in the afternoon.

In response to questions, Members heard:

- That currently 23 children and their families used specialist respite care provided through foster carers, and there were 40 foster carers available. These were not currently geographically balanced across the County, so work was ongoing to target areas where there is less respite capacity to ensure that children and their families can access support close to home. The benefit of these specialist foster carers was that families and children could build long-term relationships with individuals, getting to know and trust them to provide respite care.
- There should be no resultant impact on those children and families accessing overnight respite at Firvale in Basingstoke, as the capacity at this centre was enough that it could support additional children.
- That if the decision was made to close Merrydale and Sunbeams, this would not take place until May 2018, in order to ensure that all families have an opportunity to meet with their social worker to consider the alternative options for respite care that would meet their needs.
- Part of the driver for proposing to close Merrydale and Sunbeams and to provide a new offer of overnight respite care was to give children and their families a greater range of options that moved away from traditional overnight stays in accommodation away from their communities.
- A commitment had been made that no child assessed as requiring overnight respite support would have a reduction in this offer; the changes

would instead lead to this offer being delivered in a different way. The eligibility criteria would remain the same, as would the support offered to children and their families; there would be no need for reassessments.

- A further commitment had been made that families would not be adversely financially impacted by any changes to how overnight respite care is offered, with any additional travel required to alternative services supported by Children's Services, and agreed with families on an individual basis.
- All children and their families had been offered a 1-2-1 meeting with their social worker to discuss the proposals and to hold initial discussions about alternative options. Of these, two families had not taken up this offer; it was believed that this was because discussion at this point was too difficult for some of the families affected.
- Drop in sessions were also available to families, and consultation activities listed in the report were also held with staff members. From this point forward, the affected families would be written to once any decision was taken on the future of Merrydale and Sunbeams, offering further 1-2-1 sessions based on the outcome of the decision by the Executive Lead Member.
- The ongoing capital and revenue costs associated with traditional overnight respite care provided by the County Council was part of the driver for the decision to propose closure. However, releasing capital receipts from Merrydale and reducing spending on maintaining buildings would ensure greater investment into the service in future, with the majority of spend on services rather than buildings.

The Chairman moved to debate.

Cllr Robert Taylor left the meeting at this point in proceedings.

A variety of arguments both in support and against the closure of the two overnight respite centres were heard, including:

- That some Members were reassured that the offer to families would not be reducing, with overnight residential respite still on offer to children at a variety of locations. However, there was a strong feeling that overnight provision should take place as close to children's homes as possible.
- That expanding the overnight respite care offer would potentially mean that more children can access these services, which was a positive development.
- Some Members expressed confidence in the officers leading the review and its outcomes, and their trust in the Department to make tough decisions that should lead to better outcomes for children and their families.
- Concerns that children and their families would be very sensitive to change and the fear of unknown respite care. That further support should be given if a decision was taken to close the centres to provide reassurance about the new service model.
- A concern from some Members that because of the small saving to be achieved and the complex needs of the children affected, the proposals were unnecessary and cruel, and would have a significant impact on their welfare.

- That the County Council had a responsibility to improve the quality of life of children in its care, and a concern that this decision did not contribute towards this outcome.
- The view that services should have been double run before any proposal to close Merrydale and Sunbeams, so that families could experience alternative respite services before the changes are implemented.
- A request that the decision on the closures be delayed until children and their families were fully aware of the alternative options available.

At the end of debate, the Chairman asked the Executive Lead Member for his views on the discussion heard. Cllr Mans expressed that without prejudicing the decision he was due to consider in the afternoon, he had listened carefully to the deputations, questions and debate, and had found the discussion helpful.

The Chairman moved to the recommendations, and a vote took place on the recommendation as set out below:

For: Cllrs Branson, Bolton, Brooks, Carpenter, Chadd, Forster, Locke, Oppenheimer, Penman (9)
 Against: Cllrs Irish, James, Porter, Wade, Westbrook (5)
 Abstained: Cllr Harvey (1)

RESOLVED

That the Children and Young People Select Committee support the recommendations being proposed to the Executive Lead Member for Children’s Services in section 1, paragraph 1.1 of the report.

41. ATTAINMENT OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN HAMPSHIRE SCHOOLS

The Committee received a report and presentation (Item 9 in the Minute Book) from representatives of the Director of Children’s Services on the attainment of pupils in Hampshire schools, following on from an update provided in January 2017 on the changes to how attainment is measured nationally.

Members had noted during the previous consideration of this item that there had been an unprecedented change in the way performance was measured in schools in 2016, with the introduction of new standards at key stage one, and key stage two, and the introduction of new GCSE courses and methods of assessment at key stage four. Overall, outcomes for children and young people in Hampshire continued to outperform national averages, although direct comparisons could not be made between previous assessment types and those recently introduced. In particular, Hampshire continued to perform strongly against its comparator statistical authorities, particularly in relation to early years and key stage two.

Data from the previous year seemed to suggest that Hampshire schools were performing better with the new attainment and qualification standards than under the previous regime, which may be in part due to the work undertaken by the

Department to ensure that schools and their leaders understood the changes and how to meet the new expectations.

The Department were aware that mean scores can often hide the scale of performance, and focus was being given to those schools that were performing less well. From the most recent publication of data, there had been a significant reduction in the number of schools classed in this category.

The changes to how key stage four is tested continued, with more challenging GCSEs for English and Maths rolled out and now scored on a 1 to 9 point scale. Previously the Department would monitor how many children got a C or above in these topics; the focus now was on a five or higher.

The move to 'Progress 8' and 'Attainment 8' was leading to some tensions with schools who were perhaps considering offering a less comprehensive syllabus in order to increase the chances of children attaining preferred scores when tested. As Hampshire schools currently showed a score lower than the national average in relation to 'Progress 8', thought would need to be given as to why this is, and how to help schools increase this figure without restricting syllabus selections. Despite the lower than national average 'Progress 8' score, Hampshire schools achieved above average in nearly all performance data metrics.

In response to questions, Members heard:

- That the data received nationally could be drilled down to individual child level, so children from different cohorts, such as those with an Education, Health and Care Plan or looked after children, could be grouped for analysis. This is something that the Educational Advisory Committee could consider in future, as it fell within their remit.
- The Department were not aware of any maintained schools changing their offer of non-core subjects as a result of changes to how progress was measured, although this was something that the Department would be monitoring.
- The Department were continuing to lead a range of briefings for Head Teachers on the new attainment measures, and the Department had a local inspector attached to each 'requires improvement' school to help them to improve in the areas outlined by OFSTED.

Members agreed that they would benefit from a further school attainment update, to include work ongoing with schools judged as 'requires by OFSTED to improve attainment figures.

RECOMMENDATION

That the information update is noted.

42. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Director of Transformation and Governance presented the Committee's work programme (see Item 10 in the Minute Book).

The Chairman noted that this was the last meeting of the 2017/18 calendar of meetings for the Select Committee, and the topics considered to date would be summarised in an annual report to Full Council in the summer. The Chairman invited Members to contribute items for consideration for the 2018/19 work programme. To aid this, Members would have the slides from the 'Introduction to Children's Services' item considered in Summer 2017 recirculated for information.

At the meeting, the following items were suggested:

- Cllr Oppenheimer asked for an item on school attainment, with a specific focus on 'requires improvement' schools; although it would be important not to duplicate the work of the Education Advisory Panel in considering this matter.
- Cllr Porter wished to invite other organisations and contributors to speak to meetings.
- Cllr Branson asked for an item on mental health in schools.
- Cllr Westbrook raised Home to School Transport, which was already highlighted on the work programme.

RESOLVED:

That the work programme, subject to any amendments made during the meeting, is agreed.

Chairman, 30 January 2018