

At a meeting of the CHILDREN AND FAMILIES ADVISORY PANEL of HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL held at The Castle, Winchester on Tuesday 31 January 2017

Chairman:
p Councillor David Keast

p Ann Briggs
p Rita Burgess
a Roz Chadd
p Jacqui England

p Marge Harvey
a Chris Lagdon
p Jackie Porter
p Malcolm Wade

92. BROADCASTING ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chairman announced that the press and members of the public were permitted to film and broadcast the meeting. Those remaining at the meeting were consenting to being filmed and recorded, and to the possible use of those images and recording for broadcasting purposes.

93. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Cllr Chadd.

94. 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 and, having regard to 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 Personal Interest in a matter being considered at the meeting they considered, having regard to Part 5, Paragraph 4 of the Code, whether such interest should be declared, and having regard to Part 5, Paragraph 5 of the Code, considered whether it was appropriate to leave the meeting while the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with the Code.

95. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of 18 October 2016 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

96. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman had no announcements.

97. UPDATE ON CHILDREN'S HOME'S RESIDENTIAL STRATEGY

The Panel received a report of the Director of Children's Services (Item 5 in the Minute Book) regarding the update on the Children's Homes Residential Strategy.

The Panel heard that the overall vision for Hampshire's Residential Strategy is that Children's residential care should be a placement of choice, based on effective assessment of needs and careful matching. The provision and standard of care across the residential estate will not be less than expected from a large family home through confident, authoritative parenting within environments that demonstrate individual worth and value.

The Strategy has two main strands; the quality of buildings and the quality of staff. In order to improve the quality of the buildings, four of the existing homes are being replaced with six new homes; children and staff were consulted on their designs. The sixth new build has been delayed by difficulties in identifying a suitable site.

Quality of staff has been addressed through robust recruitment and management of staff with the embedding of an agreed model of practice. The Pillars of Parenting Model has been used since 2012 and the first two years were independently evaluated to have a significant improvement in experience of the children.

In response to questions members heard that:

- The number of children in Milesdown, Winchester will be reduced to reduce the disruption in moving to Cross Ways in Old Basing, particularly in relation to Education.
- A new Winchester based home was desired but the location can not be found so Milesdown is being reconsidered and concerns managed.
- The aim of Children's Services is to establish smaller homes with children who do not move from their local area, with a suitable mix of children.
- The sale of land in relation to the old homes offset the cost of the new homes.
- OFSTED assess the Children's homes in relation to them not feeling like an institutional setting, against the Quality Standards..
- There are children at these homes who have additional learning needs but if they were significant enough they would be in a more suitable environment.

RESOLVED: *That the Children and Families Advisory Panel note the update to the Residential Strategy and the improved outcomes associated with it.*

98. **UPDATE ON THE SUPPORTING (TROUBLED) FAMILIES PROGRAMME (STFP)**

The Panel received a report of the Director of Children's Services (Item 6 in the Minute Book) in regards to the update on the Supporting (Troubled) Families Programme.

The Panel heard how the principles of the STFP align with the County Council's own transformational ambitions up to and beyond 2020.

Phase 1 focused on families with children with poor school attendance, young people offending, family members committing anti social acts or claiming out of work benefits. Tracking of these families has shown sustainability of outcomes with 4 out of 5 families.

Phase 2, launched in December 2014 has significantly increased the number of families targeted for support and increased the criteria to include those experiencing domestic abuse or health problems. So far 65% of phase 2 families are nominated under the health criterion and 80% of these are in relation to mental health.

It is likely that there will be no Government funding for the programme after Phase 2 ends and so local investment will be crucial to the continuation of STFP beyond 2020.

In response to questions members heard that:

- Around 25% of families involved have an issue in relation to drugs or addiction. While not as large as mental health, these issues are often intertwined and there is commonly not a formal diagnosis.
- It is hard to keep the retention rate high as those who make good progress tend to disappear as support is no longer needed.
- Increasingly, social media and electronic communication is used to contact families.
- Work is being done with Housing Associations to get them involved with the STFP and to prevent evictions.
- The best professional for each family works as their STFP lead, it is not always Children's Services or Hampshire County Council staff as the scheme is multi agency.
- There is work to be done to bring in voluntary organisations and help make them more resilient.
- The programme is funded by Government up to 2020 and central funding is not expected after this point. There is a need to make the business case for investment in STFP beyond that point via the independent academic evaluation which will also assess the change in culture to whole family working brought about by the programme.

RESOLVED: *The Childrens and Families Advisory Panel are asked to note;*

- a) The positive independent evaluation of Phase 1 of STFP in Hampshire.***
- b) Sustainability of outcomes for families for whom a positive family outcome was claimed one and two years previously.***
- c) The strong performance in Phase 1 and in the first year (2015/16) of Phase 2 of the programme.***
- d) Promote STFP wherever possible to increase the numbers of families nominated to the programme.***

99. PARTNERS IN PRACTICE

The Panel received a report of the Director of Children's Services (Item 7 in the Minute Book) with regards to the Partners in Practice Programme. Members heard that Hampshire County Council had been selected as one of eight Local Authorities nationally to be included in the programme. The purpose is "to innovate, to improve frontline children's social work and to develop new systems of delivering social care and trialling new ways of working with families".

Officers advised that the greater freedoms associated with the Partners in Practice innovation will not lead to upheaval, but small bureaucratic changes to allow the system to run more smoothly and improve outcomes for children and their families. Changes are needed as there is a national trend towards increasing need and rising demand alongside reducing resources; authorities therefore need to find new ways of working.

Officers have identified seven linked components to be the key principles for the changes to be made with an overview of trialling deregulation and removing bureaucracy, multi-disciplinary family interventions and developing a model of ongoing social support.

In response to questions members heard that:

- Currently Children's Services are largely operating on a 9-5 basis and this scheme will allow them to look into more flexible social work with partners for high risk times such as Friday/Saturday evenings.
- The scheme will allow for new methods to improve staff retention to go alongside the four weekly supervision and programme of emotional resilience.
- There can be further integration of volunteers to be an extra resource to carefully manage around the edges of the social care service.
- The key to kerbing the problem of increased demand was to target the groups who return for a further intervention.

RESOLVED: *That the Children and Families Advisory Panel note Hampshire County Council's involvement in the Partners in Practice scheme and the impact this will have on Children's Services.*

100. ANNUAL UPDATE ON SWANWICK LODGE

The Panel received a report of the Director of Children's Services (Item 8 in the Minute Book) with regards to the Annual Update on Swanwick Lodge. The Panel heard that Swanwick Lodge is a Secure Children's home with 16 approved places for young people of either gender aged 10-17 years who are deemed to be a significant risk to themselves. Swanwick Lodge is a national resource and so children accommodated may not be from Hampshire.

Officers explained that previously four beds were offered under a block contract to the Youth Justice Board for young people who were remanded or sentenced to custody. This contract has since expired in light of concerns regarding the appropriateness of admission made through obligation rather than local placement matching.

The Panel were told that Swanwick Lodge had received a 'Good' Ofsted inspection for the third time in succession in May 2016 and that an interim inspection in November 2016 found that the service had "sustained effectiveness".

In response to questions members heard that:

- The average length of time that a Young Person is a resident at Swanwick Lodge is three months.
- Day release is possible and supervised, starting with a 1:3 ratio and going down to a 1:1 ratio.

- Recruitment is handled very carefully to ensure that staff are suitable and able to affect change, risk assess and deescalate behaviour. Due to the unique environment, psychological support is provided to the staff.
- The Young People in Swanwick Lodge are 12-17 years old, although 10-12 is possible with the approval of the Secretary of State.
- The Pillars of Parenting model is used to ensure stabilisation, focusing on routine. Trust can be developed in their three month stay that then enables them to access support when they leave Swanwick Lodge.

RESOLVED: *That the Children and Families Advisory Panel note the update on Swanwick Lodge.*

101. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RECOMMENDATION:

That in relation to the following items, the press and public be excluded from the meeting as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during the items there would be disclosure to them of exempt information within Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, and further that, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information for the reasons set out in the report.

102. ANNUAL UPDATE ON SWANWICK LODGE – EXEMPT APPENDIX

The Panel received an exempt appendix of the Director of Children's Services (Item 10 in the Minute Book) in relation to Item 8.

Signed: _____

**Cllr Keast
Chairman**