

AT A MEETING of the Children and Young People Select Committee of
HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL held REMOTELY on Wednesday, 13th
January, 2021

Chairman:

- * Councillor Kirsty North

Vice-Chairman:

- * Councillor Ray Bolton

- * Councillor Jackie Branson
- * Councillor Ann Briggs
- * Councillor Zilliah Brooks
- * Councillor Fran Carpenter
- * Councillor Peter Edgar MBE
- * Councillor Pal Hayre
- * Councillor Wayne Irish
- * Councillor Gavin James
- * Councillor Neville Penman
- * Councillor Robert Taylor
- * Councillor Bill Withers Lt Col (Retd)
- * Councillor Jackie Porter
- * Councillor Michael Westbrook
- * Councillor Malcolm Wade

*Present

Co-opted Members:

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

Also present with the agreement 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

158. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies received.

159. 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 Personal interest in a matter being considered at the meeting they considered 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 whilst the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with the Code.

No declarations were made at this point in the meeting.

160. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 November 2020 were agreed by the Committee as a correct record of the meeting.

161. DEPUTATIONS

The Committee did not receive any deputations.

162. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman commenced her announcements by extending her gratitude to all members of the Committee for their contribution and hard work during the current electoral term.

The Charman also reminded Members that at the 28 September 2020 Select Committee, Members agreed an additional recommendation in relation to Autism Assessment Services. Since the 11 November 2020 Select Committee Members had received by email a copy of the letter from the Chief Executive of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight CCG Partnership confirming details of funding for Autism Assessment Services. The Chairman highlighted that there was a written report providing more information on this funding later on the agenda.

The Chairman also highlighted the 8 July 2020 Select Committee, where Members agreed an additional recommendation in relation to Childcare Sufficiency Assessment and Covid-19 impact and response for the Childcare Sector. It was heard that Members had received by email a copy of the letter from Vicky Ford, Parliamentary Secretary of State for Children and Families in relation to this.

163. 2021/22 REVENUE BUDGET REPORT FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

The Committee received for pre-scrutiny, a report and presentation on the Children's Services Revenue Budget 2021/22 (Item 6 in the Minute Book).

Members were taken through the presentation and important key areas of the report were highlighted. The Efficiency and Transformation Programmes of the County Council from previous years was outlined, and it was noted that of the cumulative total savings of £560m to April 2021 for the County Council, it was noted that of this, £122m of savings was children's specific. The medium term financial strategy position was summarised as well as the impact of Covid on the County Council and the reserves position. It was confirmed that there were no additional savings in this budget round, and details of the current savings programme was also summarised as well as key issues in relation to this.

In relation to children's services departmental issues and challenges, a number of principles which the department worked to were set out at presentation slide 20, and it was noted that there had been an increase in the demand and cost of services. Presentation slides 21 and 22 illustrated the national and local figures of child protection investigations, conferences and plans, and it was noted that Hampshire was broadly in line with national figures.

The Children's Services Transformation journey was explained and the reduction in numbers of looked after children and children on a child protection plan was detailed. Pressures relating to Special Educational Needs was highlighted, and the graph at presentation slide 30 detailed the rise in EHCP's and it was heard that this was also an issue nationally. In conclusion, presentation slides 36 and 37 highlighted the breakdown of figures for the Children's Services Revenue Budget 2021/22 for schools and non-schools.

In response to questions, Members heard:

- The Government has commissioned a review of SEN reforms which will report later this year, but any financial change would need to tie in with the Government spending review which would be announced in November.
- That there is a High Needs Block deficit but this is not as high when compared to other local authorities. There are measures being taken to try and cap the deficit, but ultimately there needs to be a national solution.
- That it was important to look at the principles for children's services, which were highlighted earlier in the presentation, and recognise that these haven't changed in light of budget pressures. The financial support from the County Council Treasury department was also highlighted in terms of managing any ad hoc financial pressures.
- That Government are maintaining a voluntary scheme in relation to unaccompanied asylum seeking children which has put pressure on the budget.
- That a Government announcement last year on the national funding formula, saw an increase to the minimum level of funding per pupil, which would be spread over three years.
- That in relation to pressures on schools, there is an accumulative surplus balance for school budgets in Hampshire which is unevenly spread as the national funding formula favours larger schools as this is based on pupil numbers. Schools that struggle tend to be those less popular or schools in less populated areas.

A vote on the recommendations was held and the majority of the Select Committee supported the recommendations.

RESOLVED:

That in regard to the 2020/21 Revenue Budget, the Children and Young People Select Committee supported the recommendations being proposed to the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services and Young People.

164. CHILDREN'S SERVICES CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2021/22 TO 2023/24

The Committee received for pre-scrutiny, a report and presentation on the Children's Services Capital Programme 2021/22 to 2023/24 (Item 7 in the Minute Book).

Members were taken through the presentation and important key areas of the report were highlighted which included significant investment across the school estate, national funding policy and the statutory responsibility for the planning of school places. The Committee heard that a further 4,600 school places were being proposed for consideration in the report, which would account for an extra 18,300 school places between 2013 and 2024, but issues such as new housing developments could also impact timescales. Members attention was also drawn to the Hampshire School Places Plan 2020-2025 which was listed at Appendix 6 of the report. Resources carried forward to meet future demand of school places were also detailed to Members. Table 4 of the report listed the planned new schools in Hampshire by September 2025, and Members heard that some of the new schools detailed for 2024 will be subject to change as housing developments are monitored.

Officers highlighted the significant investment in SEND places with £1million per annum being allocated towards this. Other priority areas included investment in Early Years and also investment in supporting suitability challenges in schools.

Slide 9 of the presentation slides detailed a breakdown of the investment of the 2021/22 to 2023/24 Capital Programme and the majority of this spend would be for new schools and extensions. Some of the pressures on the Capital Programme were highlighted which were detailed at presentation slide 11, but Members heard that each of the projects listed within the programme did contain a project contingency around possible risks. In conclusion, Members heard that the County Council continued to have a national reputation for quality school buildings.

In response to questions, Members heard:

- In relation to the Free Schools programme, there was an expectation that there would be further government announcements around funding and also the Free School Programme, and officers would update Members in due course.
- That in relation to carbon neutral schools, officers were continually looking at efficiency in new school designs, and close working with the Department for Education on this issue was ongoing.
- That there is a need for options and flexibility around new schools in relation to new housing developments, as there can be uncertainty as to how many dwellings will be family dwellings. Other options such as expanding the existing school estate would also be considered.

A vote was held and the recommendations were unanimously supported by the Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the Children and Young People Select Committee unanimously supported the recommendations to the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services and Young People.

165. ATTAINMENT OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN HAMPSHIRE SCHOOLS 2020

The Committee received a report and presentation providing an annual update on the Attainment of Children and Young People in Hampshire Schools 2020 (Item 8 in the Minute Book).

The Director introduced the item and highlighted to Members that due to Covid-19 and the absence of educational data, there couldn't be comparisons drawn with previous years reports, but it was important to still bring an update to the Committee.

Members were taken through the presentation slides which highlighted key areas of the report. Members noted that as a result of the cancellation of KS2 tests, GCSE's and A-level's in 2020, there would be no national data produced by the Department for Education for this period. The Ofqual process in awarding GCSE grades in 2020 was explained and also the challenges around this to try and ensure this was an accurate and robust process as detailed at paragraphs 7-14 of the report.

The challenges with using algorithm and teacher assessments were explained, and officers highlighted that 'unconscious bias' could be a factor in teacher assessments, but slide 8 of the presentation slides highlighted that the move to teacher assessments had not disadvantaged disadvantaged pupils further.

In response to questions, Members heard:

- That the DfE have announced a £1billion catch-up fund for schools to support the catch up of disadvantaged children, and as part of the national mentoring programme, graduates will help to mentor children, particularly those disadvantaged.
- For post-16 learning, colleges have put in significant catch-up elements to ensure gaps in knowledge are addressed.
- That Ofsted inspectors are currently engaged in research to understand the effects of remote education, and a first paper on this has recently been published to provide a national perspective.
- That a lot of colleges and universities have reached out to accept children and young people who haven't obtained the required grades for a course, and have done their best to accommodate.
- That in relation to laptop availability for remote learning for disadvantaged children, the DfE has announced a further allocation of laptops to schools for the current lockdown.
- That successful remote learning should be a blended approach of online teaching and home working, with targeted support where needed. That thought has also been given to how some learning could be used as a remote resource post-lockdown.

- That there have been issues in relation to child engagement and online learning, and some schools have explored using a rewards policy for positive engagement, as well as ensuring children are logged on for learning when expected.
- That schools have reflected over the summer on how to successfully deliver any future online learning, which has made the current period of lockdown learning smoother.

The Executive Member for Education and Skills emphasised the hard work of all schools and colleges in Hampshire over the past year, and the support given to parents and children with remote learning.

The Chairman thanked officers for their presentation, and proposed an amendment to the recommendation to thank all schools and colleges in Hampshire for their work during the pandemic, which was seconded by Councillor Branson. The Committee agreed this amendment.

RESOLVED

That the Committee noted the contents of the report and thanked all schools and colleges in Hampshire for their work during the pandemic.

166. **ETHNIC MINORITY AND TRAVELLER ACHIEVEMENT SERVICE (EMTAS) UPDATE**

The Committee received a report and presentation providing an update on the Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service (EMTAS) (Item 9 in the Minute Book).

Members of the Committee were taken through the presentation slides which highlighted key areas of the report and the core work of the Service. It was highlighted that in relation to the Hampshire Young Interpreter Scheme, this was initially a pilot project which had now been digitalised and had been sold worldwide as well as nationally.

Presentation slide 3 highlighted details of population data in relation to ethnicity and the use of online resources in helping to support pupils was explained as well as the use of Interpreters particularly around engagement and support with parents. It was heard that as a result of Covid-19, the Service has had to adapt to support schools and parents which included close contact with parents, support in terms of transition between schools and interpreting. There were also lots of free resources available online.

In response to questions, Members heard:

- That the Service has supported schools in having discussions with traveller families and access to remote learning during the Covid lockdown. Where families were unable to access remote learning due to living on remote traveller sites, children would be eligible to attend school under the definition of a vulnerable child, but some traveller families may not take up this offer due to fear of Covid transmission.

- That the Service continues to work closely with schools and pre-schools to prepare children transitioning to school, particularly if they speak English as a second language.

RESOLVED:

That the Select Committee noted the work of EMTAS in supporting children, young people and their families during Covid-19 and progress made in addressing the priorities in the service plan.

167. THE IMPACT OF CHANGES TO POST 16 TRANSPORT POLICY STATEMENT 2020 FOR STUDENTS ATTENDING POST 16 PROVISION IN THE 2020/21 ACADEMIC YEAR.

The Committee received a written update report on the impact of changes to Post 16 Transport Policy Statement 2020 for students attending Post 16 provision in the 2020/21 academic year (Item 10 in the Minute Book). This six month update was at the request of the Select Committee following pre-scrutiny of the proposed changes to the 2020 Post-16 Transport Policy Statement at their meeting on the 8 July 2020.

The report was taken as read and questions were invited of the Committee.

In response to questions, Members heard:

- That in relation to the number of children having their applications rejected, there are difficulties in drawing comparisons with previous years due to Covid.
- That a significant number of appeals do get approved due to missing information on the initial application which is needed to agree eligibility.

RESOLVED:

That the Children and Young People Select Committee noted the content of the report.

168. UPDATE ON AUTISM SERVICES COMMISSIONING FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN HAMPSHIRE - DECEMBER 2020 UPDATE

The Committee received a written update report on Autism Services Commissioning for Children and Young People in Hampshire (Item 11 in the Minute Book). At their 28 September 2020 meeting, the Committee resolved to receive a written report for every meeting until the Committee were satisfied that the service had caught up and was providing a timely service for children, parents and schools and proof that the service was making progress.

The Chairman requested that any questions be either emailed to the Chairman, or the Democratic Services Officer, to be forwarded on for a response, which would be circulated to the Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the Children and Young People Select Committee noted the update.

169. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Director of Transformation and Governance presented the Committee's work programme (see Item 12 in the Minute Book).

The Chairman suggested that the Committee receive a presented update on Autism Assessment Services from officers at their meeting in November 2021, and continue to receive written updates until then, the Committee were content with this.

The Chairman also highlighted that at the first meeting of the Select Committee following the election, there would be a presentation providing an overview of the work of Children's Services.

Councillor Porter requested a future update on Youth Services across the County and an overview of the challenges to the Service for a future meeting of the Committee. Councillor Porter also declared a personal interest as a Trustee of a Youth Service at this point in the meeting.

In response to a query about a future Covid update, it was confirmed that this could be included in the Overview to Children's Services update at the first meeting of the Committee following the election. It was also confirmed that there could be a broader update on Covid at one of the regular Member briefing programme meetings.

RESOLVED:

That the work programme, subject to the additions set out above, was agreed.

Chairman,