

AT A MEETING of the Children and Young People Select Committee of
HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL held at the castle, Winchester on Tuesday
12th July 2022

Chairman:
p Councillor Neville Penman

p Councillor Juliet Henderson	p Councillor Zoe Huggins
p Councillor Prad Bains	Councillor Gavin James
a Councillor Jackie Branson	p Councillor Lesley Meenaghan
p Councillor Ann Briggs	p Councillor Arun Mummalaneni
p Councillor Steven Broomfield	p Councillor Jackie Porter
p Councillor Tim Davies	p Councillor Jacky Tustain
p Councillor Christopher Donnelly	p Councillor Malcolm Wade
p Councillor David Drew	

Co-opted members

p Robert Sanders, Church of England
p Gemma Rainger, Primary Schools Parent Governor Representative
p Kate Watson, Special Schools Parent Governor Representative

42. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillor Branson.

43. **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.

Councillor Huggins noted that they were employed in the Post-16 sector.

44. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 17 May 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

45. **DEPUTATIONS**

The Committee did not receive any deputations.

46. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman did not make any announcements to the meeting.

47. **UKRAINE & UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM SEEKING CHILDREN - UPDATE**

The committee received an update from the Director of Children's Services on unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) alongside an overview of families relocating to Hampshire from Ukraine (see Item 6 in the Minute Book).

Members received an overview of the National Transfer Scheme, which became mandatory for all Local Authorities in 2021. Hampshire's target is 199 children and has currently received 119. The average age of arrivals is 17, so the young people quickly become care leavers and no longer count towards the target number.

The committee noted that all children are considered to be trafficked until a social work assessment is completed. This is as a result of partnership working between the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub, Willow (specialist exploitation team) and Children in Care teams.

The committee received an overview of the main challenges facing the department in this area, which included accessing education and placements often being outside of Hampshire. An overview of the nationalities of the UASC was noted alongside the support offered to those considered care leavers.

The committee then received a specific update on the Homes for Ukraine Scheme which local authorities are responsible for implementing, although they remain private arrangements. Members heard how lessons had been learned from the Afghan response which informed the planning of this scheme. The challenges of this scheme were highlighted, included the need to rematch when placements break down and the limited time available to create and implement what has become a complex process.

In response to questions, members found that:

- The department pursues all possible support when English is a second language to assist in accessing education etc.
- A significant number of UASC do not receive the right to remain within the UK.
- Hampshire has an Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service which supports children, families and schools with a range of services.
- Where possible, UASC are placed alongside peers in cohorts.
- There are significant risks surrounding the young people who do not receive the right to remain, many of who then abscond.
- There is close engagement with Prevent and the Channel Panel to work to prevent and identify radicalisation.

- There is an increasing number of UASC who are now care leavers, many of which are outside of Hampshire but remain the county's responsibility.
- In relation to Ukrainian refugees, schools have reported a positive experience and classrooms are being set up to be trauma informed.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Children and Young People Select Committee note the update on Ukraine and the associated Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children.

48. EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE POLICY

With the agreement of the Chairman this item was deferred to a future meeting.

49. POST 16 EDUCATION & SKILLS - AN UPDATE

The committee received an update from the Director of Children's Services on Post 16 Education and Skills (see Item 8 in the Minute Book).

Members heard how the Hampshire Skills (Post 16) system was the largest single area further education system in the UK, noting that colleges are independent Corporations or Trusts, outside local authority regulation. There are currently 35,200 funded 16-19/25 places at Hampshire based providers, 977 of which are high needs and 89% in a further education college.

The committee noted that the LA had a duty to support transition, post 16 and participation in education, employment and training (EET). An overview of participation and attainment was provided, followed by an introduction to the new level 3 technical qualifications, T-levels. These had been developed with employers and have replaced other level 3 technical qualifications such as BTEC or OCR Nationals. Members noted the impact of the recent Skills & Post 16 Education Act.

In response to questions, members found that:

- Young people experiencing vulnerability such as living in relative poverty are provided additional support in relation to post 16 education and skills.
- Ofsted inspect the courses available for the cohort, rather than assessing the range or need of the courses available.
- There are difficulties in advertising opportunities, many of which are not voluntary roles or employment. 'Apprenticeship Hubs' have been created as an attempt to solve this issue.
- All available pathways should be shared with young people and the new T-levels should have the same weight placed upon them as other options.
- T-level placements are the responsibility of the college and they check them for safety and supervision.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Children and Young People Select Committee note the contents of the report.

50. HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT POLICY PUBLIC CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

The committee received a report from the Director of Children's Services setting out the outcomes of the recent Home to School Transport Policy Public Consultation (see Item 9 in the Minute Book).

Members noted that the Local Authority had a statutory duty to provide home to school transport to certain young people where they meet circumstances prescribed in legislation. The existing service provides daily transport for 9,000 children and young people every school day.

The committee heard that the proposed changes to the policy would allow for route planning and vehicle use to utilise efficiencies provided by increased use of collective pick-up points and multiple destinations. It was noted that there was not a statutory requirement for home to school transport to be a door to door service or to provide for individual establishments.

In order for the service to deliver savings as part of the Council's 2023 savings programme, permission to consult with the public and affected service users was provided in January 2022. The public's views on two proposals were sought:

- Increase the use of co-ordinated pick up and drop off points for SEND children.
- Arrange journeys to more commonly serve multiple schools and colleges and age groups, including journeys that serve both mainstream and special schools and colleges.

Members heard that these changes would improve the efficiency of school journeys as fewer vehicles may be required, with some carrying on average more children. This would provide savings of up to £986,000.

However, the consultation highlighted a lack of support by respondents to the proposed changes to the current arrangements, with a majority not in agreement not in agreement with either proposal.

The committee heard that many of the concerns raised in the consultation would be mitigated by applying the changes to the policy on an individual basis, ensuring that each individual children's needs are considered. This would be incorporated into the process, in accordance with the statutory guidance and the Council's Home to School Transport Entitlement policy.

In response to questions, members heard that:

- In cases where it was considered appropriate, it would allow for a more inclusive approach in relation to young people with SEN, preparing them for later life .
- Journey appropriateness was assessed by travel time, rather than the start time of the journey in relation to the school's opening time.
- Consideration would be given not just to individuals, but to the mix of young people on each vehicle.
- The changes would not be implemented unilaterally, but following individual assessment, over a period of 1 to 3 years.

- Travel escorts will continue to be deployed where needed.
- There is a two stage appeals process which parents can engage in when they are not happy with an outcome in relation to Home to School Transport. This is a statutory requirement.
- The department works very closely alongside their providers and will work to prevent changes being a surprise and supporting transition for children with vulnerabilities, as is the case currently when arrangements change.
- The majority of families will not have a significant pre-journey introduced, with the majority anticipated as being a few hundred metres to a gathering spot.
- The savings figure is an estimate as any changes to transport will be assessed on a case by case basis.
- Officers have researched other local authorities who have taken similar actions in relation to their policies, to learn from their experience.
- The proposed changes would also have a positive impact on the environment, as a result of fewer vehicles undertaking journeys.

Following questions, the initial recommendation was proposed, and a vote was held with the following outcome:

For: 9
 Against: 4
 Abstained: 1

The Executive Lead Member thanked the Select Committee for their comments and assured the members that they would inform their decision.

RECOMMENDATION:

That, regarding the changes to the Home to School Transport Policy, the Select Committee supports the recommendations being proposed to the Executive Member for Children's Services.

51. UPDATE ON AUTISM SERVICES COMMISSIONING FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN HAMPSHIRE

The Committee received a written update on Autism Services Commissioning for Children and Young People in Hampshire (see Item 10 in the Minute Book).

RESOLVED:

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

52. WORK PROGRAMME

The Chief Executive presented the Committee's work programme (see Item 11 in the Minute Book).

RESOLVED:

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

Chairman, Children and Young People
Select Committee