

AT A MEETING of the Children and Young People Select Committee of
HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL held at the castle, Winchester on Monday
17th October 2022

Chairman:
p Councillor Neville Penman

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| p Councillor Juliet Henderson | p Councillor Zoe Huggins |
| p Councillor Prad Bains | p Councillor Gavin James |
| p 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 Gemma Rainger, Primary Schools Parent Governor Representative
p Robert Sanders, Church of England Representative

59. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Robert Sanders, Church of England Representative.

60. 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.

61. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 28 July 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

62. DEPUTATIONS

The Committee did not receive any deputations.

63. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman announced that, due to the reduced timescales associated with this additionally scheduled meeting of the Select Committee, a written update on the progress of Autism Services had not been provided. Members noted that the full presentation for these services was due at the next meeting in November.

64. **OUTCOMES FROM THE CONSULTATION ON SOCIAL CARE PROVISION FOR OVERNIGHT SHORT BREAKS AT FIRVALE RESIDENTIAL RESPITE CHILDREN'S UNIT**

The committee received a report and presentation from the Director of Children's Services providing an overview of the proposed outcomes following the consultation on social care provision for overnight short breaks at Firvale residential respite Children's Unit (see Item 6 in the Minute Book).

Members noted that Firvale residential respite unit temporarily closed in March 2020 because of the pandemic and staff were redeployed to other services within Children's Services. Following this, in January 2022, the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services agreed for consultations to start on the future of Firvale Residential Respite Children's Unit. This consultation lasted 10 weeks, open to the public and staff.

The committee heard that the site is operated by HCC in partnership with Hampshire Hospitals Foundations NHS Trust (HHFT), who own the building. It was noted that the two organisations used the site for significantly different purposes and that the HHFT were exploring potential future options for the use of the building.

It was also noted that a report of essential building and maintenance works needed at Firvale, produced in August 2018, set out a contribution for HCC of at least £400,000 to ensure the building is fit for purpose and a safe environment. Additionally, the development of the residential estate surrounding Firvale has increased concerns of loss of privacy as some bedrooms and the whole grounds are now overlooked by other properties.

Finally, members heard that prior to the closure only around one third of available overnight respite provision capacity was used, and that all of these young people had been provided alternative provision since the closure.

Officers explained that it was due to the reasons set out that the recommendation being made to the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services was to permanently close social care provision at Firvale Residential Unit by 31 March 2023.

As a result of questions members heard that:

- All young people who have used the unit have been supported as individuals to find alternative provision that meets their assessed needs.
- There are a number of providers of overnight respite across Hampshire, some of which are expanding capacity, which meet the

needs of Hampshire's residents. Officers noted that these locations offer a high level and quality of service and that all are subject to Ofsted inspections.

- HCC was unusual in comparison to other Local Authorities to still be providing their own provision.

Following questions and debate, the recommendation was proposed and voted on with the following outcome:

Favour 13

Against 3

RESOLVED:

That the Select Committee supports the recommendations being proposed to the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services in regards to the proposed changes to the provision of respite services to children and young people with disabilities.

65. **SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND) 0-25 UPDATE REPORT – SEN PERFORMANCE AND JOINT WORKING**

The committee received a report and presentation from the Director of Children's Services providing the annual update on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities performance and joint working (see Item 7 in the Minute Book).

The committee received an overview of Education and Health Care Plans, noting the 155% increase of maintained plans since the reforms in 2015 which is continuing to increase. The department had estimated a 10% increase for 2022 but this has been greatly exceeded and has passed a 30% increase in demand. Despite this, the timeliness of plans being issued has continued to improve.

Members heard how schools and early years providers had the chance in March 2022 to collaborate and bid on funding to support research based, sector-led projects designed to build capacity for SEN support. It was noted that there have been 13 successful bids spanning around 80 education settings which have been developed into project actions plans and will be implemented. These projects are due to run until March 2024, with the intended impact being a more skilled workforce and a greater capacity to improve provision and outcomes.

It was noted that the increase in plans increases the pressure on the high needs budget and 2021/22 saw an overspend of £27.7million. This was stated to not only reflect the overall increase in plans but the need to place young people in the independent non-maintained sector, due to the rise of the number of plans and the increase in requests for specialist placements. Hampshire has been selected for the Delivering Better Value programme by the Department for Education which hopes to address these funding issues.

As a result of questions members heard that:

- There were a high number of requests associated with transfer to secondary school.

- Training has been produced for governing bodies and data is being gathered in relation to reduced timetables.
- The increase in appeals is thought to be due to the lack of in house specialist provision and efforts are made to mediate with parents ahead of the appeal.
- Ofsted assessed the service as improving so the increased timeliness of completion does not present a concern for their quality. Multi-agency monitoring has been introduced which includes a check on the impact the plan is making.

RESOLVED:

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

66. **ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT (2021-22) AND SECTION 30 OMBUDSMAN REPORT**

The committee received a report and presentation from the Director of Children's Services providing an overview of the annual complaints report, including a section 30 Ombudsman report (see Item 8 in the Minute Book).

The committee noted the Annual Complaints Report and its role in keeping Hampshire County Council's Children's Services Department informed on the operation and effectiveness of its complaints procedure and ensure that improvements can be made as a result. The report set out representations made to the authority, the number of complaints at each stage and any that were considered by the LGSCO, which customer groups made the complaints and the types of complaints made.

The committee went on to note the section 30 report and the reasons provided by the LGSCO for issuing it. This report sets out the details of the complaint, findings, conclusions and the LGSCO's recommendations. These recommendations have been completed, the County Council has issued an apology to the complainant and paid a symbolic amount in consideration of the time and expense resulting from the complaint. A further action in respect of reviewing wider aspects of the service is in progress in accordance with the Ombudsman's timescale.

As a result of questions members heard that:

- The department is training staff to try and prevent complaints being made by providing solutions, rather than directing to the process when requested.
- There are regular meetings with senior managers to look at trend data in relation to complaints etc.
- There has been work done to benchmark against peer authorities and HCC is typical of these

RESOLVED:

That the Children and Young Peoples Select Committee note the position of the Children's Services Department in regard to complaints for the reporting period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

That the Children and Young People Select Committee formally note the recommendations made by the LGSCO and that the recommendations of the LGSCO in respect to the complainant have been completed by the County Council.

67. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chief Executive presented the Committee's work programme (see Item 9 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