

AT A MEETING of the Children and Young People Select Committee of
HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL held at the castle, Winchester on
Wednesday, 14th June, 2017

PRESENT

Chairman:

p Councillor Ray Bolton

Vice-Chairman:

p Councillor Roz Chadd

Councillors:

p Jackie Branson
p Zilliah Brooks
a Fran Carpenter
p Steve Forster
p Marge Harvey
a Wayne Irish
p Gavin James

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

Co-opted Members:

p Caroline Edmondson: Primary School Parent Governor Representative
p Andrew March: Secondary School Parent Governor Representative
VACANT: Special School Parent Governor Representative
a Jeff Williams: Church of England Schools Representative
VACANT: Roman Catholic Schools Representative

At the invitation of the Chairman:

a Councillor Peter Edgar – Executive Member for Education
a Councillor Keith Mans – Executive Lead Member for Children's Services

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 recordings for broadcasting purposes.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Wayne Irish and Jackie Porter.

2. 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.

No declarations were made.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4. DEPUTATIONS

The Committee did not receive any deputations at this meeting.

5. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed new and returning members to the Committee.

The Chairman noted that this meeting was Andrew March's final meeting as a parent governor representative, as his four year term was due to end before the next meeting of the Select Committee. The Chairman stated for the record his thanks to Andrew for his contribution to the work of the Committee, helpfully providing Members with a perspective from a secondary school parent governor viewpoint, and wished him luck in his future endeavours.

The Chairman also noted that he had received in the last month the resignation of Gary Walker, the special school parent governor representative, due to his no longer being a parent governor. The Chairman stated for the record his thanks to Gary, and noted that the Committee would be seeking two new parent governors to take up positions later in the year.

6. INTRODUCTION TO SCRUTINY

A presentation was heard from officers in Legal and Governance which set out to the Committee the role and purpose of scrutiny, the terms of reference for the Children and Young People Select Committee, and how Members could best engage in the overview and scrutiny process (see presentation, Item 6 in the Minute Book).

In response to questions on how best to raise local issues or queries relating to Children's Services, it was heard that the Director of Children's Services, Steve Crocker, was happy to be contacted directly on these. All queries where Members were not sure how to direct their issue should be raised with Democratic and Member Services.

7. INTRODUCTION TO CHILDREN'S SERVICES

A presentation was heard from the Director of Children's Services, together with the three Assistant Directors of Children's Services, which provided a baseline of information for Members in relation to the Department and the variety of services it offers (see presentation, Item 7 in the Minute Book).

In response to questions, Members heard:

- That if children are not able to be offered one of their three school preferences, the closest school to their home address with places available would be allocated to them.
- The decision for all new schools to be 'Free' or 'Academy' schools is a policy implemented by Central Government. There were issues with finding appropriate Academy sponsors for new schools in Hampshire, or, where Academies are poorly performing, finding better sponsors to take them over. Hampshire County Council does not by law have a role in helping Academy schools improve, as this is for the Regional Schools Commissioner acting on behalf of the Secretary of State, nor in appointing sponsors for new Free or Academy schools. However, as the children attending these schools are all from Hampshire, the Department felt it appropriate that they take an active role in championing the interests of all children in this area.
- To date there had not been evidence to suggest that fewer families were using the Family Support Service since the decision was taken to reduce the number of Children's Centres, although it may be likely that the demographics would have changed given that the services were no longer universal, but more targeted. The Department would be content to bring a monitoring item to a future meeting of the Committee on this subject.
- Innovative work was taking place to recruit and retain social workers and teachers, where the highest vacancy rates were being seen across the Department.
- For social workers, the Department had been successful in recruiting social work students once they have graduated from University, with national roadshows for teachers advertising working for Hampshire County Council attracting staff who might not have applied otherwise.
- For teachers, there had been success in retraining teachers of non-core subjects to deliver English and Math syllabuses, with innovative work taking place with the Universities in Winchester and Chichester to design this programme. Over 800 Newly Qualified Teachers had been recruited for September 2017, and work would be ongoing to understand how best to retain these individuals; approximately 1/8th of them would usually leave after two years in a Hampshire school environment. Lectures were also being given at degree level by Hampshire County Council staff, where the benefits of working in the County were being promoted.

The Committee heard that Members would be welcome to request any briefings or information they felt they needed in relation to their divisional areas, and conversely to raise with the Department any issues that they receive to enable the Department to respond to them.

The Chairman thanked the Director and his Assistant Directors for an informative and educational presentation.

8. JOINT TARGETED INSPECTION - FEEDBACK AND LETTER OF FINDINGS

The Committee received a report (Item 8 in the Minute Book) from the Director of Children's Services and his representatives providing details of the outcomes of the Joint Targeted Area Inspection of the multi-agency response to abuse and neglect in Hampshire.

It was heard that this was a new framework for inspection; it was the first time that Hampshire County Council's Children's Services had been subject to an inspection with its multi-agency partners, the first time that the inspection team had been led by OFSTED but included other inspectorates with a responsibility for protecting children, and it had seen only six other Local Authority areas subject to this type of inspection before.

The outcomes of the inspection had been exceptionally positive, with Hampshire receiving the strongest report so far, with a substantial amount of good feedback on arrangements in the County. There had been some minor recommendations across all partners for improvement, and these had been placed into an action plan being led by the Assistant Director, Stuart Ashley, in conjunction with partner representatives. Monitoring was taking place of these through regular group meetings. It was agreed that a copy of the action plan would be made available to the Committee.

A few questions from Members further explored the meaning of the recommendations for partners, and clarifications were provided.

In response to questions, Members heard:

- That many of the recommendations made through the inspection would require working together through collaboration and partnership. Hampshire County Council did not have the ability to require the changes recommended to partners, but it would be able to work closely with others to influence change.
- There were many other forums for partnership in Hampshire other than the group monitoring the actions, such as a strong Safeguarding Children Board, and the Hampshire Children's Trust.
- Some wider issues around how Hampshire Constabulary manage Domestic Abuse cases had been raised through a recent HMIC report on the force, and similar issues had been raised through the Joint Area Targeted Inspection.
- The findings of the inspection team in relation to the stepping down of a very few 'child protection' cases to 'children in need' were not agreed with by the Department, as it was the decision of multi-agency partners to step children down from being in child protection. Of the 150 cases OFSTED audited, they felt that two had been stepped down to being a 'child in need' too quickly, believing that the decision had been over optimistic. Since receiving this recommendation, the Department had audited other cases to ensure that appropriate processes had been followed, and to

date evidence had not been found to suggest that the correct judgements had not been used.

Discussion was held on the possibility of Members in future being given the opportunity to review case studies of children subject to child protection plans, in order to understand the complex decision making that sits behind them.

It was agreed by the Committee that the report was overwhelmingly positive and officers and teams should be commended for their work in achieving it.

RESOLVED:

That the Children and Young People Select Committee note and welcome the letter and supporting report.

9. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee received a report (Item 9 in the Minute Book) from the Director of Transformation and Governance setting out the Select Committee's future work programme.

The Committee agreed that the following items be added to the work programme:

- Additional free hours of early years provision
- Attainment in Schools
- Evaluation and monitoring of Family Support Service implementation
- Home to School transport

It was also agreed that the items on Special Educational Needs and Disability reform and Children and Young People Disability Services include discussion on children with autism.

RESOLVED:

That the work programme be agreed.

Chairman, 10 July 2017