

Children and Young People's Services Select Committee

25 April 2019

Children and Young People's Services Select Committee Business Planning Group

Report by the Chairman of the Business Planning Group

Executive Summary

Each Select Committee has a Business Planning Group (BPG) to oversee the Committee's work programme and prioritise issues for consideration by the Committee. This report provides an update of the last meeting of the outgoing BPG held on 25 April 2019, setting out the key issues discussed.

The Focus for Scrutiny

1. The Committee is asked to consider the contents of the report.

1. Declarations of Interest

- 1.1 None.

2. Background/Context

- 2.1 The BPG last met virtually on 21 November 2018.
- 2.2 The BPG noted that WSCC recently had an Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) by Ofsted. Some items on the BPG agenda would be revisited post publication of the ILACS Report in early May.

3. Education and Skills Update

- 3.1 The BPG received a verbal update from Mark Jenner, Head of School Effectiveness on the priorities for the service, which included the development of a new Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Inclusion Strategy.
- 3.2 A number of work-streams had been identified and workshops were taking place, the output of which would form the strategy delivery plan.
- 3.3 The BPG suggested that Paul High, as lead member for SEND, be nominated to report to the Committee on the SEND strategy board, and that a full item on the strategy return to the Committee at the appropriate time.

4. School Funding

- 4.1 The following update was provided to the BPG regarding school funding:
 - A funding survey would be launched shortly, and considered at the Schools Forum in June.

- The survey would indicate how schools manage and balance their budget.
 - Next year's budget was currently uncertain. More would be known in autumn.
- 4.2 The Committee received a request from WorthLess about the potential to discuss the school funding situation at a meeting of the Committee
- 4.3 The BPG considered the limits of the Committee's influence on the school funding situation, however agreed the request from WorthLess that Heads return to the Committee later in the year, along with stakeholders and Chairs of Governors. The BPG indicated that MPs should also be invited to attend this meeting of the Committee.

5. Feedback from Performance and Finance Select Committee

- 5.1 The Chairman of the Children and Young People's Services Select Committee received a letter from the Chairman of the Performance and Finance Committee which requested a number of updates.
- 5.2 School transport was raised as a concern, particularly for SEND pupils, and the continuing overspend within this area. The BPG agreed that school transport would be discussed as a wider item on SEND provision at a future meeting of the Committee in 2019. This was likely to form part of the new SEND and Inclusion Strategy.
- 5.3 The Performance and Finance Select Committee questioned what was being done to support schools to keep pupils within mainstream environments as the Alternative Provision Colleges were exceeding capacity. The BPG agreed this would be considered at the July meeting of the group, as part of a wider item on Elective Home Education (EHE).
- 5.4 Many of the performance targets within the Best Start in Life priority area were reporting as 'red'. The BPG agreed this would be picked up as part of the ongoing work after consideration of the Ofsted report.
- 5.5 The Performance and Finance Select Committee were concerned around the provision and cost of residential placements. In discussion with officers, the BPG noted that the focus was to provide services which allow children to remain within the county. Social Workers were reviewing high cost cases and looking at alternative provision. A new Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) Framework for children's placements was allowing an engagement with the external provider market to ensure that all children placed have a pathway into less supported residential provision and to provide economies of scale.
- 5.6 The following education issues highlighted by the Performance and Finance Select Committee would be carried over to the next BPG meeting in July:
- School place planning and how this could be improved
 - The implications of the delay to the project at Manor Green Primary school
 - The poor customer satisfaction scores for services provided by Capita to schools.
- 5.7 The Chairman of the Children and Young People's Services Select Committee will write to the Chairman of the Performance and Finance Select Committee to update him on these discussions in July.

6. Children and Family Services Update

- 6.1 The Children and Family Services Update would be provided at the July meeting of the BPG, following the publication of the ILACS report in early May.

7. Total Performance Monitor

- 7.1 The BPG considered the latest TPM data. Members considered that a possible review of the presentation and measures might be useful to reframe the focus and interpretations of the data. This would be picked up at the July BPG.

8 Work Programme Planning

8.1 Forward Plan

- 8.1.1 The BPG did not identify any decisions in the Forward Plan for preview by the Committee.

8.2 Possible Items for Future Scrutiny as referred by the Committee

- 8.2.1 Members of the Committee at the 10 January 2019 meeting suggested the BPG consider the following items for future scrutiny:

- Woodlands Mead College Site – the BPG did not consider this to a topic for scrutiny at this time.
- Award of Contract for Integrated Child Psychology Service – the BPG noted that the Director of Children and Family Services approved the award of the contract in March 2019.
- Virtual School – Educational experiences and outcomes – the BPG agreed to consider this at the July meeting.

8.3 Plan the June Committee Meeting

- 8.3.1 The BPG agreed the Committee's work programme as at appendix A.

8.4 Committee Visits

- 8.4.1 The BPG would consider expressions of interest at the May meeting for visiting the MASH.

7. Implications

- 7.1 There are no resource, risk management, Crime and Disorder Act or Human Rights Act implications arising directly from this report. However, many of the substantive reports to the Committee will have some implications and a Equality Impact Report will be included in appropriate substantive reports to the Committee.

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Children and Young People's Services Select Committee Business Planning Group

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Background Papers: None

Appendix A – Work Programme for Children and Young People's Services Select Committee.