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03 June 2019

Dear Member,

County Council - Friday, 7 June 2019

Please find enclosed the briefing notes for the motions to be debated at the meeting of the County Council to be held on Friday, 7 June 2019.

Agenda No	Item
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8(a)	Motion on Ofsted inspection of Children's Services (Pages 3 - 5)
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Briefing note on factual background information attached.

8(b)	Motion on Night-time Economy (Page 6)
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Briefing note on factual background information attached.

Yours sincerely

Tony Kershaw
Director of Law and Assurance

To all members of the County Council

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County Council - 7 June 2019

Agenda Item 8(a) - Notice of Motion by Mr Jones

Ofsted Report into Children's Services – Briefing Note

The County Council's Children's Social Care Services were the subject of an inspection by Ofsted between 25 February and 8 March 2019. A final report on the service was published on 8 May. All areas inspected were given an Ofsted assessment of 'inadequate'. The last Ofsted inspection of these services took place in 2016 when an overall finding of 'requires improvement to be good' was given.

One significant consequence of the inspection will be the issuing of a statutory direction by the Department for Education (DfE) to the County Council and the appointment of a commissioner by the Secretary of State to oversee the Council's response. The Council will be expected to work closely with the commissioner on the development and delivery of an improvement plan and it will be for the Commissioner to monitor and direct the Council in relation to it.

It will be for the Commissioner to determine whether the Council's improvement plan and the actions taken to deliver it are effective. That will inform the Commissioner's recommendation to the Secretary of State in relation to whether the County Council should retain responsibility for the direct provision of children's social care services. A timetable for the evaluation of progress against the improvement plan will be determined and monitored by the Commissioner. An initial review is likely to take place six months following the publication of the report and quarterly thereafter.

The report contains criticisms of the effectiveness of the Corporate Parenting Panel. Changes to the Panel's constitution were agreed by the County Council at its April meeting and arrangements will be made for an update on the Panel's activity and future arrangements at the July meeting. The report was also critical of the Council's scrutiny function and the Children and Young People's Services Select Committee considered the implications of the report for effective scrutiny at its meeting on 15 May.

The Council's recently-established and independently-chaired Improvement Board will take the primary responsibility for managing and overseeing the implementation of the improvement plan and in providing a forum for partnership working on the plan in addition to the liaison with the DfE's appointed commissioner.

The Cabinet Member retains the statutory responsibility as lead member for Children's Services and will provide the County Council's direct accountability to the commissioner and the DfE. The Cabinet Member is a member, with the Leader, of the Improvement Board. As the Board will not have executive powers on behalf of the County Council the Cabinet Member and the Director of Children's Services will share the responsibility for taking all significant decisions for the implementation of the plan. These will be advertised through the Forward Plan in the usual way. The Children and Young People's Service Select Committee will, at its meeting on 19 June, consider the draft improvement plan and the Committee's business planning for scrutiny of its delivery.

There are monthly scheduled Member Days, overseen by the Member Development Group, to provide members with opportunities for learning and development. The next scheduled Member Days are on 26 June for budget planning and 10 July for the Fire and Rescue Service inspection outcome. There are currently no plans for a Member Day for Children's Services improvement but scheduled dates without allocated business are available.

The County Council has previously considered requests to review arrangements for the appointment to the chairmanship and vice-chairmanship of Select Committees and, in particular, a move to a presumption of appointments of opposition group members to such roles. The Council determined to retain the current arrangements on those occasions.

From 2000 until 2012 there was a minority group Chairman of the Adults' Services Select Committee. Up to 2009 there were six select committees, of which two had minority group vice-chairmen and four after 2009. In April 2012 the number of Select Committees reduced from six to four. All of the chairmanships and vice-chairmanships were majority group members from this point. A minority group member became Vice-Chairman of the Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee in October 2013.

The Select Committee protocol in the Constitution was amended by Council in February 2012 to say:

'The membership of Select Committees is set out in the Scheme of Delegation which includes guiding principles on the appointment of members. Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen will be appointed by the County Council on their individual merits, but the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of a Committee will usually be from different political groups. Members will usually serve on one Committee only.'

Tony Kershaw
Director of Law and Assurance

John Readman
Director of Children's Services

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County Council - 7 June 2019

Agenda Item 8(b) - Notice of Motion by Mr Jones

Night-time Economy - Briefing Note

The County Council's Economic Growth Plan 2018-23 recognises the important role town centres and high streets play in economic well-being and the future prosperity of West Sussex. Vibrant and successful town centres and high streets are important to attracting and retaining businesses, residents and visitors.

Town centres are facing huge challenges, which are well documented. The Districts and Boroughs are the lead authorities for their town centres and the County Council is working closely with them on a range of initiatives, which depending on local priorities, will support the development of night-time economies. Examples of the County Council's support include the following.

- To stimulate fresh thinking on town centres, the Leader of the County Council hosted a 'Let's Talk About Our Towns' event in September 2018 with Bill Grimsey of the Grimsey Review on town centres as a key speaker.
- District and Borough Growth Deals where the regeneration and public realm improvements in town centres has been prioritised. Crawley and Worthing are early examples where good progress is being made;
- Experience West Sussex which encourages residents and visitors to enjoy all the county has to offer throughout the year; and
- Practical support for the district and borough councils in developing bids to the Government's Future High Streets Fund.

During the development of the Economic Growth Plan 2018-23, which included an all-member session, member scrutiny and extensive engagement with partners, the night-time economy was not highlighted for consideration or inclusion as a focus for the County Council in the Plan.

The Economic Growth Plan 2019/20 Action Plan reflects the priorities agreed with Members through the adoption of Economic Growth Plan in 2018, with resources allocated to achieving these.

Some district and borough councils, and others including town councils and Business Improvement Districts, have identified the night-time economy as an area for focus in their local strategies and plans, and are pursuing initiatives to support and grow the night-time economy, including engaging with residents and businesses.

Support, advice, toolkits and case studies are available from national associations and other sources to support these local plans and activities associated with creating a safe, vibrant and well-balanced evening and night-time offer.

Lee Harris

Executive Director of Place Services