

## **Children and Young People's Services Select Committee**

10 January 2019 – At a meeting of the Children and Young People's Services Select Committee held at 10.30 am at County Hall, Chichester.

Present: Mr Cloake (Chairman)

Mr High	Ms Flynn	Mr Wickremaratchi
Mr Baldwin	Mrs Hall	Mr Lozzi
Mrs Bridges	Mrs Jones	Mrs Ryan
Mrs Dennis	Mrs Mullins	Mr Cristin

Apologies were received from Mrs Bennett and Ms Lord

Absent: Mr Arnold

Also in attendance: Mr Burrett and Mr Marshall

### **Part I**

#### **31. Declarations of Interests**

31.1 The following personal interests were declared:

- Mr Baldwin declared a personal interest in item 7 (Outcome of School funding review 2019/20 consultation) as a governor of Holbrook Primary School.
- Mr Cloake declared a personal interest in item 4 (Responses to Recommendations) as his wife is a social worker.
- Mrs Dennis declared a personal interest in item 7 (Outcome of School Funding review 2019/20 consultation) as a governor of The Gattons Infant School.
- Mrs Flynn declared a personal interest in items 6 (Review of SEND and SSC's) and 7 (Outcome of School Funding review 2019/20 consultation) as a governor at Ingfield Manor School.
- Mr High declared a personal interest in items 6 (Review of SEND and SSC's) and 7 (Outcome of School Funding review 2019/20 consultation) as a member of his family has an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP).
- Mr Lozzi declared a personal interest in item 7 (Outcome of School Funding review 2019/20 consultation) as a parent governor of Tanbridge House School and a Local Authority Governor at Horsham Nursery School.

#### **32. Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee**

32.1 Members queried the wording of minute 27.3. Officers agreed to review the notes from the previous meeting for accuracy.

32.2 Resolved that, subject to 27.3 being reviewed, the minutes of the last meeting held on 31 October 2018 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

### **33. Responses to Recommendations**

33.1 The Committee considered a response from the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People regarding the Alterations to the Integrated Prevention and Earliest Help (IPEH) service.

33.2 Resolved – that the response be noted.

33.3 The Committee received a verbal update from Andrew Fraser, Interim Director of Children and Family Services, on Demand and Capacity in Children's Social Care. The update provided a comparative picture of the current situation with information from August 2018. A summary of the key points were as follows:

- Caseloads were steadily reducing to more manageable levels however there was still progress to be made.
- Investment had been made in order to recruit an additional 37 full time equivalent posts to enable a stable workforce.
- Blended teams had been developed in order to increase the administration support of social workers, allowing them more time to concentrate on their cases.
- A regrade of practice managers had been undertaken, and a Head of Children's Social Care for Placements had been recruited to support work in the areas of fostering, adoption and residential services. This would balance the workload of the Head of Children's Social Care.
- In order to stabilise the existing cohort of social workers, an annual retention scheme had been launched to maintain staff in difficult to recruit posts. In a workforce of 230, 203 had signed up to the scheme, which would see £3000 paid per year, for 5 years, if they committed to staying in post.
- Following the development of a more targeted approach to recruitment and retention, there has been an increase in applications received, interviews, and offers made and accepted.
- Children Looked After (CLA) figures remain stable with a cohort of around 700. West Sussex sits lower than both the national figures, and with our statistical neighbours.
- The conversion rate of calls and contact to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) that subsequently became referrals has reduced from 32% in June 2018 to 24.8% (November 2018).
- Overall the picture in Children's Social Care was improving, however there is still more to do. The Interim Director of Children and Family Services noted that with a stable workforce, enough tools and a final improvement plan, the service would be more robust.

33.4 Resolved that the Committee:

1. acknowledge the update on demand and capacity and commend recent improvements.

2. request the number of MASH calls, contact and subsequent referrals be added to the Demand and Capacity Report when it returns to the Committee as a full item.

### **34. Forward Plan of Key Decisions**

34.1 The Committee considered a tabled paper which was a new version of the Forward Plan dated 7 January 2019 (copy appended to the signed minutes). This version of the Forward Plan was not included in the Committee papers as it had been published following the statutory despatch of the agenda.

34.2 Members of the Committee questioned the number of expansions to maintained schools in the Forward Plan, particularly where there were plans to build new academies or free schools in the vicinity of those maintained schools. Members of the Committee expressed concern this would result in surplus provision in some areas, and asked how this would be managed.

34.3 Paul Wagstaff, Director of Education and Skills, reassured members that whilst land may be secured for future development of new schools, expansion of existing schools would assist in the provision of adequate pupil places. The Director of Education and Skills added that pupil place planning was undertaken in order to meet the need and growth factors of areas over time.

34.4 Resolved that the Committee:

1. request a place planning update at an appropriate future meeting of the Committee.
2. note the Forward Plan.

### **35. Review of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Special Support Centres (SSCs)**

35.1 The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director Children, Adults, Families, Health and Education, and the Director of Education and Skills. The report was introduced by Helen Johns, Head of Inclusion, who explained the proposal to develop additional Special Support Centres (SSCs), in order to enable children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) to attend school locally. The Committee heard the following key points:

- With an increasing number of high needs children, West Sussex County Council (WSCC) are seeking to educate these children as locally as possible, as opposed to placing them in costly out of county provision.
- There are currently 32 SSCs in the county, focussed on varying areas of need. Increasing this number would allow more children with progressively complex needs to access specialist provision closer to home, whilst experiencing mainstream schooling.
- Schools with SSCs would be able to provide suitable opportunities for SEND children to integrate, which would in turn provide better outcomes for them, for example, access to college and work.

- Phase 1 of the project would deliver 4 SSCs; 2 in maintained nurseries in Chichester and Horsham, and 2 in primary schools.

35.2 Members of the Committee welcomed the proposal to increase the number of SSCs in mainstream schools. The following points were considered by the Committee, with responses from The Head of Inclusion and Paul Wagstaff, Director of Education and Skills:

- Members considered whether the objectives in the SEND strategy could be adequately met given the funding challenges faced by WSCC. The Head of Inclusion advised that currently the local authority was forced to place SEND children in high cost provision. The SSCs proposal seeks an investment to save by placing children locally and not in the private sector.
- Members noted the increasing population and rising demand for SEND provision and agreed the proposal was future-proofing in line with the SEND strategy.
- Members of the Committee were concerned that larger secondary schools might not be the most appropriate setting for SSCs. Other members of the Committee considered that all schools should be able to offer an inclusive culture.
- The Head of Inclusion explained that the proposal would start with early years, however conversations were being held with secondary schools. The proposal aims to provide a graduated response, eventually developing expertise in all schools. Members agreed it was crucial to identify needs at the earliest opportunity, and therefore understood using early years as a starting point. Members also noted the importance of therapeutic practices in early years settings.
- Members of the Committee questioned whether the service had considered parents of non-SEND children in mainstream education who might consider the proposal detrimental to their learning. The Director of Education and Skills advised that Headteachers would need to be supported to establish and promote an inclusive culture in schools. He added that some schools were anxious about their ability to meet the high needs of these children, and other schools were concerned about the impact a SSC might have upon their results outturn. The School Effectiveness Strategy 2018-2022 would assist in brokering support from one school to another in order to identify effective practice and share this across the county.
- The Director of Education and Skills advised that the new education inspection framework from Ofsted removes judgement on outcomes of exam results, and gives an overall focus to areas such as inclusivity and its effectiveness. No school would receive a judgement of Outstanding if it cannot demonstrate it meets the needs of a wide profile of students.
- Members asked if children in out of county specialist placements would be required to come back and use the local provision. The Head of Inclusion advised no child currently placed out of county would be forced to come back to the county to a maintained placement. The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills added the SSCs would be ready for future children, and over time WSCC would see gradually fewer children needing to be placed in the independent and non-maintained sector.

35.3 Resolved that the committee supports the proposal to develop additional specialist support centres attached to mainstream schools in order to educate children with SEND locally in mainstream education and reduce out of county placements. The Committee further recommends:

1. that the service investigates therapeutic training available, such as Anna Freud and Thrive, and work with Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) networks in order to help support the objectives for West Sussex.
2. that once further work has been undertaken concerning need and provision, that measured localised and granular data is brought back to the committee.
3. that it can support and assist with the SEND strategy objectives where appropriate, and asks how it can help with the enablement of schools to become inclusive.
4. that, at an appropriate time, the Committee has an update on expected outcomes of SSCs.
5. that, when developed, the business case comes back to the Committee.

### **36. Outcome of School Funding review 2019/20 consultation**

36.1 The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director Children, Adults, Health, Families and Education and the Director of Education and Skills. The report was introduced by Andy Thorne, Strategic Finance Business Partner, who took the Committee through a presentation (copy appended to the signed minutes) which outlined the potential changes to mainstream school funding in 2019/20 in West Sussex. A summary of the key points were as follows:

- In 2018/19, the new National Funding Formula (NFF) was introduced. In order to manage the implementation of the new formula, local authorities were able to manage the distribution of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) through a local formula.
- This arrangement remains in place for 2019/20, and WSCC was required to engage schools and the Schools Forum to consult on proposed changes to funding arrangements affecting school budgets.
- Last year, the Schools Forum agreed a transition through the local formula to protect primary and small schools, which represent over half the schools in West Sussex. It was possible to maintain their funding level at £150,000 as larger schools were doing better via the minimum per pupil level of funding. This meant these smaller schools received a budget allocation higher than their indicative notional funding from the NFF, to enable WSCC time to consider their future viability.
- This year, in order to increase the local formula in line with the NFF, the primary lump sum value could not be maintained at £150,000. Four options were provided in a consultation document as follows:
  - Option 1: Phased reduction in primary lump sum
  - Option 2: Full reduction in primary lump sum
  - Option 3: Full reduction in primary lump sum and application of full minimum per pupil funding rates

- Option 4: Phased reduction in primary lump sum with 0% minimum funding guarantee.
- The Schools Forum agreed to support Option 1.
- In order to boost funding for the High Needs block, further transfers from the DSG were again required. The proposed transfers were £2.3m from the Schools block and £0.4m from the Early Years block to the High Needs block, representative of 0.5%.
- In December 2018, schools and the Schools Forum voted against the proposed transfer to the High Needs block from the Schools and Early Years blocks. In anticipation of this transfer being turned down, WSCC submitted an appeal to the Secretary of State for Education on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2018. This disapplication request asked that the Schools Forum decision was overturned, and that the transfer takes place. The outcome will be known in January 2019.
- In order to understand the impact the proposed transfers would have on individual schools budgets, four options were presented:
  - Option A: Transfer through reduced minimum per pupil funding level and area cost adjustment
  - Option B: Transfer through basic entitlement unit values
  - Option C: Transfer through combinations of Options A and B
  - Option D: Transfer through combinations of Options A and B with 0% minimum funding guarantee.
- The Schools Forum agreed that if the requested transfer of 0.5% to the High Needs block was successful, Option C represented the least unfair route.
- The Secretary of State for Education had received 28 other requests to make a similar transfer to the High Needs block.
- In recognition of the pressures on the High Needs element of the DSG, in December, the Secretary of State for Education announced an additional £250m of high needs funding to be paid over two years. West Sussex will therefore receive an additional £1.8m in 2018/19 and 2019/20. This has reduced the disapplication transfer request to £0.5m.

36.2 The Committee thanked the Strategic Finance Business Partner for the presentation and report. They recognised that the NFF and DSG leaves schools and vulnerable children significantly underfunded and that further investment is required from government.

36.3 The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills advised that WSCC needed to continue to make the point to government that the funding allocation for the High Needs block in particular does not keep pace with the expenditure required. He added that he was grateful for the clear steer from schools, the Schools Forum and the Committee that Option 1 and Option C presented as the least unfair choices in an ultimately challenging funding situation.

36.4 Resolved that the Committee:

1. Considers the impact of spending pressures for schools and on high needs expenditure.
2. Supports the change to the distribution of school funding for 2019/20 as set out in paragraphs 2.5 (Option 1) and 2.9 (Option C) in the report, which is to be considered by the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills in January 2019.

### **37. West Sussex Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2017/18**

37.1 The Committee considered a report by Lesley Walker, Independent Chair of the West Sussex Safeguarding Children Board (WSSCB). The annual report 2017/18 outlined the work of the WSSCB as a statutory body, comprised of a multi-agency partnership, with an independent Chair. The WSSCB has a common goal to promote the safeguarding and welfare of children. The Committee heard the following key points and outcomes from 2017/18:

- A coordinated approach to services driven through the WSSCB showed significant improvements to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).
- The launch of the Integrated Prevention and Earliest Help (IPEH) model in 2017 resulted in WSSCB being recognised nationally as a leading provider of early help and interventions to vulnerable families and children.
- The Pause programme successfully engaged with a number of women, preventing repeated pregnancies that result in children coming into the care of the local authority.
- The Young People at Risk pilot was developed to support complex and vulnerable adolescents in West Sussex. Operation Encompass was successfully piloted in Crawley.
- Delivery of training to the Night Time Economy, including around 1000 taxi drivers, to identify and report signs of Child Exploitation (CE) and organised crime to Sussex Police.

37.2 In mid-2019, a new Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) will replace the current WSSCB model. It will comprise 3 named safeguarding partners: Sussex Police, Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and the local authority.

37.3 The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People advised this migration to shared leadership will make the partnership more accountable, and objectives more deliverable.

37.4 The Independent Chair of the WSSCB outlined the priority areas for multi-agency action in 2018/19. The Business Plan will continue to focus on three priority areas, with provision of early help as the thread that runs throughout:

- Prevention and protection of children at risk of, or experiencing neglect.
- Prevention and protection of children from exploitation and abuse
- Children's emotional wellbeing and mental health.

37.5 The Chairman thanked the Independent Chair of the WSSCB for a visionary report. The Interim Director of Children and Family Services added that he and the Independent Chair would work together to endorse and deliver the refreshed opportunities presented through the new LSCP arrangement. The Committee raised the following questions which were answered by the Independent Chair:

- Members asked if the WSSCB was confident it could identify neglect at the earliest opportunity. The Independent Chair of the WSSCB advised the early help model was crucial in the identification of neglect before children suffer long term harm. She added the work

of the board was both scrutinised and audited for assurances and insight.

- Members were pleased to see that CCGs would form part of the new LSCP, but questioned whether staff in hospitals were adequately trained to identify and report suspicious circumstances or behaviour. The Independent Chair of the WSCCB advised there would be multi-agency practitioner hubs, facilitated in medical environments, in order to provide a space for such concerns.
- Members of the Committee raised concerns about the risk and harm of social media, and access to inappropriate material online. The Independent Chair advised e-safety was a continued priority for the board moving forward in order to safeguard children when online. Members added their focus should also include guidance for parents and carers.

37.6 Resolved that the Committee:

1. considers the successes and areas for improvement for the WSSCB in 2017/18.
2. consider the WSSCB's key messages for partner agencies and WSCC.
3. visits the MASH at an appropriate time.

### **38. Business Planning Group Report**

38.1 The Committee considered a report from the Business Planning Group which was held virtually on 21 November 2018. The report was introduced by Rachel Allan, Senior Adviser Democratic Services.

38.2 The Education and Skills Annual Report would be a more succinct document this year, and as a result, will not require a Task and Finish Group. The Annual Report will come to the Committee in March.

38.3 Members requested that SEND transport be discussed at the BPG. As the BPG was held virtually, this will now be considered at the next meeting of the group.

38.4 The work programme indicated a possible consultation on the removal of non-statutory age pupils from home to school transport. The Cabinet Member advised that this was no longer being considered as a savings proposal at the current time.

38.5 The Senior Adviser advised of a possible Mental Health Project Day in May 2019. Members of the Committee were keen for this to take place and suggested the following were engaged:

- Offers from stakeholders
- Witnesses, to include children and schools
- Time For Children
- Parent support groups
- Children's Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)
- Comparisons between Children Looked After (CLA) and non CLA.

38.6 Resolved that the Committee endorses the contents of the Business Planning Group Report.



### **39. Possible Items for Future Scrutiny**

39.1 Members of the Committee suggested that the BPG consider the following items for future scrutiny:

- Woodlands Meed College Site
- Award of Contract for Integrated Child Psychology Service
- Virtual School – Educational experiences and outcomes.

### **40. Date of Next Meeting**

41.1 The Committee noted that the next scheduled meeting will be held on 7 March 2019 at 10.30am at County Hall, Chichester.

The meeting ended at 3.18 pm

Chairman