



Minutes of a meeting of the Children and Young People's Service Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at County Hall, Glenfield on Monday, 4 March 2013.

PRESENT

Mr. W. Liquorish JP CC (in the Chair)

Mrs. J. Fox CC
 Mr. S. J. Galton CC
 Mr. S. J. Hampson CC
 Mr. G. A. Hart CC
 Mr. D. Jennings CC
 Mrs. H. E. Loydall CC

Mr. J. Perry
 Mrs. C. M. Radford CC
 Mr. R. J. Shepherd CC
 Mr. E. D. Snartt CC
 Mr. D. O. Wright CC

In attendance.

Mr. I. D. Ould, Deisgnated Lead Member for Children and Young People
 Mrs. P. Posnett, Lead Member for Children and Young People.

63. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2013 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

64. Question Time.

The Chief Executive reported that no questions had been received under Standing Order 35.

65. Questions asked by members under Standing Order 7(3) and 7(5).

The Chief Executive reported that no questions had been received under Standing Order 7(3) and 7(5).

66. Urgent items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

67. Declarations of interest.

All members of governing bodies of schools and other institutions declared non-pecuniary interests in all matters relating to those institutions.

Mrs. J. Fox, Mr. J. Perry and Mr. E. D. Snartt declared non-pecuniary interests in matters relating to schools as they had family members who taught in Leicestershire.

Mr. I. D. Ould declared a personal non-prejudicial interest as the Chair of the

National Employers Organisation on Teachers Pay and Conditions of Service and a member of the Local Government Employers Negotiating Group.

68. Declarations of the Party Whip in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16.

There were no declarations of the party whip.

69. Presentation of Petitions under Standing Order 36.

The Chief Executive reported that no petitions had been received under Standing Order 36.

70. Structure of the Children and Young People's Service.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children and Young People's Service on the new structure for the Children and Young People's Service (CYPS). A copy of the report marked B is filed with these minutes.

It was noted that early help had been included with Children's Social Care in the new structure (as set out in Appendix A to the report), recognising its importance in preventing later need for social care interventions.

The following points arose from discussion:

- The Assistant Director of Children's Social Care and the Manager for the Supporting Leicestershire Families (SLF) programme (based in the Chief Executive's Department) had regular meetings. The SLF was closely aligned with the work of CYPS and its Family Support Workers would be working closely with the early help and social work teams.
- The Leicestershire Educational Excellence Partnership (LEEP) had evolved from the Educational Excellence Board (proposed in a report to the Cabinet in November) following consultation with head teachers, who had suggested a partnership model would be more effective. The work to support the LEEP would form part of the responsibility of the Assistant Director Education and Learning. The new model would make use of head teachers in the County that were National or Local Leaders of Education to support schools in the County: a budget of £350k had been allocated for this. Members welcomed the news that head teachers had contributed to and were happy with the development of the LEEP, as their commitment was crucial to future school improvement work in the County.
- The posts of Director, Assistant Director Education and Learning, and Assistant Director Commissioning and Development were currently filled on an interim basis (and there were two further posts temporarily backfilled because of this). All the other positions in the new structure were being filled on a permanent basis: there were still eight that had not been filled as yet.
- The Head of Strategy roles all have the same job description, providing leadership in the Department with interchangeable portfolios for thematic and service areas. The Service Manager roles were operational or technical.
- Locality work would still be carried out on a district basis but, to reduce

senior management costs, there were only three Locality Working Service Managers: Hinckley and Bosworth and North West Leicestershire; Charnwood and Melton; and Blaby, Oadby and Wigston, and Harborough.

- The First Response Team would be made up of the Central Duty Team plus some of the CAF (Common Assessment Framework) Team. To enable it to focus on its core work relating to safeguarding, referral routes for issues not requiring a social care response were now in place.
- In the light of the achievement of £1m savings from commissioning careers information and guidance services in the last year, it was expected there would be a growing need for expertise in commissioning going forward. The Department would also need to look at demand reduction and market development.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report be noted.

71. Out County Placements: SEN and Children in Care.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children and Young People's Service on the work to address the increasing demands seen in recent years for specialist placements out of County. A copy of the report marked C is filed with these minutes.

The Committee also considered the comments of Mr. M. H. Charlesworth CC (the local member for Littlehill House), a copy of which is also filed with these minutes. In response to Mr. Charlesworth's comments, Mr. Ould reported that there had been no previous correspondence on the matter. Mr. Ould explained that, although it had been proposed to close Littlehill House, during the consultation it had been made clear that the children concerned wished it to remain open and the staff had made a strong case for how Littlehill House could continue to make a valid contribution to the lives of children in care. As a result of this, and recognising the potential for the asset to contribute to the reduction of out of County costs, the closure notice had been withdrawn.

The following points arose from discussion:

- Costs of out of County placements had risen by 300% over the last four years and the savings arising as a result of the initiatives set out in the report were not of that scale. It was noted that there would be further invest to save schemes and work was ongoing with independent providers to increase the supply of local provision.
- The Supporting Leicestershire Families programme should reduce incidence of family breakdown and the need for children to be taken into care, thus reducing future demand.
- Analysis of data to achieve better forecasting of future need was being undertaken. The growth in demand in relation to children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) was partly due to the advances in medical science that allowed more children to survive for longer, particularly into school age.
- Provision for children with SEN was, therefore, an ethical as well as financial issue and it was suggested that Government would need to

make difficult decisions as to what was affordable in the near future.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report be noted.

72. Final Report of the Scrutiny Review Panel on Children's Centres.

The Committee considered the final report of the Scrutiny Review Panel on Children's Centres. A copy of the report marked D is filed with these minutes.

The Chairman of the Panel, Mr. R. J. Shepherd, introduced the report. He drew attention to his comments in the foreword regarding the two key groups of beneficiaries of the work of the Centres and commended the Panel's recommendations to the Committee. He also reported that the Panel had trialled a new review process, allowing it to complete its work more speedily. He suggested that the process would be suitable for use for future reviews, depending on the subject matter.

The following points arose from discussion:

- In relation to the section on Supporting Leicestershire Families, it was noted that the aim was to work with a family until it became resilient: it would be important to manage this in such a way that the family did not become dependent upon SLF support.
- Members were concerned that the funding for Children's Centres was not guaranteed beyond the coming year.
- It was noted that only c. 60% of new births were made known to the Centres and this transfer of information relied heavily on local relationships. It was suggested that the problems of information sharing with health bodies was one that the Health and Wellbeing Board should be made aware of.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report of the Review Panel on Children's Centres be supported and that the recommendations therein be referred to the Cabinet for consideration;
- (b) That the Chairman of the Committee write, on the Committee's behalf, to the Chairman of the Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board to ask that body to consider further the issues around data sharing between health bodies and partners.

73. Date of next meeting.

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on 10 June 2013 at 2.00 pm.

Mr. D. O. Wright CC

Mr. I. D. Ould drew the Committee's attention to the fact that this would be Mr. Wright's last meeting as he was not standing for re-election in May. Mr. Ould

said that he would miss Mr. Wright, whose questions he had found to be constructive, helpful and challenging. He thanked Mr. Wright for the role he had played over the years and noted that, even where they had disagreed, Mr. Wright's ideas and opinions had been valuable and Mr. Ould had often found himself taking account of them.

On behalf of the Committee, Mr. Liquorish thanked Mr. Wright for his contributions to the work of the Committee.

2.00 pm – 3.38 pm
04 March 2013

CHAIRMAN

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