

REPORT OF THE
Cabinet / Leader
PART II

217. OFSTED INSPECTION OF SAFEGUARDING AND LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN'S SERVICES

1. On 22 September, the Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Children's Services about the findings of the Ofsted inspection of safeguarding and looked after children services.

2. The Director of Children's Services was pleased to report that the County Council and its partners had achieved 'outstanding' or 'good' judgements for all 22 areas of Ofsted's recent inspection of safeguarding and looked after children services. The inspection was a three yearly intensive review of services for the most vulnerable children including a strong focus on child protection.

3. In particular, the inspection found that leadership and management of safeguarding services for the county's 307,000 children and young people was outstanding, with inspectors finding "a strong sense of safeguarding being everyone's business".

4. The Cabinet wholeheartedly welcomed the findings of the inspection and asked that the officers, staff and the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services and his two assistants be formally thanked for their contribution to the assessment, and noted that children in care and safeguarding are key areas.

5. In considering this report the Director of Children's Services also reported to the Cabinet that the department had just received notification that it would become a pathfinder for the South East 7 Group on Special Educational Needs/Children and Social Care and Healthcare.

6. It is also noted subsequent to this Cabinet meeting that on 8 November, Ofsted published their annual rating for children's services. Hampshire has retained its assessment of "performing excellently", the top grade. Hampshire is one of only 28 authorities nationally to receive this rating which is based on an aggregated analysis of all the areas children's performance indicators, outcomes from individual service inspections including of schools and colleges, and outcomes from any safeguarding inspections. It is a major achievement for staff and partners.

218. JOINT WORKING WITH HAMPSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE AND HAMPSHIRE CONSTABULARY

1. On 22 September, the Cabinet considered a joint report of the Chief Executive and County Treasurer setting out a strategic case for joint working in Hampshire for the operation of specific support services. The report explored the opportunities of building on existing arrangements to work more closely with Hampshire Constabulary and Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service to investigate the potential to combine support services - saving money and protecting and improving frontline services.

2. Amid unprecedented challenges in the face of reduced levels of Government funding and additional operational pressures, all three organisations have begun programmes which will transform and develop new and innovative ways of working. Identifying opportunities for efficiencies and service improvements through greater joint working and sharing of resources is key to this. The three organisations will now explore ways to work together more closely to share support services, which will include areas such as information technology, human resources, finance, procurement, legal and property management. A detailed business case will be developed to this effect for each of their authorities to review and make a final decision upon.

3. This work is fundamental to the County Council existing efficiency programme and will play an important part of efforts to transform the way the Council operates so it can divert more money to meet frontline pressures while providing best value for money, at the least cost, to the Council taxpayer.

219. OPEN FOR BUSINESS

1. On 24 October, the Cabinet considered a report of the Chief Executive providing an update on the development of the Open for Business Plan and a summary of performance against the plan as at Quarter one (end of June 2011).

2. The Plan integrates a range of transformational and efficiency programmes, as well as 'business as usual', forming an overarching strategy for the organisation. The priorities within the strategy aim to provide a clear operating framework for staff and act as a useful communication 'tool' for partners, stakeholders and members of the public. The report highlighted that the County Council continues to perform strongly and improve in key priority areas, while remaining focused on responding to the challenges of public sector funding cuts, with an ambitious programme of savings and modernisation.

3. Key achievements include:

- Securing £35 million in efficiency savings by the end of June 2011, with the County Council on target to meet the £55 million budget gap for 2011/12.
- Good progress in 'future proofing' Hampshire's roads, with 58 road resurfacing schemes and 160 surface dressing schemes completed as part of the Council's multi-million pound 'Operation Resilience'.
- Establishing the UK's first shared forensic science service with Hampshire Constabulary.
- A record number of Hampshire pupil's achieving five or more GCSEs, including English and Maths.
- Three of Hampshire's Country Parks voted as some of the best in the country, receiving a prestigious 'green flag'.
- Exceeding targets for Extra Care Housing – offering older residents more choice and opportunity to remain independent in a home of their own.

- The County Council being judged as providing excellent services for the most vulnerable children and young people, with Ofsted reporting that Children's Services was good or outstanding in all 22 categories assessed in its most recent inspection of safeguarding and services for children in care.

220. CORPORATE SERVICES REVIEW

1. On 24 October, the Cabinet considered an exempt report of the Chief Executive setting out the proposals and options identified as part of the Corporate Services Review (CSR) of central management and professional functions as part of Phase 4 of the Council's efficiency programme. The report provided a detailed overview of the CSR proposals and the options identified for the way forward. The proposals will move the Council towards a more modern, more collaborative and integrated way of working and will contain new and integrated senior management and organisational arrangements. The proposals will also meet the overall principles of the CSR which are to reduce costs, build capacity for the future and position the Council's services for expansion, shared services and trading.

2. The Cabinet were reminded that the central management and professional functions included within the scope of the CSR were as follows:

- Corporate and legal services
- Democratic services
- Human resources
- Corporate communications
- Customer contact centre
- Corporate risk, health and safety and emergency planning
- Corporate complaints and information compliance
- Policy, programmes and performance
- Chief Executive resources
- Information technology
- Finance, including internal audit and transactional services
- Procurement

3. The Cabinet approved the overall direction of travel for the Corporate Services Review (CSR). The detail of the revised structure has yet to be finalised but central functions will be grouped as follows:

- Finance, IT and HR services
- Policy, governance and procurement
- Business development

4. Cabinet have recognised that the proposed changes for Corporate Services will need to be implemented as quickly as possible in order to provide the County Council with a strong base from which to move forward with shared services opportunities.

221. INTERNAL IMPROVEMENT WORKS TO SWANWICK LODGE CHILDREN'S HOME, SWANWICK - DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (DFE) GRANT AWARD

1. On 27 October, the Executive Member for Policy and Resources approved a scheme for internal improvement works to be carried out to Swanwick Lodge

Children's Home in Swanwick, which will be jointly funded by the County Council and the Department for Education (DfE) by way of grant.

2. Swanwick Lodge is a 16-bedded secure children's home providing care for young people. The works are required in order to replace the existing heating and cooling system that was original to the building and installed 16 years ago.

3. The proposed new system will improve reliability, efficiency, air quality throughout the building and provide safer access to ventilation units for maintenance, less intrusion into the home by maintenance staff and a reduction in maintenance costs.

4. In addition, it is intended to replace the existing boiler plant with new gas fired boilers, which will be more efficient, use a cleaner fuel with lower CO² emissions and include improved controls. The existing staff and fire alarms in the home will also be replaced.

5. Further details can be found at www.hants.gov.uk/councilmeetings.htm by typing in the relevant reference number:

- Ofsted Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children's Services (Search Item Reference 3278)
- Joint Working with Hampshire Fire And Rescue Service and Hampshire Constabulary (Search Item Reference 3284)
- Adult Social Care - Extra Care (Search Item Reference 3175)
- Open for Business (Search Item Reference 3373)
- Corporate Services Review (Search Item Reference 3365)
- Swanwick Lodge Refurbishment Works (Search Item Reference 3313)

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Chairman of the Cabinet