

AT A MEETING of the CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SELECT COMMITTEE of the COUNTY COUNCIL held at The Castle, Winchester on Friday. 1 July 2016.

PRESENT

Chairman:

p Councillor Ray Bolton

Vice-Chairman:

p Councillor Roz Chadd

Councillors:

p John Bennison	a Tony Hooke
p Ann Briggs	p Roger Huxstep
p Zilliah Brooks	p Warwick Lovegrove
p Rita Burgess	a Ken Moon
a Christopher Carter	a Jackie Porter
p Criss Connor	p Bruce Tennent
a Philip Fawkes	p Ken Thornber
p Judith Grajewski	p Malcolm Wade
a Marge Harvey	p Christopher Wood

Substitute Members:

p Keith Evans

Co-opted Members:

p Caroline Edmondson: Primary School Parent Governor Representative
p Andrew March: Secondary School Parent Governor Representative
a Urzula Topp: Roman Catholic Schools Representative
p Gary Walker: Special School Parent Governor Representative
a Jeff Williams: Church of England Schools Representative

At the invitation of the Chairman:

p Councillor Peter Edgar – Executive Member for Education
p Councillor Keith Mans – Executive Lead Member for Children’s Services

133. **BROADCASTING ANNOUNCEMENT**

The Chairman announced that the press and members of the public were permitted to film and broadcast the meeting. Those remaining at the meeting were consenting to being filmed and recorded, and to the possible use of those images and recordings for broadcasting purposes.

134. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Chris Carter, Marge Harvey and Ken Moon. The conservative standing deputy, Councillor Keith Evans, attended in their place. Apologies were also received from Councillors Philip Fawkes, Tony Hooke and Jackie Porter.

135. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter considered at the meeting they must declare that interest at the time of the relevant debate and, having regard to the circumstances described in Part 3 Paragraph 1.5 of the County Council's Members' Code of Conduct, leave the meeting while the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with Paragraph 1.6 of the Code. Furthermore Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Personal interest in a matter being considered at the meeting they considered whether such interest should be declared, and having regard to Part 5, Paragraph 4 of the Code, considered whether it was appropriate to leave the meeting whilst the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with the Code.

No declarations were made.

136. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 25 May 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Matters arising from the minutes:

- Minute 126 (page 2): The Committee's letter on elective home education and the response from Lord Nash had been appended to the minutes of 20 January. A response to Lord Nash's letter was being drafted.
- Minute 129 (page 3): These slides had been forwarded to Members.
- Minute 131 (page 9): Online tooth brushing materials had been circulated to Members.

137. **DEPUTATIONS**

The Committee did not receive any deputations at this meeting.

138. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman did not make announcements to the meeting.

139. **FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES**

The Director of Children's Services and his representatives attended before the Committee in order to speak to the report on the proposed family support service for Hampshire (see report, appendices and presentation, Item 6 in the Minute Book).

A presentation was heard which summarised the key elements of the main report provided to the Committee.

The main proposal for the family support service would see a fully integrated service which brought together the positive work undertaken by children's centres, early help hubs and youth support services, and better aligned services to the Supporting Troubled Families programme. The service would be better targeted, aiming primarily at those children and families requiring level 3 services, and would see as a result a lessening in the targeting of families with lower level needs, and a reduction in the number of children's centres.

The time was right for a reassessment of support offered to families through children's centres, given the continuing era of austerity, changes in access to information and technology, and national government policy. In addition, the children's centre contracts were due to come to an end, so it was timely to reshape services.

It was important to note that the early years help offer was much greater now than when children's centres were originally introduced, with an almost doubling in the number of health visitors in Hampshire, the successful 'Supporting Troubled Families' programme, and financial support to families and schools for early years education, amongst a number of other services and funding streams.

Members were reminded of the County-wide public consultation on 'Shaping Hampshire' undertaken in 2015, and the outcomes from this. In addition, a summary was provided of the family support service decision-making process thus far, including the agreement to approve savings to be made as part of 'Transformation to 2017'. Pre-engagement events had been held in October 2015 focusing on key stakeholders and providers, which led to the development of the proposed options for the family support service consultation, which took place for 12 weeks from February to May 2016. Staff and unions were specifically consulted with, and the public had the opportunity to respond to the consultation through online webpages, postcards and written feedback forms, enabling as large a reach as possible.

The outcomes of the public consultation were summarised for Members. A significant amount of feedback was received, the main outcomes of which were detailed in the report. One area clearly highlighted through this exercise was the need to ensure that families could be appropriately signposted to level 1 and 2 services, and that information could be accessed in the way best suited to local communities.

The proposed family support service was outlined, where it was heard that one designated children's centre hub would be retained in each district or borough area in Hampshire. The issue of access to these had been strongly heard through the consultation, and therefore a number of community delivery sites had been identified for each area from where family support services could be provided, if demand required this. A full list of these locations would be provided to Members. It was also noted that services would have the flexibility to move resource around and offer more provision if required.

Delivery sites to be provided to Members.

The proposed service would see a reduction in the number of children's centres from 54 to 11, with those buildings retained seeing higher levels of footfall, being better designed for the provision of services, and in areas of higher deprivation. The proposed service would also require a reduction in the number of full time equivalent staff from 267.16 to 129.63. It was recommended that all staff be offered enhanced voluntary redundancy, in line with Hampshire County Council's HR policies.

Members were provided with examples of how the family support service would work in practice, including the use of the two mobile units, and the potential to bring other non-Hampshire County Council services into designated centres. Assurances were provided that professionals and individuals would be able to refer into the services, and could access advice from expertise in the family support service if needed.

In response to questions, Members heard:

- The department had noted that the consultation outcome was not supportive of the closure of children's centres. However, it was timely to review whether the centre's targeted those who needed support the most, and to ensure that services were efficient and effective. The status quo would not be an option, given the level of savings required across the department.
- The issues raised from the consultation had been used to inform the final proposal, as well as the equalities impact assessment.
- That the consultation had highlighted that not everyone had access to online or IT services, and the service directory would need to be reflective of this.
- That it was expected that the proposed model would reach a similar number of children and families at level 3 as currently seen through the children's centres. In addition, a number of children were seen through the Supporting Troubled Families programme.
- In comparing current service provision to the proposed model there would be some decreases and other

increases in the number of evidence-based programmes available to families. However, as previously noted, resource would be flexed to meet demand.

- There was a discussion to be held on whether services should be funded for everyone in order to reach the needy, or whether in times of austerity those who can afford support services but didn't need targeted intervention should pay for their access to these.
- That access to services was an issue that had been highlighted through the consultation, and it was hoped that the increased number of possible outreach delivery sites and mobile units would help to mitigate against barriers to access. The impact on those living in rural areas was not expected to change, as people were already required to travel as part of the current organisation of centres.
- The health visiting service was universal and all new parents receive a home visit, so if families did require a referral on to level 2 or 3 support services this would be a suitable mechanism for doing so.
- Any parent or guardian would be able to self-refer to support services in the hubs, and surgeries would be held with bookable appointments which would enable an assessment of need to be taken, and signposting to services if the assessed need was lower than the tier 2 and 3 services offered by the hubs. Additionally, the hubs would have a much greater focus on multi-agency working, and access to non-local authority support services.
- The recommendations on the future staff resource required to meet the needs of the proposed family support service had been carefully considered and taken into account estimated future service delivery, given the increasing population in the County and increasing complexity of support required by families.
- Staffing levels and organisation plans had been drafted for all of the proposed children's centre hubs. The total staffing numbers would cover both the main hubs and outreach work.
- Staff would be expected to travel to outreach appointments and, where appropriate, family homes. However, consideration was being given to how to enable staff to work smarter and more flexibly, in order to reduce travel times and the impact on the environment.
- That the total number of full time equivalent redundancies was approximately 145. Those individuals would have access to the full range of support offered by Hampshire County Council. An offer would be made to help those who wished to continue providing early years support to enter the childcare workforce, as the County had a shortage across the geography.

- Disabled children are by legal definition ‘children in need’, and therefore they and their families would be able to access family support services. However, many families of children with disabilities prefer to use short breaks and other respite services specifically aimed at supporting their needs.
- It was important that other agencies who receive funding to support children in need also consider how their offer is targeted to meet demands. For example, many schools receive the ‘pupil premium’ in order to support children from areas of deprivation, and therefore this funding should be targeted in a way that met assessed needs in relation to education and attendance.

Following questions, the Chairman moved to debate.

Members held discussions on the information contained within the report and appendices, and the information received in response to questions. The outcomes of the consultation, and the need to consider the needs of vulnerable children and their families, were highlighted.

Members considered the breadth of services available to families to provide support for parenting, early years intervention and related issues. Members were cognisant of the change in national policy around early years, and the need for an integrated, multi-agency approach. Discussion was also held on the role of the state in providing universal child support services, and whether this should be reconsidered in times of austerity. Some Members agreed that the children’s services department had the skills and expertise to implement a family support service that was fair and met the needs of those who required them.

Some Members outlined their concerns regarding the proposed family support service and the reduction in building and staffing. A few Members stated that they did not feel that they had enough information on the proposed service to support the decision to the Executive Lead Member.

Following debate, the Chairman moved to recommendations.

A recommendation was proposed by Councillor Malcolm Wade and seconded by Councillor Bruce Tennant. A vote took place on the recommendation as set out below:

‘That the Committee recommend that the Executive Lead Member for Children’s Services does not agree to develop a new integrated family support service at this stage. Therefore there are no human resource implications and no

reduction in the workforce.'

For: 4
Against: 11
Abstained: None

A second recommendation was proposed by Councillor Malcolm Wade and seconded by Councillor Bruce Tennant. A vote took place on the recommendation as set out below:

'That the Committee recommend that the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services having taken account of the responses to the consultation and the equality impact assessment, does not agree to reduce the number of designated children's centres from 54 to 11.'

For: 5
Against: 10
Abstained: None

The Chairman proposed the following recommendation:

'That the Executive Lead Member considers exploring how Hampshire County Council can effectively signpost the public to universal early help services for children and families in their local area.'

For: 15
Against: None
Abstained: None

The Chairman proposed the following recommendation:

'That the Committee Monitors this item, and requests an update on progress when appropriate, should a decision be taken to adopt the proposed family support service.'

For: 15
Against: None
Abstained: None

The Chairman moved to consider the recommendation before the Committee:

'That the Committee support the recommendations being proposed to the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services in section 8 (page 26) of his report.'

For: 11
Against: 4
Abstained: None

RESOLVED

That the Committee:

1. Support the recommendations being proposed to the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services in section 8 (page 26) of his report.
2. Recommends that the Executive Lead Member considers exploring how Hampshire County Council can effectively signpost the public to universal early help services for children and families in their local area.
3. Monitors this item, and requests an update on progress when appropriate, should a decision be taken to adopt the proposed family support service.

140. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Director of Transformation and Governance presented the Committee's work programme (see Item 7 in the Minute Book).

RESOLVED:

That the work programme, subject to any amendments made during the meeting, is agreed.

Chairman, 19 July 2016