

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

CHILDREN'S, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION CABINET COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee held at Darent Room - Sessions House on Thursday, 8th March, 2018.

PRESENT: Mr G Cooke (Chairman), Mrs A D Allen, MBE (Vice-Chairman), Mrs R Binks, Mrs S Chandler, Mrs P T Cole, Mrs T Dean, MBE, Mrs L Game, Mrs S Gent, Ms S Hamilton (Substitute for Mr R C Love), Ida Linfield, Mr S C Manion, Mr D Murphy, Mr M J Northey, Mrs S Prendergast and Dr L Sullivan

OTHER MEMBERS: Roger Gough

OFFICERS: Keith Abbott (Director of Education Planning and Access), Matt Dunkley CBE (Corporate Director for Children Young People and Education), Sarah Hammond (Interim Director of Specialist Children's Services), Simon Pleace (Finance Business Partner for Children, Young People and Education), John Reilly (Strategic Business Adviser), Karen Sharp (Head of Commissioning for Public Health), Ian Watts (Area Education Officer – North Kent) and Emma West (Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

79. Apologies and Substitutes
(Item 2)

Apologies were received from Mr D Brunning, Mr R Love and Mr Q Roper.

Ms S Hamilton attended as a substitute for Mr R Love respectively.

80. Declarations of Interest by Members in items on the Agenda
(Item 3)

1. Dr Sullivan made a declaration of interest as her husband worked as an Early Help Worker for Kent County Council.

81. Minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2018
(Item 4)

1. Resolved that the minutes of the meeting of the Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee held on 18 January 2018 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

82. Minutes of the Corporate Parenting Panel held on 09 November 2017
(Item 5)

1. Resolved that the minutes of the Corporate Parenting Panel held on 09 November 2017 be noted.

83. Verbal Update by Cabinet Member and Corporate Director
(Item 6)

1. Roger Gough (Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education) gave a verbal update on the following issues:

National Offer Day - National Offer Day had taken place for secondary school places on 1 March 2018. He said that 17,442 children in Kent were offered a secondary school place, this figure had increased by 750 children since 2017. He said that Kent were seeking to build the capacity in schools to match the rising secondary school roles. He said that the number of children in Kent who had been offered their first secondary school preference was 79.6% and only 4.4% of children in Kent were allocated a place outside of their preferences. He said that although some children were allocated a place outside of their preferences, this was not the end of the process, parents were able to go through the appeal and reallocation process. He said that although Kent would not always be able to deliver every child's first school preference, the aim was to deliver that to the highest ability. He registered thanks to Scott Bagshaw (Head of Admissions & Transport) and his team for making trips into the office and coping so well in the extreme weather conditions that Kent had been faced with, Members of the Committee generally supported this. He said that Kent were seeking to minimise oversubscription cases and maximise parental choice as much as possible.

Post 16 Transport Policy – The Post 16 Transport Policy had gone out to consultation on 27 February 2018 and would continue through to 8 April 2018, schools, colleges and training providers had been made aware of this. The cost of the vacant seat payment would be reduced to an annual amount of £400, which would be the same amount as a 16+ travel card.

Special Educational Needs Statements – Special Educational Needs (SEN) statements were in the process of being converted to an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). At the end of February, 99% of SEN statements were completed in Kent. Kent had 6,800 SEN statements and Learning Disability Assessments (LDAs) that needed to be converted to EHCP's, the number of EHCP applications had risen significantly during the conversion stage and therefore Kent had struggled to meet the 20-week target for processing all EHCP applications, although Kent were ahead of the national average.

2. Matt Dunkley (Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education) gave a verbal update on the following issues:

Recent Weather Conditions - He registered his thanks to all staff for their efforts to keep core services open within Kent during the adverse weather conditions.

KCC Staff Briefings - Kent had recently provided briefings for Kent staff relating to the process of integration for Children, Young People and Education Services and its focus on the role of a Corporate Parent. Kent had also met with head teachers to discuss High Needs Funding (HNF) and Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND), both of which were a financial challenge for Kent and a matter of considerable angst for schools.

National Activity – The Local Government Association (LGA) had launched a campaign relating to the funding of Children’s Services to highlight the national £2billion funding gap for Children’s Services. In relation to Social Workers and Children’s Social Care working together, the Government had published its response to the consultation which meant that Kent were presented with a clearer idea of the new guidelines relating to child protection and working together. Matt Dunkley said that a further update would be brought to future meetings of the Committee.

Ofsted Update – Kent had had an annual conversation with Ofsted as part of the new arrangements for Kent. With regards to the process, Kent produced the self-evaluation relating to the current performance within Social Care and Education in Kent. Ofsted asked questions relating to out-of-county children in care and requested information regarding the impact that this had on Kent’s services and schools. Matt Dunkley confirmed that Ofsted presented Kent with a letter which provided information relating to the discussion and said it would be available for Members of the Committee to see in the near future.

a) In response to a question, Mr Gough said that a reallocation process offering places to late applicants and original applicants that had joined a school’s waiting list after offer day, would take place on 25 April 2018.

b) In response to a question, Mr Gough said that the figure for out-of-county placements was 3,289 for secondary schools. He said that this figure was 1,760 in 2013 and therefore had almost doubled in the last 5 years, he reminded the Committee that not all the applications were for grammar schools.

c) In response to a question, Mr Gough said that Scott Bagshaw and his team ran a very effective admissions co-ordinating approach and the Area Education Officers (AEOs) had undertaken work in terms of the number of school places that were available. He said that Kent had communicated with parents as much as possible to ensure that they had all the documentation required when applying for their child’s school place or progressing through the appeals or reallocation process.

3. The Chairman said it was important that children in Kent were placed in a good or outstanding school and said that the increase in good and outstanding schools in Kent maximised parental choice.

4. RESOLVED that the verbal updates be noted.

84. 18/00004 - Proposed Revision of Rates Payable and Charges Levied for Children's Services in 2018-19
(Item 7)

(Simon Pleace (Finance Business Partner for Children, Young People and Education) was in attendance for this item)

d) Simon Pleace introduced the report which set out the proposed revision to the rates payable and charges levied for children’s services within Kent for the 2018-19 financial year.

- a) In response to a question, Matt Dunkley said that there had been competitive tension between sectors. He said that Kent aimed to seek placement for as many children as possible with Kent's in-house foster carers. He said it was important to ensure sufficient training and support was in place for foster carers.
- b) In response to a question, Sarah Hammond (Interim Director of Specialist Children's Services) said that over 80% of Kent's children in care were placed in in-house placements. She said that the 3% uplift for all in-house fostering and associated payments was a fair percentage indicator and allowed foster carers to feel valued. She said that Kent were taking part in pilot projects to look at ways in which foster carers could receive further support.
- c) In response to a question relating to adoption service charges, Simon Pleace said that the charges were agreed by the Local Government Association (LGA), Consortium of Voluntary Agencies (CVAA), Association of Directors of Children Services (ADCS) and Society of Local Authority Chief Executive (SOLACE). He said that the rates remained unchanged from those published in 2014-15. Sarah Hammond said that Kent were very good at recruiting, assessing and registering adopters and that the services of Kent's adopters would be marketed to neighbouring authorities for prices determined within the report. She said that when Kent had to pay external adopters, this was because they needed specialist services that they could not find in-house.
- d) In response to a question relating to other Local Authority charges, Simon Pleace confirmed that the proposed rate for 2018-19 of £72.38 per hour for social work support and assessment was in line with Adult Social Care within Kent. He said he would ensure a briefing note was circulated to Members of the Committee to confirm whether this rate was in line with agencies and other local authorities. He also agreed to circulate a list of the events that had been held across the county for foster carers.
- e) RESOLVED that the decision proposed to be taken by the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education, to
 - a) approve the proposed changes to the rates payable and charges levied for Children's Services in 2018-19 as detailed in section 2 of this report; and
 - b) note both the changes to the following rates that are dictated by external agencies: Inter-agency charges and Essential Living Allowance and; any charges to other Local Authorities for use of in-house respite residential beds are to be calculated on a full cost recovery basis; and
 - c) delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education, or other nominated officer, to undertake the necessary actions to implement the decision;

be endorsed.

85. 18/00013 - To Procure A New Contract For The Delivery Of Independent Adoption And Special Guardianship Order Support Services
(Item 8)

(Karen Sharp (Head of Commissioning Children & Public Health) and Michelle Hall (Commissioning Manager (Children)) were in attendance for this item)

1. Mr Gough (Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education) and Karen Sharp introduced the report which set out the current KCC commissioning arrangements for Independent Adoption and Special Guardianship Order (SGO) Support Services which would expire in September 2018.
 - a) In response to a question, Karen Sharp said that she would provide an update for Members before the contract expired in September 2018.
 - b) In response to a question, Mr Gough said that although the service had been commissioned for ten years, the provider had not been the same throughout and therefore there was scope for change. Karen Sharp said that the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) and costing elements would be analysed further to ensure that the contract focused on the appropriate aspects and ensured best practice for adoptees, birth parents, families and the provider.
2. RESOLVED that the decision proposed to be taken by the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education, to
 - a) agree to procure a new contract for Independent Adoption and Special Guardianship Order Support Services; and
 - b) delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education, or other nominated officer, to undertake the necessary actions to implement the decision;

be endorsed.

86. Award Report: Mobilisation Of A Framework For The Provision Of Externally Commissioned (Independent) Foster Care Placements
(Item 9)

(Karen Sharp (Head of Commissioning Children & Public Health) and Michelle Hall (Commissioning Manager (Children)) were in attendance for this item)

1. Karen Sharp introduced the report which summarised the activity taken to commission and mobilise a framework for the provision of external fostering placements for Kent working in a multiple supplier collaboration with Medway Council.
2. The Chairman suggested that an update be received by the Committee in a year, so Members could see the progress that had been made.
 - a) In response to a question, Sarah Hammond said that a saving could be made if additional children were placed in-house as opposed to in the private sector.

- b) In response to a question, the Chairman said that external placements were expensive, and by having the contract in place, Kent would have more control over the costs. He said that the in-house placements were maintained locally within Kent and that the interests of the children were the most important aspect.
3. In response to a question, Sarah Hammond said that a recruitment programme was in place for in-house foster carers, and the dates of recruitment events for foster carers would be circulated to Members of the Committee. She said that Kent were always looking for new foster carers and were doing all that was possible to promote fostering in Kent. She said that the additional 20% of children were not placed in the independent fostering market, there were some cases where children had complex needs and therefore would be placed in residential placements.
4. A Member commented on the report and was pleased that the voice of the child had been made a part of the tendering process.
5. RESOLVED that the report be noted.

87. 18/00006 - Proposal to expand Trinity School taking the Published Admission Number from 120 to 180
(Item 10)

(Ian Watts (Area Education Officer – North Kent) was in attendance for this item)

1. Ian Watts introduced the report which set out the proposal to permanently expand Trinity School from 4FE to 6FE. He said that the Trinity School was located on site with the Wildernesse School which was shared with the grammar annex building, therefore there were site constraints and a phased approach was needed to ensure that minimal disruption was caused to an already well-used site.
2. Keith Abbott (Director of Education Planning and Access) said that although the figure of £8m was high, the impact on specialist provision needed to be considered.
 - a) In response to a question, Ian Watts said that Kent had seen a significant increase in parental choice over the years and were responding to provision issues since September 2017 through temporary expansions and would continue to do so whilst Kent worked towards permanent expansions. He said that provision had increased significantly since Trinity School opened in September 2014 and the demand around central Sevenoaks had increased.
3. Mr Gough (Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education) said that Kent were responding to local pressures with regards to accommodating children with school places and said that the pressures had been increasing at a faster rate than initially anticipated. He said that the local Member, Mrs Crabtree submitted comments with regards to the decision and said that whilst she recognised the need to expand the Trinity School, Kent should ensure that traffic issues were being addressed. Ian Watts said that issues relating to traffic were being addressed and confirmed that the proposal would not move forward

until KCC's planning policy and requirements had been met in terms of mitigating traffic issues.

4. In response to a question, Ian Watts said that guidance was available for schools which set out how the best use of space could be employed with regards to expanding a school. He said that the Education Funding Agency (EFA) were very stringent with regards to adhering to the guidance provided to schools, whereas more freedom was available when delivered by the Local Authority. Although the Local Authority would still aim to deliver best value for money, the working practice and requirements of the school would be taken into consideration. He said that although the Trinity School was a free school, the funding would be delivered by KCC. The Chairman reiterated Ian Watts' comments and said that the property group, Gen2 could clearly demonstrate that Kent could deliver better value for money than all surrounding authorities in terms of what Kent spent per square metre on delivering expansions.
5. Mr Gough reiterated Ian Watts' comments and said that all of Kent's academies and maintained schools were treated equally and were approached in the same way.
6. In response to a question, Ian Watts said that the Knole Academy site would be considered during the second phase of the expansion. He referred to the Kent Commissioning Plan and said that local demand would be best met through expanding the Trinity School and not Knole Academy.
7. In response to a question, Ian Watts said that free schools and foundation schools wishing to conduct their own consultations was common practice as they were the decision maker and their own admissions authority. He said that the main administration of the consultation was undertaken in conjunction with Kent's officers to ensure it was wide-ranging. He said that the consultation responses would be made available for Members of the Committee.
8. At the end of the debate, the recommendation was put to the vote.
9. RESOLVED that, subject to planning permission being granted, the decision proposed to be taken by the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education, to
 - a) allocate £8m from the Children, Young People and Education Capital Budget, to fund any necessary additional works or variations to accommodation;
 - b) authorise the Director of Infrastructure in consultation with the General Counsel to enter into any necessary contracts/ agreements on behalf of the County Council; and
 - c) authorise the Director of Infrastructure to be the nominated Authority Representative within the relevant agreements and to enter into variations as envisaged under the contracts;

be endorsed.

(Ida Linfield asked that her abstention from the vote be noted in the minutes)

88. 18/00012 - Proposal to permanently expand Dartford Grammar School for Girls, Dartford from a PAN of 160 to 180
(Item 11)

(Ian Watts (Area Education Officer – North Kent) was in attendance for this item)

1. Ian Watts introduced the report which set out the proposal to permanently expand Dartford Grammar School for Girls from a PAN of 160 to 180.
 - a) In response to a question, Ian Watts confirmed that the Local Member did not provide any further feedback.
 - b) In response to a question, Ian Watts referred to the Kent Commissioning Plan and discussed the Grammar provision in Sevenoaks for boys.
 - c) In response to a question, Mr Gough said that any changes made to the school's admissions criteria would be negotiated before the expansion took place.
2. RESOLVED that, subject to planning permission being granted, the decision proposed to be taken by the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education, to
 - a) allocate £600,000 from the Children, Young People and Education Capital Budget, to fund any necessary additional works or variations to accommodation;
 - b) authorise the Director of Infrastructure in consultation with the General Counsel to enter into any necessary contracts/ agreements on behalf of the County Council; and
 - c) authorise the Director of Infrastructure to be the nominated Authority Representative within the relevant agreements and to enter into variations as envisaged under the contracts;

be endorsed.

89. CYPE Directorate Business Plan 2018-19
(Item 12)

(John Reilly (Strategic Business Adviser) was in attendance for this item)

1. John Reilly introduced the report which outlined the draft Children, Young People and Education Directorate Business Plan 2018-19. The Plan provided a summary of the services that made up the CYPE Directorate, the key priorities and performance measures and the resources available to deliver the desired outcomes for 2018-19.
 - a) In response to a question, Matt Dunkley referred to the Children, Young People and Education's strategic documents and said that they could be streamlined, staff in Kent were working together in staff forums to build a new vision for the department. He said that although the strategic documents

contained a lot of operational detail, consolidating the documents would make it easier for Members to track the key, high level aspects.

- b) In response to a question, Matt Dunkley said that Kent sought to move towards a whole system approach that integrated support and a reduced number of referrals into Specialist Children's Services.
 - c) In response to a question, John Reilly said he would ensure that work was undertaken to include, at the beginning of Section 3 of the Business Plan, a concise introductory paragraph, setting out the complexity of the education environment.
 - a) In response to a comment, Sarah Hammond said that the national average time for a social worker's career in front line child protection was 8 years. She said that Kent's 'Grow Our Own' social work programme had been working well and Kent were maintaining nearly 90% of newly qualified social workers. Kent were looking at ways in which a post-qualifying professional development programme could be developed to ensure that social workers in Kent were able to progress at a pace which was suitable and to ensure that social workers had the right level of caseloads.
 - b) In response to a question, Matt Dunkley said that Kent had recruited social workers from other agencies but had not lost a large number of social workers recruited in Kent. Kent were working towards ensuring that a single referral route was in place for referrals and the Early Help and Social Workers would ensure that correct procedures were followed for each case.
 - c) In response to a question, John Reilly said that the Children, Young People and Education Directorate Business Plan was a draft and that Members had the opportunity to make comments and suggestions to refine the plan.
1. Matt Dunkley said that he and Mr Gough had agreed that there would be scope for a different approach to the content of the strategic documents and policies within Children's Services, Members of the Committee supported this review.
 2. The Chairman suggested organising a Members briefing to give Members the opportunity to express ambitions and ideas relating to the strategic documents within Children's Services, Members of the Committee supported this proposal.
 3. The Chairman suggested that the item be added to the work programme for 2018-19 for discussion in September 2018, Members of the Committee supported this.
 4. At the end of the debate, the recommendation was put to the vote.
 5. RESOLVED that the report be noted, subject to a briefing being held for Members of the Committee to consider a review of the Children, Young People and Education's plans and strategies.

(Dr Sullivan asked that her vote against the proposals set out in the recommendation be noted in the minutes)

90. Annual monitoring review of the Vulnerable Learners Strategy
(Item 13)

(John Reilly (Strategic Business Adviser) was in attendance for this item)

1. Mr Gough (Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education) introduced the report which set out the refreshed Vulnerable Learners Strategy 2017-2020 and its achievements since its publication in April 2016. The strategy identified the priorities and actions to help disadvantaged, vulnerable learners overcome barriers to learning. Examples of good practice in the use of the Pupil Premium and details about the most effective strategies that were having some impact in narrowing achievement gaps and promoting greater social mobility were also highlighted.
2. Matt Dunkley said that the number of children in Kent that were identified as vulnerable had increased, this was due to population growth and the achievement gaps which were not narrowing at a fast-enough pace. He said that it was important for Kent to understand what the most effective policy response was for vulnerable learners and to focus on the needs of vulnerable learners.
 - a) In response to a question, John Reilly said that the attainment gap for vulnerable learners in Kent was 34% which was behind the national average, he said that the Vulnerable Learners Strategy was in place to narrow the attainment gap and make better use of Pupil Premium funding.
3. Lesley Game said that the Pupil Premium Select Committee had discussed the use of Pupil Premium funding for vulnerable learners and conclusions would be made public in July 2018, these conclusions would be presented to the Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee first for review. The report would then be discussed at the Scrutiny Committee and presented to County Council.
4. The Chairman said that the Pupil Premium Select Committee could look more closely at the areas of deprivation throughout Kent and the impact that living in a deprived area had on vulnerable children and families.
 - a) In response to a question, Matt Dunkley said that it was important for parents to engage with their children and ensure that they were providing educational support at home, but also important for schools to ensure that the education experience was optimised for children. Kent were working with schools to ensure that strategies were in place to produce better outcomes for vulnerable children and work in a way that was supportive of valuing the connection with education.
 - b) In response to a question, John Reilly said that there were a wide range of indicators that could be used within schools which focused on the needs of disadvantaged children.
 - c) In response to a question, Matt Dunkley said that deprivation data in schools was an indication and not a predication of a child's future performance. It was important that schools responded to each child and their needs as an

individual and not assume anything about a child because of their background.

5. RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Verbal Update on Key Performance Indicators for the Education People

1. New information was circulated to Members during the meeting which was exempt from publication due to commercial sensitivity, therefore it could not be taken in open session as the information would be discussed by Members.

91. SACRE Annual Report *(Item 15)*

1. Steve Manion introduced the report and commented on the work that had been undertaken by SACRE in 2016/17 and said that SACRE had continued to make efforts to engage with all schools across Kent, to ensure compliance with requirements to provide high quality Religious Education and opportunities for Collective Worship. Mr Manion expressed his thanks to Mr Gough (Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education) and Mr Northey for their support with the review of the Kent Agreed Syllabus. He also thanked Penny Smith-Orr (Professional Advisor) and Nikki Younosi (SACRE Vice-Chairman) for their involvement in supporting SACRE meetings.
2. RESOLVED that the report be noted.

92. Performance Scorecard *(Item 16)*

1. Matt Dunkley introduced the report which set out the Children, Young People and Education performance management framework which was the monitoring tool for the targets and the milestones for each year up to 2020, set out in the Strategic Priority Statement, Vision and Priorities for Improvement, and service business plans.
2. Sarah Hammond said that the average caseload for qualified social workers in the Children's Social Work team was 23.4, and the average caseload for social workers in the Children In Care team was 15.4. She said that the social workers in the Children In Care team were given a lower caseload average because they were holding the live care proceeding cases as well as the children that were in longer term care. She said that the caseloads for social workers within the Children's Social Work team had dropped to 22.1, and caseloads were expected to drop further in the future.
 - a) In response to a question, Sarah Hammond said that Kent offered 90 to 100 social work student places per year to universities and Kent recruited roughly 45 newly qualified social workers in each cohort.
3. RESOLVED that the report be noted.

93. Work Programme 2018/19 *(Item 17)*

d) RESOLVED that the Work Programme for 2018 be noted.

Exclusion of the Press and Public

Resolved that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

EXEMPT ITEM

(open access to minutes)

94. Verbal Update on Key Performance Indicators for the Education People (Item 14)

(Keith Abbott (Director of Education Planning and Access) was in attendance for this item)

1. Keith Abbott said that the Key Performance Indicators that were presented to Members of the Committee focused on ensuring that the contract considered best practice. The KPI's were in draft form and would not be finalised until the contract had been signed.
2. The Chairman suggested that an update come back to a future meeting of the Committee to discuss the KPI figures in further detail, Members of the Committee supported this.
3. RESOLVED that the Key Performance Indicators be noted, subject to an in-depth briefing being held for Members to discuss the KPI figures in further detail.