

Children's Services Committee

Minutes of the Meeting Held on Tuesday 11 September 2018
10am, Edwards Room, County Hall, Norwich

Present:

Mrs P Carpenter - Chairman

Mr D Collis	Mr G Middleton
Ms E Corlett	Mr J Mooney
Mr S Dark	Mr M Smith-Clare
Mr J Fisher	Mr B Stone
Mr R Hanton	Mrs S Squire
Mr E Maxfield	Mr V Thomson

Church Representatives:

Mr P Dunning	Mrs H Bates
--------------	-------------

The Chairman welcomed Mr J Mooney to the Committee.

1. Apologies and substitutions

1.1 Apologies were received from Paul Dunning and Helen Bates.

2. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2018

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2018 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

2.2a Officers confirmed that the re-design of Children's Centres was on track and the consultation would be launched on Monday 17th September 2018.

2.2b. Information regarding the cost of security for the CASSTLE site would be shared with Mr Smith-Clare.

2.2c. There was no confirmed date for the visit from the Regional Schools Commissioner, however the Executive Director of Children's Services had extended her invitation.

3. Declarations of Interest

Mr R Hanton declared an 'other' interest as his daughter-in-law was a teacher.

Mr S Dark declared an 'other' interest as his sister was a Headteacher at Swaffham and he was a Governor at the West Norfolk Academy.

Mr M Smith-Claire declared an 'other' interest as he was a Governor at Alderman Swindell School.

Mr E Maxfield declared an 'other' interest as he was a Trustee at the Hamlet Charity in Norwich which provides services under contract to Norfolk County Council and was a Governor at two schools.

Mrs S Squire declared an 'other' interest as her sons had Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP) administered by Norfolk County Council.

Mr V Thomson declared an 'other' interest as his son had an EH&CP administered by Norfolk County Council.

4. Items of Urgent Business

4.1 There were no items of urgent business.

5. Public Question Time

5.1 There were no public questions submitted.

6. Local Member Issues/Member Questions

6.1 There were two local member questions submitted, which are attached at appendix 1.

6.2 With regards to the question received from Mr Smith-Clare, the Executive Director confirmed that the Children and Young People Strategic Partnership Board had agreed to undertake some work to better understand the landscape of children in poverty. They would be devising the strategy with the work being agreed from that. Updates would be brought to the meeting when it was relevant.

6.3 With regards the question received from Ms Corlett, Officers confirmed that when the data was available, it would be brought to the meeting.

7. Review of Children's Services MASH

7.1 The Committee received the annexed report (7) which explained the changes being made at the front door into Children's services to help achieve key outcomes for the services and meet the Council's priorities.

7.2 The Committee asked if there could be some training for Members on the redesign of the MASH, and this would be developed by Officers.

7.3 The Committee heard that in terms of recording information, there would need to be a balance of the amount of information recorded dependent on the level of concern raised, but that all agencies would continue to keep written records, and all referrers would be provided with an email summarising the conversation, agreement and action taken. Post introduction, feedback would be sought from partners and the approach reviewed formally and periodically.

- 7.4 Voluntary agencies, such as Momentum Norfolk, were working closely with NCC to ensure that the smaller vulnerable groups were known about.
- 7.5 The Committee were reassured that the right number of Social Workers for the service had been appointed to start. There had been work carried out through Community Care to sell the service as an innovative approach. There would be 14 Social Workers, an increase in the current numbers, to cover the extended opening hours, but this will continue to be monitored. There were also plans in place to ensure that caseloads were not impacted in other teams if individuals moved to the new service. New contracts would also be in place to cover weekend working.
- 7.6 This approach was relationship based and based on collaborative professional conversations.
- 7.7 The Committee heard that Professor David Thorpe, who had carried out the research in Norfolk and provided the recommendations for the new model, had sufficient expertise and evidence that this worked well elsewhere with other Local Authority Children's Services.
- 7.8 The change had led to more manageable workloads and better decision making. Evidence of the impact made in Norfolk would be brought back to the Committee at a later date.
- 7.9 The Committee **NOTED** the proposals towards a new approach to managing contacts and referrals into the Council's Children's Services.

8. Children's Transformation Programme

- 8.1 The Committee received the annexed report (8) which outlined the significant and ambitious programme of transformation across a range of service areas.
- 8.2 The Committee asked if the timescales were realistic considering external factors which would be outside of NCC's control and the current budget situation. Officers explained that it was a five-year programme and were optimistic that it was a fast-enough pace. There were some parts of the programme that could be live within months and others which would take longer. There needed to be a medium to long-term change culture for people to adapt to it.
- 8.3 Some of the programme had been trialled and piloted between the business case and the implementation but it was dependent on the project.
- 8.4 For information, the term 'early years provision' referred to in the report included all childminders / nurseries and pre-schools.
- 8.5 The Committee **NOTED** the contents of the report and associated presentation and provided the necessary comments to steer the direction of the work.

9. Strategic and Financial Planning 2019-2020 to 2021-22

- 9.1 The Committee received the annexed report (9) which provided the Committee with an update on the Council's overall budget planning position, including the forecast budget gap for 2019-2010 to 2021-22, and set out details of the strategic and financial planning for Service Committees.

- 9.2 The Committee questioned the impact on schools that could lose funding through fair funding. Officers explained that they had been working with school's forum through a task and finish group who had been considering the implications.
- 9.3 Members asked what cost of the tribunals would be to the Council and how many had occurred. Written information would be provided after the meeting.
- 9.4 Members acknowledged that if the revenue grant stopped in 2020/2021, the savings indicated would be a challenging issue even with the implementation of the transformation programme.
- 9.5 The Committee **RESOLVED** to;
1. **NOTE** the Council's budget assumptions and the budget planning principles for 2019-20 which have been approved by Policy and Resources Committee (paragraph 3.3 and 3.4);
 2. **NOTE** the forecast budget gap of £94.696m (table 3), which reflects the changes from the 2018-22 Medium Term Financial Strategy, and the resulting indicative savings targets for the Committee over the period 2019-20 to 2020-21 (table 4);
 3. Consider and identify any further key areas of risk in relation to 2019-22 budget planning for the Committee's budgets, including any additional pressures and the robustness of existing planned savings as set out in section 5, noting that any changes may impact on the overall budget gap and will require additional offsetting savings to be found;
 4. **AGREE** the proposed approach and key themes to focus on in developing savings proposals for 2019-20 to 2021-22, including how the principles of the Council's Strategy, Norfolk Futures, will inform and shape budget planning activity set out in section 5, having regard to the existing savings for 2019-20 and beyond which were agreed as part of the 2018-19 budget round (table 1);
 5. **COMMISSION** officers to develop detailed savings proposals to be presented to the Committee for consideration at the October meeting to help close the forecast 2019-20 to 2021-22 budget gap;
 6. **NOTE** the budget planning timetable (section 6).

10. Budget Monitoring Report

- 10.1 The Committee received the annexed report (10) which set out the Period 4 (July) financial forecast for Children's Services, and the programme of transformation and improvement that was continuing.
- 10.2 The Committee heard that there was a robust methodology to assess those who required top-up funding, and this was carried out in conjunction with colleges and post-16 educational establishments.
- 10.3 Officers explained that vacant schools were only retained if they were in use for schools, otherwise they were passed to the Corporate Property Team. The cost of vacant schools included cost for security but not for maintenance.

- 10.4 The Committee asked if lobbying was being done to increase the funding from Central Government for the Staying Put initiative. Officers would look into this further for Members.
- 10.5 The Committee **RESOLVED** to consider;
- i. The service transformation and improvement achieved
 - ii. The forecast overspend of £3.284m for General Fund Children's Services
 - iii. The forecast use of Children's Services General Fund reserves and provisions
 - iv. The forecast overspend of £3.023m for Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Children's Services that will need to be offset against DSG balances and recovered in future years.
 - v. The amendments to and reprogramming of the Children's services Capital Programme.

11. Performance Monitoring Report

- 11.1 The Committee received the annexed report (11) from the Executive Director of Children's Services which focused primarily on the data as at end of April 2018. In addition to the vital signs performance the report also contained other key performance information via the (MI) report (appendix 2).
- 11.2 The Committee heard that although they were 5% above the national average for completing health assessments within the timescales, it was still an aim to achieve higher. Latest figures showed that 100% of Breckland's assessment were being carried out within timescales, and 92% of those in Norwich within timescales. Overall 70% were within timescales, which had improved from the last set of figures which showed 60%.
- 11.3 The Committee questioned the number of year 10 and year 11 children without a permanent school place at the end of the Summer Term. Officers answered that there had been 20 from year 10, and 23 from year 11. All had been confirmed a place in a short stay school and would be taking that up over the next 5 weeks. Those who would join the short stay school in the later stages would have lone star provision up to that point, receiving educational support of face to face and some e-learning.
- 11.4 The Committee expressed concern at the educational care and health plans which had been completed within timescales. Although Officers acknowledged that 12% was not the figure which they wanted to achieve, there were the resources in place to increase the trajectory. Officers also reassured the Committee that this did not mean that children did not receive the support they needed within schools, as support was available, and in a lot of cases it was found that a plan was not needed.
- 11.5 There was concern expressed at the Key Stage 2 results. This was a consequence of historical events. Early years outcomes had been at the national average for 3 years but a proportion of good schools were still maintaining or increasing.
- 11.6 The Committee **RESOLVED** to;
- Review and comment on the performance data, information and analysis presented in the vital sign report cards and concluded that the recommended actions were appropriate.

12. Committee Forward Plan and update on decisions taken under delegate authority

- 12.1 The Committee received the annexed report (12) which set out the forward plan for the Committee to enable Members to shape future meetings, agendas and items for consideration.
- 12.2 A New Directions report would be brought to the Committee in November as part of the Edge of Care Services report.
- 12.3 The SEND report scheduled would include Education Health and Care Plans.
- 12.4 The Committee **AGREED** the Forward Plan at Appendix A with the additions as noted above.

The meeting closed at 1.15pm.

Chairman



If you need this document in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact Customer Services on 0344 800 8020 and we will do our best to help.

**CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE QUESTIONS
11 September 2018**

5. Public Question Time

None received

6. Local Member Issues / Member Questions

Mike Smith-Clare

Nationally with 4 million children living in households unable to afford the recommended daily intake of healthy food - how many Norfolk children rely on a hot school lunch as their only healthy meal of the day?

There are 15041 children eligible for free school meals. We would not have any knowledge as the extent that this is a child's only hot meal of the day.

Supplementary

During lengthy school holidays what measures are in place to ensure that children reliant on school lunches are still receiving an essential daily meal?

Norfolk County Council does not have any information regarding the arrangements that parents make for children during the school holidays. Whilst schools are not responsible for resolving the issue of poverty in wider society, we know that some Norwich schools are working pro-actively with charities as part of the Norwich Opportunity Area Programme, where need has been identified.

Emma Corlett

1. How many racist incidents were reported in Norfolk schools during the last academic year

A) directed at school staff

B) directed at fellow pupils

and how does this compare to the previous 2 academic years. Of those, how many were reported to the police?

We do not have this information yet. Schools have until 14th September 2018 to submit their annual return to provide this information to us. See reminder sent to all schools in July 2018 - Management Information Sheet 99/18 - Annual Report of Prejudice Related Incidents.

Supplementary

Are schools are obliged to report such incidents to the County Council, and if so is a standardised reporting system in use across all Norfolk schools?

The current duty is described in the Equality Act 2010. Schools are obliged to share this information with us and there is a standardised return from all Norfolk Schools. This data is used to meet the expectations outlined in the Equality Act to analyse how schools and settings and the Local Authority

- *Foster good relations*
- *Advance further equality of opportunity*
- *Eliminate discrimination.*