



# Minutes

Name of meeting	<b>POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES</b>
Date and time	<b>THURSDAY, 23 NOVEMBER 2017</b>
Venue	<b>COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, NEWPORT, ISLE OF WIGHT</b>
Present	Cllrs Vanessa Churchman (Chairman), Debbie Andre, George Cameron, John Howe, Karl Love, Tig Outlaw, Chris Whitehouse.
Co-opted Members Present	Shaun Arnold (Parent Governor Representative) Rob Sanders (Diocesan Representative)
Cabinet Members Present	Cllr Paul Brading
Officers Present	Stuart Ashley, Jennifer Beresford, David Hardcastle, Kathy Marriot, Helen Miles, Brian Pope.
Stakeholders Present	Sophie Butt (IOWSCB)

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5. [Minutes](#)

RESOLVED :

THAT the Minutes of the meeting held on [29 June 2017](#) be confirmed.

6. [Declarations of Interest](#)

Cllr Debbie Andre declared a possible pecuniary interest as a guardian for international students and arranging DBS checks on host families.

7. [Options For The Future Arrangements Of Childrens Social Care And Education Services On The Isle Of Wight](#)

The Chief Executive provided an outline of the decision made by Cabinet at its meeting on 9 November 2017, to extend the current strategic partnership with Hampshire County Council. The amendments to the strategic partnership agreement reflecting the removal of the Department for Education's Statutory Direction from July 2018, and local determination of the partnership outcomes, performance outputs and resource requirements had been delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Cabinet Member for Resources.

Reassurance was provided that the regular strategic review of the arrangements ensured they were flexible and could be adapted to reflect the council's future needs and constraints. Hampshire County Council had the option to end the agreement if they felt the budget envelope was not sufficient to deliver effective service but it was not expected this would be an issue.

RESOLVED :

THAT the partnership outcomes and performance outputs be brought back to the committee before being confirmed.

8. [Isle of Wight Safeguarding Children Board \(IOWSCB\) - Annual Report 2016/2017](#)

The IOWSCB Board Manager advised that the board had had a positive year and the outcomes relating to the strategic priorities were highlighted.

Members were advised Leadership and Governance initiatives had resulted in 100% of IOW Taxi Drivers being DBS checked and had undertaken mandatory training on Child Sexual Exploitation. There had also been an increase in numbers of privately fostered children registered with the Local Authority.

Clarification was provided that neither board nor council had the authority to require language schools to undertake DBS checks. However, the board had worked hard to establish an open dialogue with the providers on the Island and the fact they had completed the self-assessments was a very positive step. The issue of language schools and safeguarding had been raised at ministerial level but to date there were no new regulations relating to language schools.

Scrutiny, Performance and Assurance activities had resulted in a 100% response rate to education audits and nine school visits had been completed. The multi-agency self-assessment audit tool had been updated and follow-up scrutiny panels undertaken to both scrutinise responses and provide support to the organisations which completed the tool. A range of multi-agency audits were also completed on thematic issues.

Scrutiny, Performance and Assurance projects had included the establishment of the Isle of Wight Child Death Overview Panel which was performing effectively and providing the board with good understanding of the themes around child deaths. In addition, a Joint Hampshire and Isle of Wight Neglect Strategy had been published and was launched at the IOWSCB multi-agency conference. Free Neglect training for professionals would be provided from January 2018 and there was an online tool kit on the IOWSCB website.

Improving Quality and Practice events included a review of the 4LSCB Joint Working Protocol, IOWSCB Multi-agency training being attended by 600 professionals across the Island, safeguarding performances of 'In the Net' and 'Chelsea's Choice' being watched by over 2,500 children, teachers parents

and carers, and learning lessons workshops held to share themed information and learning arising from Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) and audits.

Members raised questions relating to the increased level of deprivation on the Island and its impact on children. Information relating to this would be provided to the committee outside of the meeting.

Discussion took place regarding Early Help and reduction of funding to Barnardo's services. The board had sought reassurance from Barnardo's in relation to this and were satisfied with the new model. It was noted that the service had allowed the council to maintain many universal services, such as Stay and Play, through the use of volunteers. Members were advised a direct correlation could not be made between the reduction in Early Help interventions and the increase in Children in Need (CIN) as children on a Child Protection Plan could have been stepped down to CIN. The deputy director assured the committee he was confident the Early Help offer was robust and that the CIN figures were reflective of national figures and proportionate in relation to the Islands demographics.

Confirmation was provided that the NHS, Clinical Commissioning Group and the voluntary alliance were core members of the board and had representatives both at board and subgroup level.

**RESOLVED :**

THAT the report be noted.

9. **Annual Safeguarding Report – Children's Services**

The committee considered the report which provided an update on safeguarding children activity within Children's Services in 2016/17. Areas highlighted included:

Child Sexual Exploitation: There was excellent strategic representation on the Island through the Missing, Exploited and Trafficked Children meetings. The group identifies children at risk and disrupts perpetrator behaviour. Work is undertaken with children, young people and their parents to mitigate risks.

There had been a reduction of children on child protection plans with 200 children subject to a plan compared to 264 in March 2015 which was lower than some statistical neighbours. The reduction was the result of an improvement to the quality of interventions at the Child in Need level rather than changes to thresholds. Neglect remained the main category of registration and work to raise awareness and ensure interventions resulted in sustainable change.

Children's Services had recently taken part in a voluntary thematic Ofsted pilot inspection. The service was assessed as having good thresholds, the right interventions delivered at the right time. Systematic change was demonstrated through the service.

The committee's parent governor representative shared concerns raised at a recent school governors meeting regarding the time taken by MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) to answer calls (40 minutes). Reassurance was provided that the average time taken to answer a call was two minutes. If the matter was urgent an email could be sent and would be processed immediately. Several committee members advised they had visited MASH and were very impressed with the service. Officers agreed to provide a report to the committee to deliver further assurance regarding call times.

Members invited the deputy director to comment on the areas for improvement detailed in Ofsted's report and were advised the issues related to embedding changes in the service. Improvement was a journey and the service was on the cusp of good but certain areas remained inconsistent. The action plan to address these inconsistencies would be shared with the committee.

Discussion took place regarding the placement of children from other local authorities on the Island and the issues around notifications of placements. There were no powers in legislation for any action to be taken regarding failure to notify but Ofsted would look at this area in its inspections. All Isle of Wight children placed off Island were monitored.

Clarification regarding the new framework introduced following the Wood review was sought. Members were advised that under the proposed framework out for consultation, local partners would have increased freedom to decide how they worked together. There was a move toward a triumvirate of the Local Authority, Health and Police partners. There was the option not to have a Local Safeguarding Children Board or, if local arrangements worked, to retain the board.

**RESOLVED :**

- (i) THAT the report be noted.
- (ii) THAT the committee receive a report on MASH call times.

10. **[The Attainment of Pupils in Isle of Wight Primary Schools 2017](#)**

Members received analysis of the performance of primary schools on the Island using the Department of Education's Early Year's and End of Primary measures. There had been good levels of improvement but the Island lagged behind nationally due to Mathematics.

Pupil's performance in reading had improved at a great rate than nationally with 71% reaching the Age Related Expectation (ARE) compared to 64% in 2016 on the Isle of Wight. Local performance was in line national performance. While writing remained broadly reflective of national level's there had been a slight fall from 74% achieving ARE last year to 72% this year compared to a two percent improvement of 76% nationally. The fall for the Island was reflective of the 2017 cohort starting KS2 with lower levels of attainment in writing than the 2016 cohort.

Mathematics remains the area where most improvement is required and was a key focus for schools and the local authority. Whilst the proportion of children reaching ARE improved from 63% in 2016 to 68% in 2017, nationally this increased from 70% to 75%. Members were advised that it was felt the key to improvement lay within teaching pupils to apply their mathematical knowledge to real life situations more effectively.

The proportion of children reaching ARE was 68% in 2017 compared to 63% in 2016. However, the number of children reaching ARE nationally went from 70% in 2016 to 75% in 2017. The challenges in maths related to applying theory (concrete) to real life (abstract) and work was being undertaken to help children apply this effectively. References were made to reports relating to improving mathematics which would be sent to members following the meeting.

Discussion took place regarding further improvement on the Island and the challenges of supporting all schools to ensure all children improved, particularly around maths. Reassurance was provided that the support offered was tailored to the circumstances of the school and addressed each layer of the school structure: governance, senior leadership and teaching staff.

A number of schools through 2016-17 had been in receipt of tailored local authority support. These schools improved by an 8% average in the ARE combined RWM measure from 2016. This was greater than the improvement for all schools on the Isle of Wight and nationally.

Members were encouraged to visit the schools in their ward.

**RESOLVED :**

THAT the report be noted.

11. **To agree to consult on school term dates**

Members reviewed the report relating to the decision made by Cabinet on 9 November 2017, to undertake a consultation to revise the school year. The council was investigating the patterns of term and holiday times to ensure they best supported learning and outcomes for children and the wider community. The alternative school years outlined in the report were:

Option 1A: Reduction of summer holidays by one week and extension of Autumn (October) half-term to two weeks.

Option 1B: Reduction of summer holidays by one week and extension of Spring (February) half-term to two weeks.

Option 2: Reduction of summer holidays by two weeks and extension of Autumn (October) and Spring (February) half-term to two weeks. Fix the Easter holidays (Easter weekend would not necessarily be included in the holidays every year).

Discussion took place regarding the consultation questions. Members requested the results of the consultation were brought back to committee before the final decision was made. The consultation would be launched on 24 November 2017 and close on 12 January 2018. It was agreed an extraordinary meeting would be held in February 2018 to discuss the results.

RESOLVED :

THAT an extraordinary meeting of the committee be held in February 2018 to discuss the results of the consultation.

12. **Council's forward plan and the committee's work plan**

The committee considered the council's forward plan and its own work plan. No changes were made to the committee's work plan. It was noted that the final decision regarding school term times would be made by Cabinet in March 2018.

CHAIRMAN