



Minutes

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| Name of meeting | POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES |
| Date and time | THURSDAY, 7 JUNE 2018 |
| Venue | COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, NEWPORT, ISLE OF WIGHT |
| Present | Cllrs Vanessa Churchman (Chairman), Debbie Andre, George Cameron, John Howe, Karl Love, Steve Hastings, Chris Whitehouse |
| Cabinet Members Present | Cllr Paul Brading. |
| Officers Present | Stuart Ashley, Jennifer Beresford, Richard Hadley, Amber James, Kathy Marriot, Brian Pope, Karen Pothacary, Martin Smith, Rachel Smith, Rachel Stewart. |

1. [Minutes](#)

RESOLVED:

THAT the Minutes of the meeting held on [15 March 2018](#) be confirmed.

2. [Declarations of Interest](#)

Councillor Debbie Andre declared an interest as a member of the Adoption Panel and Councillor John Howe declared an interest as a member of the Fostering Panel.

3. [CAMHS \(CCG and NHS\)](#)

The committee considered an update on the Children and Adolescents Mental Health Service presented by the Head of Commissioning for Mental Health and Learning Disabilities for the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).

A statement regarding the autism diagnosis service on the Island, or lack thereof, was shared with members. The statement expressed both the Trust's and the CCG's regret that there had been delays providing a service following the closure of the Administrative Data Research Centre (ADRC) in September 2018.

A new service would be delivered by the Trust and led by Professor Jeremy Turk. It was noted the service required the recruitment of a team of multi-disciplined individuals. This process had begun but there were issues with recruiting specialists nationally. It was noted that the CCG, with Healthwatch, had hosted two meetings for Families and Carers as well as those waiting for an

assessment. It was expected working through the referral list would take some time and additional money had been ring-fenced for this purpose.

Members sought reassurance that all General Practitioners (GP's) had signed up to the new referral pathway. They were advised that there would be a pathway for all localities but GP's could not be forced to undertake the work. Concerns were also raised regarding the lack of communication in relation to the service and members were advised this would be addressed.

took place regarding the performance of the Children and Adolescents Mental Health Service (CAHMS). Reassurance was provided that outcomes for the service were outstanding and performance indicators showed the service was performing at above average levels. However, members indicated they did not feel the performance data provided supported improvements to outcomes for patients and were frustrated that plans were refreshed but did not seem to move forward. Concerns were also raised regarding adequate staffing for the delivery of the service given the issues nationally.

It was agreed CAHMS and Autism Diagnosis would become a standing item on the committees work plan until the committee was satisfied patients' needs were being met.

RESOLVED:

THAT CAHMS and Autism Diagnosis become standing items on the committees work plan until the committee was satisfied patients' needs were being met.

4. Home Education

The Assistant Director for Education presented a report which provided an update on Elective Home Education (EHE) nationally and on the Island. It was noted that while home education could be a very positive thing it was sometimes perceived negatively and that the authorities' duties and responsibilities in relation to EHE were limited.

A private members bill had been being considered by the House of Lords, however, Brexit was delaying legislation's passage through parliament and it was expected new guidelines would be issued in the interim. A consultation regarding the guidelines was underway and would close on 2 July 2018 and officers had worked with ministers and influenced the project. It was proposed that a letter from the committee, supporting the principles of the new guidelines and the need for statutory services be sent to the minister

There were 406 young people or 2.4 per cent of the school population registered as home educated on the Island at the end of March 2018 which was reflective the previous year. Reassurance was provided that the EHE figures on the Island were not a concern and were higher than national statistics due to the high level of knowledge of the EHE population which other areas lacked.

Consideration was given to why children were home educated. There were a number of reasons such as parent's educational philosophy (20 per cent),

educational needs not being met (34 per cent), behavioural and attendance issues (11 per cent) and changing school (4 per cent).

Discussion took place regarding the percentage of children who were home educated due to Special Educational Needs (SEN) or bullying. It was noted that parental perception could impact on these statistics and that there was a strong anti-bullying policy across the Island. Work was underway with SEN colleagues to identify the tipping point at which parents withdrew the child to ensure support was provided prior to this.

In response to concerns regarding the quality of home education on the Island, it was noted that in extreme cases an Education Order could be imposed.

RESOLVED:

- (i) THAT the report be noted.
- (ii) THAT the Cabinet Member writes to ministers to supporting the principles of the new guidelines but emphasising the need for statutory changes.

5. Reports of the Deputy Director, Children's Services

(a) [Quarterly Performance Data \(Quarter 4\)](#)

Members received a presentation which provided the committee with the priorities from the Isle of Wight Children and Young Peoples plan and progress against the long term measures associated with the Corporate Plan. The key points highlighted included:

- The rate of Children on Care (per 10,000 children) on the Island was 90.9 (representing 225 children at the time of the meeting). This was higher than other comparators in the South East; however, there was a triple lock system (social worker, team manager, service manager) in place and there was confidence that the right children were being looked after.
- The number of children on a child protection plan for the second or third time remained low at 9.1% which compared well to both regional and national figures. This showed confidence in the Child in Need (CIN) service which hadn't previously been the case on the Island.
- The number of repeat referrals on the Island was 30.1 per cent against a target of less than 20 per cent. It was noted that work around how incidents were reported would be undertaken to bring reporting criteria in line with neighbouring authorities. Reassurance was provided that this was not an area of concern and that this was supported by Ofsted.

Members noted that the work undertaken early help and family centres on the Island had been recognised at a national level and the Area

Director was involved in discussions with ministers regarding the initiatives.

RESOLVED:

THAT the report be noted.

(b) [Beaulieu House](#)

The committee considered the report of the Service Manager for Specialist residential services which provided an overview of the in-house and overnight respite services for children with disabilities provided by Beaulieu House in 2017/18.

Members were advised that residency had been high during the past year which was good news. There were challenges around the complexity of the needs of some of the looked after children. These would be addressed through training and ensured the right children are admitted to the service. Ofsted had rated the service as 'good' in August 2017 and it was hoped a further inspection would be undertaken as they helped the service to move forward.

RESOLVED:

THAT the report be noted.

(c) [Fostering](#)

The County Service Manager for Integrated Placements presented a report updating the committee on the activities of the Fostering Service during its first year under Hampshire County Council.

The team had successfully recruited and approved 14 new fostering households result despite a reduction in the number of enquiries. A new marketing strategy was underway which would refresh the brand. It was acknowledged there were challenges recruiting on the Island but progress was being made in reducing the number of unnecessary off island placements. Since retention was crucial, various initiatives were being undertaken to support existing carers. A recent survey had revealed financial support was considered to be "poor" or "okay" and allowances were being reviewed to ensure that the Isle of Wight Council remained competitive.

RESOLVED:

THAT the report be noted.

(d) [Adoption](#)

The committee received a report which provided an overview of the Isle of Wight Adoption Agency's outcomes for the 12 month period ending 31 March 2018. There had been a number of improvements for the service in the period including:

- Eight of the 13 children adopted were placed on the Island (children may only remain on the Island when it is safe and appropriate to do so.)
- The timeliness of assessments had been improved.
- A new marketing strategy was in place
- A number of successful applications to the adoption fund had been made.

Discussion took place regarding the Regional Adoption Agency which was a national initiative and required all adoption agencies in England to work more closely together on a regional basis and join to form regional adoption agencies (RAAs). A proposal would be made at the Cabinet meeting on 12 July 2018 that the Isle of Wight would join Hampshire County Council, Portsmouth City Council and Southampton City Council to form Adopt South.

The joint agency would increase the pool of potential adopters and provide a number of services including recruitment, assessment and approval of adopters, matching of children in need of adoptive families and post- adoption support. Reassurance was provided that an island placement will always be preferable for Island children.

RESOLVED:

THAT the report be noted.

6. [Council's forward plan and the committee's work plan](#)

RESOLVED:

THAT the forward plan and work plan be noted

7. [Members' Question Time](#)

Cllr Love raised a question in relation to youth services on the Island. Grant funding for youth services ended on the 31 March 2018 as it had been withdrawn from the budget. The majority of services had continued but were run by the voluntary sector. It was noted that the youth offer was on the committees work plan.

CHAIRMAN