

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PEOPLE AND FAMILIES SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE HELD AT AT COUNTY HALL, CHELMSFORD, ON THURSDAY 8
SEPTEMBER 2016**

County Councillors:

* I Grundy (Chairman)	* C Guglielmi
* S Barker	T Higgins
* K Bobbin	* P Honeywood
R Boyce	R Howard
* M Danvers	* M McEwen
* A Erskine	* C Seagers
R Gadsby	* J Whitehouse
K Gibbs	* A Wood
* A Goggin	

Non-Elected Voting Members:

Mr R Carson

Ms M Uzzell

*present

The following officers were present in support throughout the meeting:

Robert Fox	Scrutiny Officer
Jennifer Reid	Committee Officer

The meeting opened at 10.30 am.

1. Apologies and Substitutions

The Chairman reported the receipt of the following apologies:

Apologies	Substitutes
Cllr R Boyce	Cllr C Seagers
Cllr R Gadsby	Cllr K Bobbin
Cllr T Higgins	Cllr J Whitehouse
Cllr J Chandler	Cllr S Barker
Mr R Carson	--

2. Declarations of Interest

Councillors A Wood and M McEwen declared a personal interest in respect of Agenda item 7 (minute 8 refers), relating to Adult Community Learning, as members of the Adult Community Learning Forum.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 May 2016

The minutes of the People and Family Scrutiny Committee meeting of 12 May 2016 were approved, subject to the amendment of one typographical error on page 4, and signed by the Chairman. It was confirmed that the meeting scheduled for 14 July 2016 was subsequently cancelled.

4. Minutes of the Meeting held on 8 July 2016

The minutes of the People and Family Scrutiny Committee meeting of 8 July 2016 were approved, subject to the amendment that the meeting scheduled for 14 July 2016 was subsequently cancelled, and signed by the Chairman.

Matters Arising

Minute 4, page 4, Councillor Danvers raised a question regarding the level of wraparound support provided in an individual case.

Action: Councillor Madden agreed to respond to Councillor Danvers directly.

5. Questions from the Public

There were no questions from the Public.

6. Variation in the Order of Business

Upon the motion of the Chairman, duly carried, it was agreed to vary the order of business to allow agenda item 8 (Safeguarding Member Reference Group) to be considered before agenda item 7 (Adult Community Learning). Minutes 8 and 9 below refer.

7. Residential and Domiciliary Care

Members received PAF/14/16, a report of a review by a Task and Finish Group of the People & Families Scrutiny Committee. The Chairman welcomed Councillor Dick Madden, Member for Adults and Children, and Councillor Malcolm Maddocks, Deputy Member for Adults and Children, to the meeting.

The Chairman gave his thanks to the Task and Finish Group for their work on the report and also to the care home staff and other officers for their impressive responses. The Chairman noted the recommendations and summarised the three main themes:

- On-going issues with recruitment, retention and training of staff.
- The passion of staff to improve lives
- The need to raise the profile of carers in the community and develop relationships with Members.

Councillor Madden thanked the Committee and in particular the members of the Task and Finish group, Councillor Ian Grundy, Councillor Jenny Chandler, Councillor Mike Danvers, Councillor Keith Gibbs, Councillor Maggie McEwen, Councillor Jon Whitehouse, Councillor Andy Wood and David Sollis from Healthwatch Essex.

Councillor Madden explained that following the addition of Adults to his portfolio he had requested that the People and Families Scrutiny Committee look at this area in more detail, resulting in the creation of the Task and Finish group. He commented that all 75 Members of the Council are represented by the Scrutiny Committee and it is helpful for Members to have a deeper understanding of this issue affecting some of the most vulnerable people in Essex. He was moved by the work that had been done and was pleased to see the acknowledgement of officers and staff who are looking to improve the lives of this group of people.

Councillor Madden confirmed he would be providing a full Cabinet Member response to the report to the meeting of the Committee in October but shared some initial thoughts with the Committee on some of the recommendations and actions in the report.

- Friends and Neighbours (FaNs) project funding – Councillor Madden acknowledged the excellent work of FaNs and is keen to see this continue. Advice would be sought from officers and commissioners as this is currently funded by grants but may be able to continue funding through commissioning streams.
- Care top-ups – nationally the cost of care is a big issue and Councillor Madden continued to pursue this as the Essex representative for the Local Government association (LGA). The 2% Social Care levy in the last financial settlement provided some extra funding however there was still a gap and Councillor Madden intended to pursue this further. He recognised that this was an issue for national organisations and independent care homes. The use of reserves to help funding gaps would be limited as these had been partly earmarked and would not provide a long term solution. Councillor Madden recognised the impact of the changes to market rates as a result of The Care Act (2014). He has organised an away day for Cabinet Members to look at the marketplace and how things can be done properly and ethically whilst still being affordable. Councillor Madden invited the Chairman to attend the meeting to represent the scrutiny committee and the Task and Finish group. He confirmed further response to the issue of top up payments would be provided following consultation with officers.
- Inspections – Councillor Madden felt that these have moved on since last year and also confirmed that there is a weekly serious case review which includes risk assessment. Councillor Madden supported in principal the view put forward in the report.
- Members' visits – Councillor Madden agreed that the recommended formal approach to visits was better than current ad-hoc approach. Although there is no statutory obligation for visits Councillor Madden expressed the view that all Members should see this as similar responsibility to the Corporate Parenting responsibility and supported compulsory training on care home visits. Councillor Madden also expressed his thanks to the Members who took part in the pilot.

- Corporate Carers Group – Councillor Madden endorsed the need for an all-party group to engage in this key area and would like to take this through the necessary governance to put in place.
- Care home/ hospice End of Life care – Councillor Madden recognised the importance of the need for joined-up thinking and confirmed the national requirement for collaborative working.
- Schools Initiatives – Councillor Madden felt the proposal made good sense and saw the opportunities in educating children and young people in the care of the elderly.

In summarising, Councillor Madden also confirmed his support for a joint seminar to look at responsibilities under The Care Act (2014) and the continuation of the PROSPER project, and that where annual reports were recommended these should be provided. He confirmed that all of the recommendations and actions in the report would be addressed fully in the formal response. Councillor Madden expressed his gratitude for the report and the assistance it would provide to him in his aim to improve Adult Social Care to a nationally recognised standard.

In response to Members' questions, further discussion was held around funding issues. Members recognised that this was a national issue and were concerned both about short term and long term funding. Councillor Madden confirmed that the LGA have been lobbying the government regarding per capita funding based on demographics which may have been affected during the last funding review, to address the potential extra cost to local authorities with older populations. Councillor Madden commented that the targets introduced by The Care Act (2014) had been delayed until 2020, however this did not lessen the impact only deferred it. He confirmed that every person has a financial assessment when they enter residential care through Adult Social Care. Members were interested to know how much Winter Fuel Allowance and pensions could be contributed and requested further information regarding means testing should an element of top-up fees be considered. Councillor Madden confirmed he would provide further information in his full response to the report. Members also commented on the need for joined up thinking due to the complexity of residential care and the number of agencies involved. The long term pressures that an increasing elderly population put on funding were recognised and the need to look for long term solutions now. Councillor Madden commented on the current strategy to increase provision of independent living accommodation to allow residents to stay in their own homes longer and free up larger properties for families and the requirement for a culture change. It was also noted that whilst there is an increase of over 65's in Essex, the majority of existing residents self-fund.

The following points were also raised by Members:

- Members involved in visiting residential homes were interested to see them and some had attended open days, but were also interested in visiting other homes not involved in the pilot scheme. It was noted that Members were not inspectors but played the role of critical friends.
- It was requested that the Domiciliary Review report be brought to the People and Families Committee before completion to allow contribution by the Task and Finish Group and Councillor Madden agreed to arrange this.

- Members expressed concerns that homes may close due to financial difficulties resulting in lack of available places and queried how provision of resource is monitored across county including private residential homes. Councillor Madden confirmed that this formed part of risk assessment, and that the monitoring of standards and safeguarding includes financial stability. Assistance can be given to ensure that resource is available and this has previously included ECC helping to negotiate a takeover of one home.

Actions:

- *Councillor Madden to arrange the domiciliary care review group to see the T&F Group*
- *Councillor Madden to invite Councillor Grundy to attend the Cabinet away day looking at the financial market, with particular regard to adult social care*
- *Councillor Madden to come back to the October meeting of the committee with a full response to the actions and recommendations of the T&F Group*

Councillor Madden left the meeting.

8. Safeguarding Member Reference Group

Members received PAF/16/16, the 2015-16 report of the Safeguarding Member Reference Group presented by Councillor Malcolm Maddocks, Deputy Member for Adults and Children.

Councillor Maddocks gave an overview of the items discussed at meetings of the group held between April 2015 and April 2016, giving further information on some of the key issues:

- Colchester Hospital Safeguarding – in his verbal update to the group in September 2015, Peter Tempest expressed his concerns regarding the capacity for improvement, however Councillor Maddocks feels there has been some improvement since this time and expects this to continue.
- Presentation on Gangs – the presentation provided to the group at the February 2016 meeting will be included in member development.
- Deprivation of Liberty (DoLs) – the group had received updates on this in February and March 2016. Essex is required by law to complete this however the only way to achieve it would be to take on a large number of extra staff. A visit had been made to Suffolk County Council, who had been assessed as good, to look at how they used risk assessments to prioritise cases. Further investigation is required to consider whether this is an appropriate way forward for Essex.
- Care Homes – Members queried how complaints about care homes were reported and processed. Councillor Maddocks confirmed that in Essex complaints can be taken in a number of methods including online, via social workers and through the call centre. Urgent complaints are dealt with first then all others are dealt with in date order.

The group received regular updates regarding Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) over the year. Councillor Wood expressed concern that he felt that in his constituency, and the surrounding area, in particular, Social Care teams were

unable to cope with the number of cases where children were at risk of CSE and there was more that the Police could do to assist with monitoring offenders in the area. Councillor Maddocks agreed he would take this forward with the Director for Safeguarding. The Chairman felt that when the Committee met with the Chief Constable he had taken on board their comments and agreed to meet with Councillor Wood outside of the meeting to discuss further. Members also referred to the HMIC report regarding the success of the Multi-Agency Hub for Safeguarding in Thurrock. Members of the hub will be presenting to the Committee in November. Councillor Maddocks confirmed he would put this forward to be considered by the Safeguarding Member Reference Group.

Councillor Guglielmi suggested that the Safeguarding Member Reference Group create links with the Community Safety Hubs (CSH) across Essex. He referred to the Tendring CSH which worked with a large number of partners including an ex police officer brought in to help deal with gang culture issues in the area and agreed to provide contact details to Councillor Maddocks.

Actions: Councillor Maddocks to take up issues related to child sexual exploitation in Tendring with Paul Secker.

Councillor Maddocks left the meeting.

9. Adult Community Learning

Members received PAF/15/16, a report from the Adult Community Learning service (ACL). The Chairman welcomed Councillor Ray Gooding, Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning, and Peter Cook, Director of Delivery Transitions, to the meeting.

Councillor Gooding confirmed that there is no obligation to provide this service however it meets the needs of a numbers of sectors of the community and the report demonstrated how the service contributes to ECC priority outcomes. The Director of Delivery Transitions confirmed that not all of the statistics were up to date as date for 2015/16 was not yet available.

The Director of Delivery Transitions delivered a presentation (a copy of which to be circulated with the minutes) which summarised the successes and challenges of the service, providing an update since the last report to the Committee. The main challenges facing the service were around funding and increasing take up of courses.

The Director of Delivery Transitions provided further detail around the following key points:

- One of the service's main challenges was funding which has seen a 12-15% reduction in recent years which has limited the ability to provide subsidised education.
- 2015/16 saw 20,000 enrolments by 13,000 adults across Essex and the target for 2016/17 is 22,000.
- 1 in 10 working age adults in Essex have no qualifications, and approximately 120,000, representing 14-15% of the working age population, do not have maths qualifications above the level expected of an 11 year old.

- The potential reduction in immigrant labour following Brexit provides an opportunity to promote the benefits of ACL in helping to train local people to meet the workforce requirement.
- There is currently a government consultation into apprenticeship funding which may result in local authorities having to pay levies.
- There are anticipated changes in current methods of funding to be announced in January 2017. Currently there are two separate funding streams, Community Learning providing non-accredited courses and Adult Skills providing accredited qualifications. It is not yet known how the new funding will work or what level of support per learner will be provided.
- In order to continue, the service faces some difficult decisions. This may result in venue changes or closures, lower subsidisation and an increase in commercial activity.
- Key priorities for the service include improving results, the upcoming Ofsted inspection, following a Requires Improvement grade two years ago, and the three year plan following the January 2017 funding announcements.

In response to Members' questions, the Cabinet Member and Director of Delivery Transitions confirmed further information around funding challenges.

Sponsorship and support from local businesses in providing courses for the local workforce was being considered however due to the current economic climate, this was proving challenging. The service was awaiting the result of a joint tender with local colleges which had been made to the European Social Fund for a £33 million share for Essex of £87.5 million for the current 5 year period for South-East England. There are on-going conversations with libraries, colleges, schools and other organisations such as University of the Third Age and the Women's Institute regarding sharing facilities and creating links, which could include using existing facilities out of hours. For example discussions are being held with Harlow College regarding shared facilities. Community based learning was being explored and one of the highlights of this so far was the 'TechMoms' course offered in the Saffron Walden area which had a high uptake.

Members felt that there was a perception in the community that the service may be concentrating on those with higher needs or those without a minimum level of learning and was not meeting the needs of all sections of the community. The Director of Delivery Transitions confirmed that although the report focussed on the 7 priority outcomes, the service was aware that they had a wide range of customers and care needed to be taken to ensure community, social and commercial requirements were balanced. The changes in funding did provide an opportunity to re-evaluate the service, following awareness of a reliance on repeat learners accessing daytime courses and a move away from evening courses. The service does offer a very wide range of courses and needs to make sure these are accessible to working and non-working adults.

Members were interested in the data regarding enrolments. The Wilson Marriage Centre in Colchester continued to be very successful and attract a high number of learners from outside the immediate vicinity. Members noted that there had been a drop in learners, following the move of ACL Rochford to co-locate with Rayleigh Library, which could in part be explained by the reduction in practical courses available at the new facilities.

Members were keen to see how the 2015/16 data would impact on the statistics in the report and the Director for Delivery Transitions confirmed he would circulate these figures to Members when received.

Action: Director for Delivery Transitions to provide a note to the Committee on the full 2015/16 academic achievement statistics when it is available.

10. Scrutiny recommendations tracker and work programme

The Scrutiny Officer confirmed the following agenda items for the meeting to be held on 13 October 2016:

- Residential and Domiciliary Care, Full response from Councillor Dick Madden, Member for Adults and Children.
- Report on Domestic Violence

The Scrutiny Officer confirmed the following agenda items for the meeting to be held on November 2016:

- Safeguarding reports for both Adults and Children
- Thurrock Multi-Agency Hub for Safeguarding

It was also agreed that a pre-meeting with the Thurrock Hub would be arranged prior to the November meeting of the committee.

11. Date of next meeting

The Committee noted the date of the next meeting: 10.30 am on Thursday 13 October 2016. Venue: Council Chambers at County Hall.

The meeting closed at 12:55pm.

Chairman

Date