

UNAPPROVED MINUTES OF AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE PEOPLE AND FAMILIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD AT COUNTY HALL, CHELMSFORD AT 10:00 AM ON FRIDAY 8TH JULY 2016:

TO SPECIFICALLY CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING CALL-INS OF CABINET DECISIONS:

- (I) FP/467/04/16 – PROCUREMENT OF A NEW MODEL TO DELIVER INTEGRATED PRE-BIRTH TO 19 HEALTH, WELLBEING AND FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES;
 (II) FP/418/02/16 – HOUSING RELATED SUPPORT: POST 16 SERVICES.

Present

* I Grundy (Chairman)	* A Goggin
* R Boyce	* C Guglielmi
* J Chandler	* T Higgins
* T Cutmore (substitute)	* P Honeywood
* M Danvers	* R Howard
* A Erskine	* J Jowers (substitute)
R Gadsby	M McEwen
K Gibbs	* C Seagers
	* A Wood

Cllrs Keith Bobbin, Karen Clempner and Tony Durcan, were in attendance for the duration of the meeting.

 The following Officers were present in support of the meeting:

Robert Fox	Scrutiny Officer
Graham Hughes	Scrutiny Officer

1. Apologies and Substitution Notices

The Scrutiny Officer reported apologies for absence from Councillors Boyce, Gadsby and McEwan for whom councillors Cutmore, Jowers, and Seagers respectively were in attendance as substitutes.

2. Declarations of Interest

The following declarations of interest were made:

CllrJ Chandler	Chair of Chelmsford and Maldon Children's Centres District Partnership Board
Cllr T Cutmore	Member of Mid Essex Clinical Commissioning Board
Cllr T Higgins	Colchester YMCA was one of the Mayor's Charities in 2015/16 when Cllr Higgins was Mayor. Daughter is a Trustee of Colchester YMCA Committee Member of Stepping Stones Play and Learn Group

Cllr P Honeywood	Cabinet Member for Housing at Tendring District Council (dispensation obtained to participate and vote on both call-in items)
Cllr R Howard	Member of Canvey Island Children's Centre Board
Cllr C Seagers	Two daughters worked in the NHS (North East London Foundation Trust and South Essex Partnership Trust)

3. Questions from the Public

There were no questions from the public.

The Chairman then proposed, and it was agreed, to change the order of business of the published agenda and consider agenda item 5 (the call-in on the decision on Housing Related Support Post 16 Services) before agenda item 4 (call-in on Decision on procurement of a New Model to deliver Integrated Pre-Birth to 19 Health, Wellbeing and Family Support Services). The remainder of the agenda order to be unchanged.

In considering each of the two call-ins below, the Committee had the following courses of action open to it.

- Refer the decision back to the Cabinet Member for Adults and Children;
- Refer the matter to Full Council;
- Support the decision being implemented;
- Pass any other resolution.

4. Call-in of Cabinet Decision FP/418/02/16: Housing Related Support: Post 16 Services

(a) Summary of decision being reviewed:

The Cabinet decision was to re-commission Housing Related Support (HRS) services so as to support the needs of particular priority cohorts of young people at risk (listed below) and to reduce the revenue spend by about £1 million per annum.

- Vulnerable teenage parents (up to the age of 19 years. with an additional need or where the baby/child is known to Family Operations);
- Care leavers (18-21 years old, and up to 25 years old in special circumstances); and
- 16-18 year olds at risk of homelessness (up to their 19th birthday if known to ECC).

A Single Point of Access for vulnerable young people would be established to access HRS services and work with District/Borough Councils.

(b) The reasons for the call-in

The decision had been called-in by Councillor Danvers. The Cabinet Member and Councillor Danvers had agreed not to hold an informal meeting and that the call-in should be referred straightaway to the scrutiny committee.

Joining Councillor Danvers to support the call-in was:

Aaron Barker, resident of Braintree Foyer;
Councillor Tony Durcan
George Shoobridge, resident of Braintree Foyer;
Mark Watson, Manager of Braintree Foyer;
Tonya Weston, ex-resident of Braintree Foyer;
Peter Watts, Director of Care and Support at Swan Housing (Basildon).

It was highlighted that other residents from Braintree Foyer, Family Mosaic Housing and Occasio House were in the audience.

- (i) The written call-in referred to the County Council now redefining vulnerability to exclude 19-25 year olds leading to an increased risk of young people in this age group facing eviction and homelessness. It suggested that adequate and comprehensive consultation had not been undertaken with district councils or with young people impacted by the decision and that it did not detail the procedures to be put in place to resettle those affected.
- (ii) In the meeting Cllr Danvers referred to the increasing number of evictions of people unable to pay their rents and that borough and district councils were already struggling to cope with the pressure to rehome them and asked that the Cabinet Member should review the impact of the decision and investigate other solutions to meeting budgetary pressures being faced by the County Council.

Specifically, the following points were made:

- Young people up to the aged of 25 were not eligible for housing benefit;
- Many of the existing residents in Braintree Foyer and similar facilities had been referred to them by Social Services;
- The decision would lead to an increased displacement of vulnerable young people and more young people being made homeless;
- Vulnerability did not automatically stop post 18 years of age;
- The Cabinet Report proposing the decision seemed to suggest that Foyers and hostels were housing older 'less vulnerable' people which was misleading and that some of the evidence in the report needed to be reviewed and re-evaluated;
- Residents of Braintree Foyer gave their own first-hand accounts of how Braintree Foyer had helped them and that they may not have been able to be a resident under the new proposals;
- Essex County Council should have a duty of care towards these young people and that the Foyer and hostels give a stable environment offering support, freedom, space and care and compassion to young people;
- Current providers had concerns about the impact of the proposed changes and it was requested that there should be a 'pause' whilst agencies and partners worked together to identify longer term

improvements that could be made and other support that could be available rather than seeking a short term solution;

- The consequences of the current proposed changes will fall on borough and district councils.

(c) Cabinet Member response to the call-in

Thereafter, at the request of the Chairman, Cllr Dick Madden, Cabinet Member for Adults and Children, responded to each of the issues raised in the call-in notice with the following officer support:

Adam Boey, Cabinet Adviser.

Simon Harniess, Head of Commissioning – People

Sue Lancaster, Service Manager.

Nick Presmeg, Director of Commissioning: Vulnerable Adults.

The following key points were made in response to the call-in:

- The County Council proposed to target its HRS support to the most vulnerable;
- The procurement would be outcomes based with clear performance objectives to be met by the provider. Currently there was no control over the outcomes being targeted or achieved by providers from the grants process.
- HRS does not cover accommodation costs. Instead, HRS services are to provide extra support around accommodation and included advice and guidance on basic life skills, accessing education and training, as well as helping young people manage issues such as social isolation and anxiety and depression.
- District Councils had a statutory duty for providing social housing and to have a formulated strategy to support homelessness. The County Councils' had some specific statutory duties related to carers and safeguarding. However, closer working between the different councils would assist providing a consistent framework for managing the needs of 18-25 year olds and the Cabinet member strongly encouraged all boroughs and districts to participate in the on-going discussions.
- Processes will be put in place for those impacted by the proposed changes through a managed transition and 'wraparound' support available.
- There had been extensive consultation with borough and district councils. Consultation with service users was on-going and would continue.
- The procurement process would be paused for three months to allow further discussion with stakeholders and service users.
- It was accepted that there had been some editorial errors in the Cabinet Report.

(d) Issues raised by the Committee

In subsequent discussion:

- The Cabinet Member advised that there had been significant dialogue with stakeholders prior to the proposed decision being finalised.

- The Cabinet Member acknowledged that the specific targeting of services in future could have some impact on some young people hence the need for on-going dialogue with borough and district councils.
- It was acknowledged that housing shortages and affordable accommodation remained an issue and discussions continued with borough and district council partners in co-ordinating actions and planning.
- There was concern that one of the impacts of the decision could be a drift of young people towards poorer quality HMOs and bedsits.
- Some members were concerned that the targeting of HRS would mean that some people would miss out on the basic life skills training that many received under HRS.
- Some members advocated the value of 'invest to save' as part of a prevention strategy.
- The delayed procurement would give an opportunity to further review those young people on the 'cusp' of eligibility for HRS and how they should be supported in future.
- Future service models for support could be different in future varying by provider and their particular local focus for the facility (e.g. mediation, short stay etc).
- The changes were proposed to establish consistency of service and approach across the county.

The Chairman then confirmed that the Committee had no further questions.

(e) Motions proposed and the decision of the Committee

Thereafter, Councillor Higgins moved the following motion, which was seconded by Councillor Danvers :

That the Decision to re-commission Housing Related Support Services for young people by basing it around supporting the identified priority cohorts of young people, be referred back to the Cabinet Member for further review.

Upon being put to the meeting the Motion was lost by 10 votes to 2 with the Chairman abstaining.

Councillor Chandler then moved the following resolution, which was seconded by Councillor Jowers. Upon being put to the meeting the Motion was carried by 10 votes to 2 with the Chairman abstaining:

Resolved:

- (i) That, subject to the procurement process being paused for three months to facilitate further preparatory discussion with partners and stakeholders, the Committee supports the Decision to re-commission Housing Related Support Services for young people by basing it around supporting the identified priority cohorts of young people;
- (ii) That a further update be received by the Committee on the dialogue undertaken as part of the three month review.

5. **FP/467/04/16 – Procurement of a New Model to deliver Integrated Pre-birth to 19 Health, Wellbeing and Family Support Services**

(a) Summary of decision being reviewed

The Cabinet decision was to launch a procurement for an Integrated Pre-Birth to 19 Health, Wellbeing and Family Support model which incorporated the following services:

- 0-5 Healthy Child Programme;
- 5-19 Healthy Child Programme;
- Healthy Schools;
- Family Nurse Partnership; and
- Sure Start Children's Centres.

Children's Centres would be part of the integrated service, with a particular delivery model which, in summary, meant:

- A reduction from 37 Children's Centres to 12 Family Hubs;
- A reduction from 38 Children's Centre Delivery Sites to 25 Family Hub Delivery Sites; and
- A range of Family Hub Outreach Sites to be determined on a local basis.

(b) The reasons for the call-in

The decision had been called-in by Councillor Henderson. The Cabinet Member and Councillor Henderson had agreed not to hold an informal meeting and that the call-in should be referred straightaway to the scrutiny committee.

Joining Councillor Henderson to support the call-in was Councillors Bobbin and Durcan:

(i) The written call-in suggested that the County Council was breaching statutory guidelines unless it could be demonstrated that the most disadvantaged would not be adversely affected and that there was a duty to have sufficient children's centres to meet local need. Over 80% of respondents to the public consultation had disagreed with the core principle of the proposal and it was suggested that the timing and format of the consultation did not add value to the deliberations. A number of other unsatisfactory outcomes that were likely from the proposals were suggested particularly around reduced accessibility to services and that it may be harder to build local support networks.

(ii) In the meeting the following points were highlighted:

- The importance of early interventions being available through Children's Centres.
- The Children's Centres proposals would have a negative impact and marginalise those in most need of such a local service. Concerns had been raised in the Equality Impact Assessment.
- There had been significant improvement in the health and wellbeing of young families since the inception of the Sure Start Children's Centres.
- Young families will be unable to access the proposed Family Hubs and Family Hub Delivery sites and areas of Tendring were highlighted as being particularly isolated.

- It was suggested that children's centres provide guidance on general health and wellbeing that reduce inappropriate referrals to GPs and presentations at hospital A&Es. In particular, it was highlighted that the centres can provide specific support on issues such as mental health, obesity and isolation and act as a 'safe haven'.
- Anonymised case study examples from Harwich families were relayed highlighting the role of children's centres in providing introductory support networks, offering community based interventions, improving parenting skills and building confidence and emotional support.
- The importance of the emotional and social support given to young families at children's centres was highlighted. Some indicative numbers from Harwich Teen Talk on the increasing numbers of young people experiencing mental health issues was given.
- It was suggested that young families could turn to nursery and primary schools for advice and guidance instead if they cannot access a local children's centre.
- The number of children's centres had been reduced in 2014 and the Cabinet Report suggested that the number of families 'reached' had increased by 22% through using more local community venues. Anecdotal evidence did not support this assertion and this reported increase was disputed.
- Other services and organisations could be co-located with Children's Centres at the moment and the impact on those should also be considered.
- Some of the issues being raised were connected to the previous call-in considered by the Committee that day on Housing Related Support and the need for a consistent approach to support vulnerable people.
- The decision was inconsistent with the move towards greater integration of health and social care.
- It was requested that there be a pause in the implementation of the decision for a more fundamental review.

(c) Cabinet Member response to the call-in

Thereafter, at the request of the Chairman, Councillor Dick Madden, Cabinet Member for Adults and Children, responded to each of the issues raised in the call-in notice with the following officer support:

Adam Boey, Cabinet Adviser.

Adrian Coggins, Head of Commissioning PH and Wellbeing

Heidi Kimber, Assistant Director Children's Services, Barnardo's (North East Essex Children's Centre Contract provider)

Chris Martin, Director for Commissioning, Children and Families

Carolyn Terry, Commissioner for Early Years Services

The following key points were highlighted.

- The proposed decision was about developing an integrated 0-19 service and did not just relate to children's centres. It was important to move away from services being provided in silos and it was intended to consolidate 16 current contracts for 0-19 services into just one.

- There was a statutory framework stipulating issues to consider and take into account when formulating the proposals for 0-19 services. The Childcare Act 2006 required that arrangements made by the County Council should secure early integrated services in an integrated manner.
- The current network of locations from which services will be available would be maintained and extended through the use of Family Hubs, Children's Centre Delivery Sites and Family Hub Outreach Sites thereby increasing the potential for outreach and for services to be provided at different times. It was anticipated that outcomes would improve as a result.
- Through reducing the number of children's centres in 2014 and delivering services more locally there had been a 22% increase in the number of families 'reached' and almost a 50% increase in the number of families from priority groups reached.
- Providers had indicated that often having to staff children's centres buildings despite them not having sufficient service users there to justify it, prevented them approaching hard-to-reach families more flexibly from other community locations and in their homes. Under the new model providers would have flexibility to determine those locally who needed more support and the format of the Family Hub Outreach Sites that would be based on that local need.
- An illustrative example of a piloted outreach service at Harwich library was given which had been oversubscribed and seen an increase in engagement, particularly with priority groups.
- The 0-19 years' contract specification required the provider to take into account the Early Years Review and the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment in addressing the impact on particular demographic groups and contractual key performance indicators would be used to evidence this. The Early Years Review had also highlighted the need to work more collaboratively across services.
- Whilst current data showed that children in Early Years Services were generally performing well, the data masked that disadvantaged children were performing particularly poorly and that many were not 'school ready' at the time of starting school.
- The formal consultation had been run over eight weeks and it was a distortion to say that views expressed during the consultation had been discounted. 21 changes had been made to the proposals as a result of the consultation.

(d) Issues raised by the Committee

During subsequent discussion the following additional points were made:

- The specification for the new provider of 0-19 services contains Key Performance Indicators – some of which are specific quantified targets for the whole of the eligible population, such as immunisations but there are also other 'stretch' targets focusing on the 'worst off groups' such as a specific additional target to improve school readiness for those in the most deprived quintile. The provider would be expected to continuously review the delivery of local services by engaging with local people.

- The budget for children's centres remained the same although 10% savings had been identified for the overall 0-19 service primarily as a result of more joined-up working between the different strands of service.
- Whilst the use of the term 'closures' in relation to some of the fixed children's centre sites in the Cabinet Decision paper may have been misleading its use had been a legal requirement. A debrief session would be convened to establish any lessons learnt.
- An illustrative example of a piloted outreach service at Harwich library was given which had been oversubscribed and seen an increase in engagement, particularly with priority groups. Some further issues specifically around the use of Harwich library were raised by local members and would be discussed outside of the formal meeting.
- When considering whether buildings were accessible as part of an Equalities Impact Assessment it was important to not only consider physical mobility. For example, hearing and sight issues should be mitigated and a library, for example, may have too much background noise for some people. The Cabinet Member agreed to raise this with Head of Service. Action: Cabinet Member for Adults and Children

Councillor Danvers still believed that the proposed decision had not been thoroughly assessed for its full impacts and that he felt he had not had adequate responses to the particular issues raised on accessibility, transport, and continuing to be able to build local support networks.

(e) Motion proposed and the decision of the Committee

Thereafter, Councillor Guglielmi moved the following resolution, which was seconded by Councillor Jowers. Upon being put to the meeting the motion was carried by 10 votes to one with two abstentions (one being the Chairman):

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Committee supports the decision to launch a procurement for an Integrated Pre-Birth to 19 Health, Wellbeing and Family Support model (as detailed earlier in these minutes); and
- (ii) That the Committee receives a further update in approximately six months' time on the result of the procurement process.

6. Withdrawal of Call-in on Decision on Procurement of a New Model to Deliver Integrated pre-Birth to 19 Health, Wellbeing and Family Support

A report comprising the notes of an informal meeting to discuss a call-in by Councillor Young specifically in relation to the Children's Centre at Greenstead was received and noted. As a result of the meeting the call-in had been withdrawn.

7. Date of Next Meeting

The Committee would meet next at 10.30am on Thursday 14 July 2016 in Committee Room 1, County Hall.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 1.38pm.

Councillor Ian Grundy
Chairman
14 July 2016