
Minutes of the meeting of the People and Families Scrutiny Committee, held in Council Chamber County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex on Thursday, 13 October 2016

Present:

County Councillors:

I Grundy (Chairman)
K Bobbin
J Chandler
A Goggin
C Guglielmi
P Honeywood
M McEwen
J Whitehouse

The following officers were present in support throughout the meeting:

Robert Fox Scrutiny Officer
Jennifer Reid Committee Officer

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from the following members:

Cllr Andy Erskine
Cllr Andy Wood
Cllr Ray Howard
Cllr Theresa Higgins (Cllr Jon Whitehouse attended as substitute)
Cllr Michael Danvers (Cllr Keith Bobbin attended as substitute)

Apologies were also received from Richard Carson.

Cllr Andy Erskine has now replaced Cllr Bob Boyce as a member of the Committee.

The Scrutiny Officer confirmed that membership of the Committee should include four non-elected voting members who have voting rights on education issues, and that Lee Cromwell had recently been appointed as a non-elected voting member in his capacity as a primary school parent governor leaving one on-going vacancy.

2 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2016 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

3 Questions from the Public

There were no questions from the Public.

4 Essex Police Briefing

Members received PAF/20/16, a note of the Essex Police Briefing to the People and Families Scrutiny Committee.

In introducing the report, the Chairman confirmed that a copy of these notes had been sent to Essex Police who had confirmed they were happy that they were an accurate record of the meeting. The Chairman proposed that a copy of these were also sent to HMIC to show ECC recognition of the work taking place and the improvements. Cllr Guglielmi confirmed that as a member of the Essex Police and Crime Panel, he was aware that The Police and Crime Plan 2016 - 2020 reflected some of the issues discussed at the briefing but not all. the Scrutiny Officer confirmed that the notes have been forwarded to the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for information.

A number of key points and the need to follow up in future meetings were discussed in more detail:

- The Chairman confirmed that the Thurrock Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) had been invited to present at a training session to be held following the meeting of the Committee on 10th November. Cllrs Honeywood and Guglielmi referred to a presentation that had been given by the Margate CSE Task Force at Tendring District Council and how this had influenced the set up of the Tendring Hub. They had been very impressed with the presentation and work done in Margate and recommended that it may be useful for the Committee to receive this presentation. Of particular interest were the mapping exercises and the lead by the Fire Service which could be strategies useful in Essex. The Chelmsford hub is due to be in place by the end of the year.
- Data protection should not be a barrier to data sharing between agencies to ensure safeguarding.
- The six fold increase in reporting of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) was not an indication of an increase in incidence however Members were concerned about possible increases in this and trafficking and commented that it would be better if actual numbers were reported.
- The Joint IT system to enable multi-agency working would take time to set up
- Members were reminded to consider this report when the safeguarding annual reports were received at the meeting of this Committee in December to see how the data compared.
- Members recognised the importance of scrutiny in this area.
- The Essex Police Chief Constable will be invited back to future meetings

for further updates.

Actions

Robert Fox to invite the Tendring multi-agency Hub to the training session on Thursday, 10 November in advance of receipt of the Safeguarding Annual Reports in December 2016.

5 Urgent Business

Upon the motion of the Chairman, duly carried, it was agreed to vary the order of business to allow Members to receive a presentation about Young Carers originally scheduled for the postponed meeting of the Task and Finish Group as an urgent item of business. (minute 6 refers).

6 Supporting Young Carers in Essex

Members received a presentation (attached to these minutes) from Tim Frances, Youth Work Commissioner, regarding the future of support for Young Carers in Essex and reflecting to the improvements since the changes to the service in 2015, originally intended to be given at the Young Carers Task and Finish group that had been postponed.

In delivering the presentation and in response to Members' questions the Youth Work Commissioner provided further information around the following key points:

- The Youth Service now comes under the Education and Lifelong Learning Directorate.
- The changes in 2015 came about following the need to renew the contracts for young carers groups and the recognition of the need for increased support.
- There are significant impacts on young people being carers in particular the low family income which can impact on the ability to care, the rate of NEET which is six times the average rate and the high rate of mental health issues which can be brought on by the pressure of caring. It can also have positive impacts such as increased resilience and skills with greater sense of responsibility and empathy.
- The Children and Families Act 2014 definition defining a young carer as under 18 provided a shift away from the focus on young people age 10-14 where the bulk of support in Essex had been provided.
- Based on the data provided by the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS), the gender split in young carers is even unlike adult carers who are predominately women. In Essex the ethnic profile is lower than the population meaning more work may need to be done in order to identify young carers.
- The key change for Essex was the move to have Young Carer

Assessments conducted by the Targeted Youth Advisers Team rather than social workers or by staff from young carers' groups providing better quality assessments focusing on wider needs of the child or young person and offering a range of support. Currently capacity for assessments is good and they are completed within 2 weeks of referral, however this may change if referrals increase.

- The Young Adult Carers (YAC) program is providing support for a wider age range and there is increased support in schools.
- The activity completed in redesigning the offer allowed benchmarking and sharing of good practice with other LAs and the analysis of young carers plans provided an opportunity to identify key common issues.
- The engagement with young adult carers provided an opportunity to look back at what would have been useful at different ages. The group are keen to engage with the Task and Finish group.
- An action had been created with young people identifying key actions such as improving on-going support in schools, access to key workers in times of crisis even when regular support not required, personal budgets, meaningful respite and better access to Essex specific information. In particular reference was made to the module under the Healthy Schools program to assist in improving the level and consistency of support in schools.
- There are now key targets in the pre-birth to 19 specification around young carers. A paper is going to the Health and Wellbeing Board to ask partners to sign up to the NHS England proposed memorandum of understanding around all carers including young carers.
- There was recognition that the YEA was geographically unrepresentative due to co-opted members to fill spaces. Following the upcoming elections this practice would not take place and work would be undertaken to ensure it was representative of the whole county.

The Chairman thanked Tim Frances for the comprehensive report and confirmed this would be taken forward by the Task and Finish Group. He confirmed that if any further Members wished to be involved there was room within the group for more volunteers.

7 Residential and Domiciliary Care

Members received PAF/18/16, the Cabinet Member response to the report of the Residential and Domiciliary Care Task and Finish Group. The Chairman welcomed Councillor Dick Madden, Cabinet Member for Adults and Children, Nick Presmeg, Director for Commissioning - Vulnerable Adults and Adam Boey, Senior Policy and Strategy Officer, to the meeting.

The report outlined the Cabinet Member response to the recommendations and actions of the Task and Finish group and in response to Members' questions, the Cabinet Member and officers provided clarification and further information around the following key points:

- The funding of residential care places is a massive national issue and the subject of much debate. There has been communication from ECC to the Chancellor of the Exchequer regarding the consequences and impact of funding cuts in this area. the 2% Social Care precept only covers approximately 75% of the National Living Wage (NLW) requirements. Whilst ECC is not allowed to raise rates above the NLW requirements, following a national precedent new contracts do allow for resident top-up payments provided these are for extra services and part of core care.
- A list of homes in each area will be provided to Members and visits can be arranged through Councillor Maddocks, Deputy Cabinet Member for Adults and Children.
- Member development is being actioned and will part of the full program from May 2017.
- ECC monitors care provision in Independent Living arrangements involving private tenancies but does not monitor the accommodation.
- A Strategic Commissioning Board with Cabinet members and Senior Officers has been held around the funding issues surrounding the adult approach including residential and domiciliary care, nursing and reablement which has lead to Task and Finish group being developed. Strategies were being at looked at to reduce what can be controlled e.g. reducing numbers going into care however in Essex the majority of residents self-fund.
- The proposed Corporate Carers Panel has Cabinet Member support to go through Governance and would look to cross portfolios for example Young Carers come under Education and Lifelong Learning.
- Councillor Dick Madden agreed to include an update on actions regarding links between schools and residential care homes under the Education and Lifelong Learning portfolio as part of his implementation update to this Committee in April 2017.
- A copy of the final report to include Councillor Madden's response would be sent to the Government Minister responsible for residential care.

The domiciliary care aspect of the Task and Finish group, which had been deferred due to changes in the service will be built into the work plan for after the May elections.

Councillor Madden expressed his gratitude for the assistance of the Task and Finish Group and the collaborative cross party working in this major issue.

Actions

1. *Councillor Malcolm Maddocks to send a list of all residential homes per division to Members.*
2. *Councillor Madden to return to the Committee with an implementation update in April 2017 and to include a report on the joint actions with the*

Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning.

3. *Councillor Dick Madden/Robert Fox to insert Councillor Madden's response into the Final Report and send to the Government Minister responsible for residential care.*

8 Housing Related Support for Older People

Members received a verbal update from Cllr Dick Madden, Cabinet Member for Adults and Children and Nick Presmeg, Director for Commissioning - Vulnerable Adults following the call in the Cabinet Member decision, FP/221/08/15 Changes to Funding for Housing Related Support Funded Older People's Services, in November 2015.

The Director for Commissioning - Vulnerable Adults confirmed that current contracts had been extended until April 2017 to allow for further consultation but within the renewed contracts there had been changes implemented and new pricing structures. Communication had been on-going with providers who maintain the individual relationships with residents to monitor the impact of the changes so far and there was no clear evidence that this had resulted in increased hospital admissions.

A report had been produced addressing the questions raised in the call-in and a copy of this would be circulated to Members.

Actions

Councillor Dick Madden to circulate a written report on actions to date.

9 Scrutiny recommendations tracker and work programme

Members received PAF/21/16, providing an outline of the work programme.

The Chairman, two Vice-Chairmen and Scrutiny Officer proposed to meet to discuss the work programme, with particular relevance to the outcomes of the police briefing and safeguarding to ensure relevant areas covered.

The Safeguarding Annual Reports will now be moved to the December meeting and a training session in preparation for these reports will be held following the meeting of this committee on 10 November 2016.

The items for the next meeting on 10 November 2016 will focus on Education.

10 Date of Next Meeting

The Committee noted the date of the next meeting: 10.30 am on Thursday 10

November 2016 in Committee Room 1 at County Hall.

Chairman