

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held on Friday, 20 January 2012 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 12.40 pm.

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Ann Bonner – in the Chair

Councillor Janet Godden
Councillor Neil Owen
Councillor Marilyn Badcock
Councillor Mrs Anda Fitzgerald-O'Connor
Councillor Michael Waine
Councillor Ian Hudspeth (In place of Councillor Dave Sexon)
Councillor Liz Brighthouse (In place of Councillor Sarah Hutchinson)

Other Members in Attendance: Councillor Melinda Tilley

Co-opted Members: Mr Chris Bevan
Mrs Sue Matthew

By Invitation: Mrs Carole Thomson

Officers:

Whole of meeting Lisa Michelson

Part of meeting Sara Livadeas
Sarah Breton
Arzu Ulusoy-Shipstone
Roy Leach
Simon Pickard
Andy Roberts

Agenda Item **Officer Attending**

The Scrutiny Committee considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting [, together with a schedule of addenda tabled at the meeting/the following additional documents:] and agreed as set out below. Copies of the agenda and reports [agenda, reports and schedule/additional documents] are attached to the signed Minutes.

175/12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

(Agenda No. 1)

Councillor Hudspeth for Councillor Sexon
Councillor Brighthouse for Councillor Hutchinson
Apologies from Councillor Altaf-Khan, Councillor Seale, and Brenda Williams

176/12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - SEE GUIDANCE NOTE ON THE BACK PAGE

(Agenda No. 2)

None.

177/12 MINUTES

(Agenda No. 3)

Corrected misspelling for Councillor Badcock.

178/12 SPEAKING TO OR PETITIONING THE COMMITTEE

(Agenda No. 4)

None.

179/12 NEW JOINT COMMISSIONING ARRANGEMENTS

(Agenda No. 5)

The committee was joined by Sara Livadeas, Deputy Director – Joint Commissioning (SL) and Sarah Breton, Strategic Lead and Head of Joint Commissioning (SB) to receive a report. Speaking to the paper, SL described the new joint commissioning approach to Social and Community Services and Children's Services as well as the considerations taken to come to the new arrangement. The ensuing discussion highlighted the fact that while the two services appear to be quite dissimilar in terms of the amount of service that is contracted out, the guiding principles for commissioning were the same as well as the aim, which is to support families. The approach to joining up would seek to remove duplication, while retaining expertise (bringing down 'silos' where they exist) – which the committee supported. There was also a discussion about whether in the larger context of commissioning, if the much small contracts for children's services would be eclipsed by the larger adult care contracts. SL reassured the committee that this was an important consideration in the way the team leadership was structured. . The lead officer for children is parallel to the lead officer for adults to ensure an equal weight for overall service decisions. There is much to be gained from a more coherent approach to contracting, which is currently very fragmented, so that there is a consistent approach to service providers and risk in this area is reduced

The committee asked that Joint Commissioning return in a year's time after it's been fully established.

180/12 CAPITAL PROGRAMME UPDATE

(Agenda No. 6)

Speaking to a report, Arzu Ulusoy-Shipstone, Capital, Strategy & Transformation Manager (AU-S) gave the latest position on the confirmed amounts in the capital budget. She reported that while there were sufficient funds for the Basic Maintenance and Structural Maintenance budgets, there continued to be unknown elements of the impact for national policy decisions around funding especially around the shift to academies. Roy Leach, School Organisation & Planning Manager, added that at the moment, a school's decision to become an academy does not have an impact on investment decisions, adding that this clarification will be communicated through the Schools' Forum. While the county council does not currently have a written policy regarding this, discussions are underway to develop one. The committee had a discussion about existing investment commitments and what changes have occurred and whether these decisions have been communicated with schools.

181/12 ACADEMIES / FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS
(Agenda No. 7)

Simon Pickard, Finance Business Partner for Children Education and Families (SP), along with Andy Roberts, Interim Deputy Director - Education and Early Intervention (AR) joined the committee for a question and answer session regarding the expected financial impacts for recent shift in national policy towards the promotion of academies. SP confirmed that there are financial pressures arising around the amount of funding available per pupil in Local Authority Central Spend Equivalent Grant (LACSEG) calculations. He described the national picture as 'fluctuating wildly' around the price paid per student and said that there were additional consultations on the horizon which contributed to the uncertainty. However, there was a downward trend in per pupil deductions and the Council had made accurate projections of the deductions to date, meaning there was no immediate financial problem. The committee requested that the costs of running an academy are made transparent in any future consultations on Academy status. The committee also decided to explore a possible seminar on this issue to take place later in the year for all local elected members. Lastly, the committee asked that an upcoming paper on this which is to be considered by the Cabinet be brought to the committee.

182/12 CLOSE OF MEETING
(Agenda No. 8)

The meeting finished at 12.40.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing