

## PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**MINUTES** of the meeting held on Thursday, 5 October 2017 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 12.30 pm

**Present:**

**Voting Members:** Councillor Liz Brighthouse OBE – in the Chair  
Councillor Jenny Hannaby (Deputy Chairman)  
Councillor Mike Fox-Davies  
Councillor Tony Ilott  
Councillor Liz Leffman  
Councillor Glynis Phillips  
Councillor Emily Smith  
Councillor Michael Waine  
Councillor Liam Walker  
Councillor Jeannette Matelot (In place of Councillor Nick Carter)

**Other Members in Attendance:** Councillor Ian Hudspeth (for Agenda Item 5)

**By Invitation:** Pamela Marsden, Independent Chair, Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board  
Paul Burnett, Independent Chair, Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board

**Officers:**

Whole of meeting Claire Phillips, Senior Policy and Performance Officer;  
Colm Ó Caomhánaigh, Committee Officer

Part of meeting

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Officer Attending</b>
5	Maggie Scott, Assistant Chief Executive
6	Steve Turner, OSAB Business Manager
7	Tan Lea, Strategic Safeguarding Partnerships Manager
7&8	Hannah Farncombe, Deputy Director – Children's Social Care

*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 and agreed as set out below. Copies of the agenda, reports and additional documents are attached to the signed Minutes.*

#### **40/17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS**

(Agenda No. 1)

Apologies were submitted by Councillor Nick Carter (Councillor Jeannette Matelot substituting) and Councillor Charles Mathew.

#### **41/17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - GUIDANCE NOTE ON BACK PAGE OF THE AGENDA**

(Agenda No. 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **42/17 WORKING TOWARDS A NEW CORPORATE PLAN 2018-21**

(Agenda No. 5)

Ms Scott introduced the report on behalf of the chair of the working group, Councillor Heathcoat. Ms Scott proposed a public-facing document setting out the council's vision for the county, that could be made available quickly, for example online and in libraries. A full, more internal and detailed corporate plan would be produced in the longer term for approval by Council.

Councillor Hudspeth stated that a new corporate plan was needed because the Council was entering a new, more ambitious and aspirational phase, having largely made the necessary budget savings. There was greater agreement around the county now on priorities for government funding bids. When such bids were successful it freed up council money to be spent elsewhere.

Members were invited to comment and made the following suggestions:

- The document needs to address infrastructure for growth towns around the county.
- It is not obvious how feedback from the public has influenced the document.
- There should be more on joint working between the local authorities and other partners across the county.
- There were too many case studies. A smaller number is needed that can stand up to rigorous scrutiny.
- There needs to be more to give hope to those currently struggling to get by.
- The document should also address how the priorities will be achieved and how success will be measured.

It was agreed to circulate a new, shorter draft on the basis of the feedback received and to invite Members to comment on that draft by email. The Chairman will attend Cabinet and deliver feedback from the Committee.

#### **43/17 SAFEGUARDING ADULTS**

(Agenda No. 6)

Ms Marsden presented the report. She drew attention to good performance ratings such as 86% of care homes rated as good or outstanding. The Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service had conducted 3,000 welfare checks. The Adult Board is now

working closely with the Children's Board and they meet twice yearly to discuss joint priorities. Housing has been identified as a joint issue.

Ms Marsden and Mr Turner responded to Members' questions as follows:

- Recruitment and retention continue to be a major problem for everyone in the sector despite having the highest pay rate in the country. There is a need to offer prospective employees good job progression prospects.
- South & Vale failed to produce a report in time due to staff changes but have delivered a supplementary report.
- Healthwatch has a representative on the Board and they have been commissioned to do some work on user feedback.
- Duplicate reports may be responsible for some of the low conversion rate of reports. Also, care providers have been encouraged to make reports to cover themselves. A comprehensive training plan is in place to seek to reduce the number of concerns that convert into enquiries. A consultancy service has been set up to advise whether a safeguarding concern should be made. It is hoped that the impact of this will be seen next year.
- More training with councillors will also be provided as they often pick up reports of abuse.

#### **44/17 SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN - ANNUAL REPORTS** (Agenda No. 7)

Mr Burnett introduced the report. He expressed satisfaction that the right people were on the Board and there is strong engagement with its work. He stated that his biggest concern was the reduction in referrals for early help and at the same time an increase in children taken into care. He has also expressed concern at the poor OFSTED ratings for secure centres.

Mr Burnett, Ms Lea and Ms Farncombe responded to Members' questions as follows:

- There is no resource issue with early help. There is a need to engage partners to refer into early help. There are some signs that this is happening with the new Locality and Community Support Service.
- There should be greater powers for local authorities to ensure that parents are accountable for children's safety when being educated at home.
- School governing bodies need to be more aware of potential impacts of children being on reduced timetables.
- It is hoped that a new model for CAMHS will help reduce waiting times for assessments. The Board will assess how the new CAMHS pathway links to the main pathway for children. This should reduce confusion for staff and others.
- Where grandparents are formally taking care of grandchildren there are safeguards in place but there are concerns about situations where this is happening informally.
- Locality networks are being built around schools in areas of concern. They ensure that key services work together. It is hoped that each school will have a named Police Community Support Officer.

- While local councillors have been consulted on individual problems there is a need for more communication to them about the situation in general.
- The Board is working with VOXY to get better feedback from children on their experience of safeguarding.

Ms Lea presented the PAQA report. She drew attention in particular to the ten most common learning points in the summary. Ms Farncombe presented the CRAG report. There were 5 Serious Case Reviews involving 6 children. The Chairman suggested that serious case reviews could be the subject of a 'deep dive' by the Committee or a subgroup could look at them.

The committee agreed that it should consider serious case review reports when they are published.

**45/17 CHILDREN MISSING FROM HOME OR CARE IN OXFORDSHIRE**

(Agenda No. 8)

Ms Farncombe presented the report. She explained that when children go missing twice or more within 90 days the case is reviewed to ensure that agencies are working together. There had been a reduction in repeat episodes which indicates that the right structures are in place though there is still a lot of work to do.

Ms Farncombe responded to Members' points as follows:

- There is concern that when unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASCs) go missing for a long period, they may have become involved in trafficking. However, some may have always planned to move on.
- When Looked After Children placed out-of-county go missing there is a clear protocol to notify Oxfordshire as well as the police but they often fail to notify us at the outset. If the children return, there is a review to check if the placement is still appropriate.
- The Council works with colleges especially in respect of 16 to 18 year olds.
- A new structure has been created to tackle the growing problem of children at risk of exploitation by organised crime groups.
- Ms Farncombe will update the Committee on the recommendation that Thames Valley Police appoint a senior officer to oversee UASC partnership working. The committee supported this.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing ..... 2017