

Date: Wednesday, 15 July 2015

Time: 10.00 am

Venue: SY2 6ND
Shrewsbury Room, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, Shropshire,

Contact: Tim Ward, Committee Officer
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YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

TO FOLLOW REPORT (S)

3 Minutes (Pages 1 - 6)

The minutes of the meeting, held on 14 May 2015, are attached for confirmation.

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 June 2015 are to follow

7 Schools Sustainability (Pages 7 - 10)

Report to follow marked 7

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YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 24 June 2015

10.00 am - 12.16 pm in the Shrewsbury/Oswestry Room, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 6ND

Responsible Officer: Tim Ward

Email: tim.ward@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 252739

Present

Shropshire Councillors

Councillor Joyce Barrow (Chairman)

Councillors Peggy Mullock (Vice Chairman), Andy Boddington, Hannah Fraser, Vince Hunt, John Price, Robert Tindall, Kevin Turley and David Turner

Co-Opted Members (Voting)

Austin Atkinson

5 Apologies and Substitutions

5.1 Apologies for absence were received from Mark Hignett and Kevin Pardy.

6 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

6.1 There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests.

7 Minutes

7.1 Resolved: -

That the minutes of the meeting held on 1 April 2015 be approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

7.2 A member requested that the minutes of the meeting held on 14 May be amended to reflect the fact that there was an election for the position of Chairman. It was agreed that this would be done.

8 Public Question Time

8.1 There were no questions from members of the public.

9 Members' Question Time

9.1 There were no questions from Members.

10 "Hearing the Voice of the Child" (Mental Wellbeing)

- 10.1 Members received a presentation from Shereece Williams a pupil at The Grange Primary School who outlined the help she had received following being bullied and how she was helping other pupils at the school who were being bullied.
- 10.2 Miss Beverley Williams, a teacher at the school informed members that the school had taken part in the pilot for TaMHS and had continued the work once the pilot had finished. In response to a question she confirmed that the school received no extra funding to run the programme and that any costs came out of the school budget although they were looking for other sources of funding.
- 10.3 A Member asked whether there was a common approach within schools for dealing with bullies and their behaviour. In response the Director of Children's Services advised that the responsibility lay with the individual schools and there was some variation with the approach taken but that bullying was addressed in the PSHE policy and practice document.
- 10.4 The Chairman thanked Shereece for coming to talk to the Committee and commented on how impressed she was with the way she had dealt with being bullied and the work she was doing to help other children who were being bullied.

11 The Role and operation of the CSE Panel

- 11.1 Members received a presentation (copy attached to signed minutes) updating them on work being done to control Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and the role and work of the CSE Panel.
- 11.2 The Service Manager reminded Members that the Shropshire Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) had developed a CSE strategy and practitioners toolkit and had created a multi-agency CSE Panel. He advised that where a child was identified as being at risk of CSE using the risk identification tool, this was referred to the CSE Panel, and in medium and high risk cases also to Children's Social care, and that when cases were discussed by the Panel, each agency was able to bring any information that it had about the child and was able to contribute to any action that was required.
- 11.3 The Service Manager advised that there were 50 referrals to the Panel in 2014/15 a rise of 28% on the previous years and that in the period 1 April 2015 to 1 June 2015 there had already been 25 referrals to the Panel which had resulted in extra meetings of the Panel having to be held. He commented that the rise in referrals reflected the fact that agencies were becoming more confident in identifying and reporting potential cases of CSE.
- 11.4 The Service Manager advised Members that briefings on CSE had been made to elected members, Town and Parish Councils, and to the Head Teachers Forum and The Central Policy Group and that a CSE Awareness page had been included in the Shrewsbury Town Football Club programme. Several Members expressed concern that not all Councillors had attended briefings on CSE and Safeguarding as they felt it was essential that they were made aware of the subject.

Resolved: -

That a recommendation be made that training in Safeguarding and CSE be made essential for all Members

- 11.5 The Service Manager introduced Julie Johnson (Schools Lead in CSE), who advised Members that her role was to work with schools to help them identify and report cases of CSE. She informed Members that only 7 of the 22 secondary schools in the county had reported cases of CSE and there was a need to understand why more schools were not reporting cases and that she was working with Head Teachers and designated leads in schools to raise awareness.
- 11.6 Ms Johnsons advised Members that funding had been secured from the Police and Crime Commissioners Office to put on performances of "Chelsea's Choice", which was a hard hitting drama around CSE, for year 8 and year 9 pupils in the county, and that designated leads in schools were also required to attend the performances. Members asked whether it would be possible for them to attend one of the performances. The Director of Children's Services said it may be possible for them to attend a performance in February 2016.
- 11.7 A member commented on the rise in "E-bullying" and commented that there was the opportunity to raise awareness though social media channels. Ms Johnson commented that a Twitter account had been set up for the Say Something if You See Something Campaign but that uptake had not been very good. She advised that there was a need to get the message out to parents and carers, and that each school had different policies about this.
- 11.8 The Chairman thanked the Service Manager and Ms Johnson for their presentation.

12 Changes to the Provision of Youth Services

- 12.1 Members received the report of the Director of Commissioning (copy attached to the signed minutes) which updated them on progress with the local commissioning of youth activities.
- 12.2 The Director of Commissioning introduced the report and advised Members that the proposed budget allocation had been reduce pro-rata as the new provision would start in September 2015 rather than April 2015. The budget retained would cover the costs of interim Positive Activities staffing and direct delivery costs.
- 12.3 The Director of Commissioning also advised Members that following a procurement process the Shropshire Youth Association (SYA) in partnership with Energize had been appointed as the Infrastructure Support Provider. The contract would run from 13 August 2015 to 31 March 2017, and that the role of the Infrastructure Support Provider would be to provide capacity building support to new and existing youth providers and supporting Local Joint Committees and the Community Enablement team with the local commissioning of youth activities, particularly with engagement of young people and their safeguarding and welfare.

- 12.4 The Director of Commissioning advised Members that a number of different approaches were being adopted by LJC's dependant on local circumstances from retaining the current provision to the transfer of responsibility for commissioning and delivery of youth activities to Shrewsbury Town Council via a formal delegation of responsibilities.
- 12.5 The Director of Commissioning informed members that expressions of interest had been received following the listing of some Youth Buildings for Community Asset Transfer and that interested parties had been invited to move to the next stage of the process.
- 12.6 The Director of Commissioning advised that a formal public consultation on youth activity was being undertaken and undertook to circulate the results to Committee Members when they were available.
- 12.7 The Local Commissioning Manager advised members that the first tranche of opportunities for youth provision had been advertised on the Council Website. He agreed to circulate a link to the relevant webpage.
- 12.8 A Member commented that there was a potential conflict of interest for the SYA in that they could be advising the LJC's whilst assisting providers or applying to provide services themselves. The Director of Commissioning informed Members that this risk had been recognised and that appropriate safeguards would be built into the procurement process.
- 12.9 A Member asked what assurances could be given that youth activity would continue to be available in youth buildings following their transfer. The Local Commissioning Manager commented that a requirement for youth provision would be built in to the transfer documentation.
- 12.10 A Member asked who would be responsible for the monitoring of the contracts and ensuring outcomes were achieved. The Director of Commissioning advised that contract monitoring would be done through the Community Enablement team.
- 12.11 A Member asked what would happen if provision was not in place by the beginning of September. The Local Commissioning Manager advised that strict timetable had been drawn up and that work had been done to ensure that there was no gap in provision.
- 12.12 The Chairman commented that the budget of £130,000 for infrastructure support costs seemed high. The Director of Commissioning advised that this was the figure that was reached following the tendering process.
- 12.13 The Chair asked that the Committee be updated on progress with youth provision after the contracts had been in place for 3 months.

12.14 **Resolved:**

That the Scrutiny Committee be updated on progress with youth provision after the contracts had been in place for 3 months and that the Committee receive a further update in respect of youth commissioning and the impact it has had to date in Spring 2016

13 **Performance**

13.1 Members had before them the "Your Life" Performance dashboard. The Director of Children's Services advised members that this matter had been referred from the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee. She drew attention to table 1 which showed that the number of referrals to Children's Social Care had risen compared to last year and to table 2 which showed the outcomes for children referred to Children's Social Care.

13.2 The Head of Safeguarding advised Members that the number of referrals had risen over the past two years but this was from a very low level and work had been done to ensure that agencies felt that they could make referrals when required.

13.3 The Head of Safeguarding advised Members that a lot of referrals resulted in a 'professional conversation' which often ended in action other than coming into the service such as referral to the 'Early Help team'. Based on this data review processes changed to direct Initial concerns into Early Help first so the right service could be offered more quickly, whilst maintaining access for professional to support and advice from our qualified Early Help social workers. We have seen this changes impact to reduce referrals

13.4 A Member commented that there were positive outcomes contained in the table. The Head of Safeguarding commented that measures contained in the LAC Strategy such as Early Help and the Edge of Care work at Havenbrook were having a positive effect.

13.5 A Member asked how the figures compared with national figures. The Director of Children's Services commented that it was difficult to do a comparison as you were not able to compare like figures as the figures for Shropshire were current figures whilst the national figure were based on last year's data

14 **RAG - Fostering**

14.1 Mr Hunt updated the meeting on work he had been doing as part of the RAG on Fostering. He informed Members that he had been shadowing a couple throughout the fostering process. He expressed concern that there seemed to be a delay in getting cases heard by the Fostering Panel. The Head of Safeguarding commented that she was not aware of a problem but that she would bring a report to a future meeting giving details of the performance of the Panel.

15 Work Programme

15.1 Members received copies of the Committees Work Programme and the Cabinet Forward Plan.

15.2 The Chairman informed members that she proposed to add the following topics to the work programme:

- The impact of forthcoming budget reductions on safeguarding services;
- The oversight of vulnerable groups, including those who are educated at home, or are missing from education;
- Safeguarding arrangements in independent schools;
- Progress in implementing PSHE which addresses issues of sexual exploitation;
- The rate of referrals and re-referrals to children's social care and the rate of children with a second or subsequent Child Protection Plan;
- The contribution of schools to the Early Help and Child Protection Services and the impact of the early help strategy;
- The plans for the transition of the health visiting service to the local authority;
- Schools Funding ;
- Post 16 Provision & funding in schools with 6th Form provision and colleges; and
- The financial implications of the new government edict for free pre-school education;

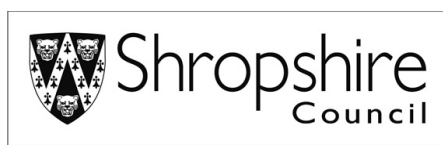
15.3 A Member asked that the financial implications of the new government edict for free pre-school education be considered as a matter of urgency as she knew of schools that had serious concerns regarding this matter.

16 Date of next Meeting

16.1 Members were reminded that the next scheduled meeting would take place on Wednesday 15 July 2015 at 10.00am at the Shirehall

Signed (Chairman)

Date:



<p><u>Committee and Date</u></p> <p>Young People’s Scrutiny</p> <p>15 July 2015</p>	<p><u>Item</u></p> <p><u>Public</u></p>
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SCHOOLS SUSTAINABILITY

Responsible Officer Karen Bradshaw

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1 Summary

The Report provides an overview of issues affecting the Sustainability of Schools in Shropshire. It sets out the problem of significantly declining numbers of pupils and the impact this will have on the funding for some schools.

It explains the basis on which Schools Forum and Cabinet decided on the funding formula for schools for 2015/16.

It outlines the work of two Task and Finish Groups (Schools Forum and Administration) on School Sustainability and their recommendations.

2 Recommendations

That the Committee accept the position as set out in the Report.

REPORT

Background

1. Shropshire Council’s primary aim is to provide high quality education for all Shropshire children. The sustainability of the school network in the context of a significantly declining school population raises a number of issues. A falling school population in Shropshire bucks the national trend for *rising numbers of school children in most LA areas*.
2. The number of pupils on roll at Shropshire Schools has fallen by about 10% in recent years and this trend will continue, with a further fall of nearly 4% by 2019/20.

3. But the decline in numbers is not evenly spread throughout Shropshire. Some areas will see a modest increase in numbers or a fairly stable school population - so the decline in other areas will be greater than the 4% Shropshire average.
4. New house building in Shropshire has not had the impact on pupil numbers that might be expected. In the years from 2003 to 2012, 10,800 new homes were built in Shropshire whilst numbers of pupils *fell by more than 2500* in the same period.
5. Because Government funding is linked very closely to pupil numbers, Shropshire will almost certainly see a significant fall in DSG (Dedicated Schools Grant) over the next few years. The additional funding of more than £10 million (about £333 per pupil) received in 2015/16 will be substantially eroded as numbers of pupils continue to fall in the next few years.
6. The Schools Forum has carefully considered current and future levels of funding for Shropshire Schools. It recommended to Cabinet last December a formula for the current year which distributes the majority of the additional funding across all schools at a flat rate per pupil. Cabinet accepted this recommendation.
7. The Minimum Funding Guarantee(MFG) has in recent years benefited some Shropshire schools by cushioning reductions in per pupil funding. As funding per pupil increases, so the MFG decreases. Thus some Shropshire schools have derived little/no immediate benefit in the current year from the average increase in per pupil funding.
8. The Schools Forum established in November 2013 a Task and Finish Group on Schools Sustainability. The Group continued to meet on a regular basis through 2014 and meets rather less frequently in 2015. This Group was assisted in its work by the formation within the Administration of a parallel Group with the remit of securing Member backing at political level for the Schools Forum recommendations. A joint communication on behalf of both Groups was sent in September 2014 to all schools, local SC councillors, Parish and Town Councils and MPs.
9. The strong advice from Schools Forum and the two Task and Finish Groups on School Sustainability is that Governing Bodies should look very carefully at their projected pupil numbers over the next few years and the impact that the likely (in most areas) fall in numbers will have on the school's funding. All schools now have a modelling tool for calculating the impact of pupil numbers on the school budget.
10. There is no simple solution to Shropshire's problem. What works well in one part of Shropshire may not work at all in other areas. There are many ways in which the Council can help but there is no blue print that seeks to solve the issues across the whole County.

11. Governing Bodies are urged to look closely at collaboration with other schools. This can take many different forms e.g. a Federation or a Multi Academy Trust and we have a number of successful examples of different collaborative structures in Shropshire in both Primary and Secondary sectors.
12. However doing nothing is almost certainly not a sensible option.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)
Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)
Local Member All Members
Appendices

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