



## **YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2014**

**10.00 - 11.45 am in the Shrewsbury/Oswestry Room, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 6ND**

**Responsible Officer:** Tim Ward

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### **Present**

#### **Shropshire Councillors**

Councillor Joyce Barrow (Chairman)

Councillors Peggy Mullock (Vice Chairman), Andy Boddington, Vince Hunt, Robert Macey, Kevin Turley, David Turner, Charlotte Barnes (Substitute) (substitute for Hannah Fraser) and Jane MacKenzie (Substitute) (substitute for Kevin Pardy)

### **35 Apologies and Substitutions**

35.1 Apologies for absence were received from Mr Atkinson, Councillor Fraser, Councillor Pardy and Mr Wilson

35.2 Councillor Barnes substituted for Councillor Fraser and Councillor MacKenzie substituted for Councillor Pardy

### **36 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

36.1 None were disclosed

### **37 Minutes**

#### **37.1 RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting of the Young Peoples Scrutiny Committee held on the 10 September 2014 be approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman

### **38 Public Question Time**

38.1 There were no questions from members of the public

### **39 Members' Question Time**

39.1 There were no questions from Members

## 40 Changes to Youth Services

- 40.1 The meeting received the report of the Area Commissioner (North) which updated Members on progress made with changes to youth services.
- 40.2 The Area Commissioner stated that a great deal of work had been carried out since his last presentation to the committee. He advised Members that tenders for the procurement of an infrastructure support service were due in on 24 October 2014 and that it was hoped that following a full evaluation the infrastructure partner would be confirmed by mid-December. It was noted that, following the evaluation of the pilot of using local Youth Boards, it was considered that the existing network of Local Joint Committees [LJCs] could be used for local commissioning rather than creating new boards.
- 40.3 The Area Commissioner advised that a funding formula was being developed using 9 criteria together with an added element of rurality and that the formula should be finalised in November.
- 40.4 The Area Commissioner stated that he and the Director of Commissioning had met with the Positive Activities staff to discuss the plans. With the move to the commissioning of services it was hoped that many of the existing staff would be employed by the new service providers. He added that, as required under employment legislation, the formal consultation with staff would begin in November.
- 40.5. The Area Commissioner advised members that a review of youth buildings was being undertaken and that currently there were no plans to sell off any of the buildings. It was however noted that, following the review, some buildings may be transferred under community asset transfers.
- 40.6 The Director of Commissioning commented that the Lead Commissioner for youth provision would sit under Early Help to ensure a joined up provision.
- 40.7 The Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Libraries and Culture commented that it was clear that there would be more budget cuts after the next election and that the process of locality commissioning being planned could provide valuable lessons for other services. He stated that currently there were approximately 11,000 sessions of youth work delivered in the County each year of which only 4,000 were delivered directly by the Council. He advised that Member briefings would be held to update Councillors on the plans.
- 40.8 The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services commented that it was important that safeguarding issues were addressed at all stages of the process.
- 40.9 A Member asked what the role of the Infrastructure Partner was. The Director of Commissioning advised Members that the Infrastructure Partner would help the LJCs to identify needs and, with the commissioning process, they would also be responsible for providing support and advice on safeguarding issues, DBS checks and training.

- 40.10 A Member commented that amendments to the LJC Constitution would be needed and some of the LJC boundaries may need reassessing. Several Members commented that work was being carried out on the possibility of amalgamating some of the LJC areas.
- 40.11 Members requested information on the funding formula as soon as possible and requested input into the criteria and expected outcomes as these would vary in different areas.
- 40.12 A Member queried the measures that would be put in place regarding safeguarding issues. The Area Commissioner advised that there was a great emphasis placed on safeguarding within the proposed contract with the infrastructure provider. The Director of Children's Services commented that there would be a requirement within any contract that providers comply with safeguarding guidance issued by the Shropshire Safeguarding Children's Board.
- 40.13 A Member asked that Town and Parish Councils be informed of the plans as soon as possible.
- 40.14 **RESOLVED:**
- i) That the Young People's Scrutiny Committee provide feedback and comment on the needs assessment model used to allocate Council funds to Local Joint Committees as part of its Work Programme for the financial year 2015/16 and;
  - ii) That the Young People's Scrutiny Committee receives a further update on the youth activities commissioning model in Spring 2015.

#### 41 Pupil Premium for Looked After Children

- 41.1 The meeting received a report from the Head of Looked After Children (LAC) Education and Health Team, which outlined changes in the management of the pupil premium grant for LAC and its impact on Shropshire LAC, LAC from other authorities placed in Shropshire and Shropshire Schools.
- 41.2 The Head of LAC Education and Health Team advised that under the Children and Families Act 2014 local authorities in England had a duty to promote the educational achievements of looked after children and had to appoint an Officer with the responsibility for discharging this duty; this Officer would be known as the Virtual School Headteacher (VSH) for LAC. He informed Members that he fulfilled this role for Shropshire Council.
- 41.3 The Head of LAC Education and Health Team added that in April 2014 the arrangements for the payment of pupil premium for LAC had changed in that:
- The amount of Pupil Premium for LAC had risen to £1900 per pupil.
  - Pupil Premium was payable from the first day the child became looked after rather than after the child had been looked after for six months or more.

- Pupil premium for LAC must be managed by the VSH and, whilst there was no requirement of the authority to pass the funding on to the school, where the child was on the roll there was a strong presumption that this would happen.

- 41.4 The Head of LAC Education and Health Team advised Members that Headteachers and Designated Teachers for LAC had been briefed and had received training on the arrangements for supporting the changes to the way the pupil premium was administered.
- 41.5 The Head of LAC Education and Health Team informed the Committee that as VSH he was required to provide a report on Pupil Premium to Ofsted in the summer term of 2015, and that following its publication a further report would be made to the Young People's Scrutiny Committee.
- 41.6 A Member asked whether the pupil premium for LAC with special educational needs (SEN) was used in addition to the funding received for SEN. The Director of Children's Services commented that the two funding streams should be used in a complementary way.
- 41.7 A Member noted that there was a requirement to return any underspend of pupil premium to the Department for Education and asked whether any money was returned from Shropshire. The Head of LAC Education and Health Team advised that he aimed to spend all the money available whilst ensuring that the money was targeted correctly and used to the best advantage for the looked after children of Shropshire.
- 41.8 A Member recognised that there were a large number of LAC placed in the county by other authorities and asked whether the Pupil Premium followed these LAC. The Head of LAC Education and Health Team informed the meeting that there were currently 460 LAC from other authorities placed in the County and that often these LAC had quite extensive needs. He added that he worked closely with the VSH and other Officers from the home authority to ensure that the Pupil Premium was received and spent to the best advantage of the looked after child.
- 41.9 A Member asked whether the Pupil Premium could be spent on other support such as speech and language therapy. The Head of LAC Education and Health Team advised that there was flexibility in how the Pupil Premium could be spent and where there was an identified need for support then this could be funded.
- 41.10 A Member asked what provision was made for the more gifted LAC. The Head of LAC Education and Health Team advised that as part of his role as VSH he challenged schools to make the most of children's abilities.
- 41.11 The Chairman thanked the Head of LAC Education and Health Team for his report and congratulated his team on the good work that they were doing.

## 42 Rapid Action Group (RAG) - Cost of Looked After Children

- 42.1 The meeting received a report from the Head of Children's Social Care Services and Safeguarding which provided an update on the work of the Rapid Action Group [RAG] working on Looked After Children (LAC) foster care provision.
- 42.2 Two Members expressed disappointment that the members of the RAG had not had sight of the report prior to it coming to the Committee.
- 42.3 The Director of Children's Services commented that the report looked at the work of the group within the context of the wider LAC Strategy. She advised Members that a review of the Shropshire Fostering Service had been undertaken by a Shropshire Graduate the aim of which was to ensure that the service was competitive, innovative and good value for money, and took Members through the key findings of the review.
- 42.4 A Member queried the saving figures quoted in paragraph 4 of the report. The Director of Children's Services confirmed that the figures were incorrect and should read £2.266 million in 2014/15, £1.370 million in 2015/16 and £1.589 million in 2016/17.
- 42.5 A Member asked whether the Graduate who had carried out the review had any experience in adoption and looked after children. The Chairman commented that graduates often brought a fresh pair of eyes to a review. The Director of Children's Services confirmed that the graduate did not have any experience of fostering but she believed this was advantageous as they did not come with any predetermined views.
- 42.6 A Member congratulated the Fostering Team on the excellent advertising for foster parents.
- 42.7 **RESOLVED:**
- i) That the work of the RAG Group within the wider context of the LAC Strategy and Shropshire Corporate Parenting Strategy, be noted and
  - ii) That a full report on the proposals for continued LAC placement provision be made to a future meeting of the Young People's Scrutiny Committee.

## 43 Work Programme

- 43.1 The Committee received copies of the current Scrutiny Work Programme and the Cabinet Forward Plan.
- 43.2 A Member asked for an update on the levels of pupil premium received following the introduction of universal free school meals for KS1 given that eligibility for free school meals was a criteria for the receipt of pupil premium. It was agreed to include the response within the Minutes.

The Pupil Premium is based on pupils recorded on the January School Census as known to be eligible for free schools meals or have been eligible for free school meals in any of the previous 6 years. From September 2014 there is a statutory requirement for schools in England to provide free school meals to all pupils in reception, year 1 and year2. It is important however to continue to register infant pupils who would be eligible for free school meals under the existing criteria as it is essential for the allocation of the Pupil Premium. The Government has developed a model letter for schools to send to all parents explaining the importance of completing a school meals registration form so that the school can continue to register pupils who attract pupil premium. Shropshire schools have been advised to use this letter as required, but also to continue with the arrangements they have had in place for a number of years to encourage registrations, particularly for children entering reception, given the funding this draws in via the Pupil Premium.

43.3 The Chairman asked Members to let her know of any other topics they would like added to the Committee's Work Programme.

**44 Date of Next Meeting**

44.1 Members were reminded that the next scheduled meeting of the Committee would take place on Thursday 20 November 2014 at 10.00am at The Shirehall

Signed ..... (Chairman)

Date: .....