

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD ON 20 JUNE 2017 FROM 7.10 PM TO 9.07 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Pauline Helliard-Symons (Chairman), Parry Batth, Kate Haines, Ken Miall and Beth Rowland

Other Councillors Present

Councillors: Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey, Mark Ashwell, Prue Bray, Gary Cowan, John Kaiser, David Lee, Philip Mirfin, Ian Pittock, Malcolm Richards and Imogen Shepherd-DuBey

Officers Present

Luciane Bowker, Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist
Lisa Humphreys, Head of Social Care and Intervention
Judith Ramsden, Director of People Services
Jane Winterbone, Interim Head of Learning and Achievement

1. NEW ROOM BOOKING SYSTEM

The Chairman wished to record a formal complaint about the fact that as a result of the new room booking system, the screen in reception no longer displayed the meeting rooms. This new system had been causing delays and difficulties for members of the public and elected Members when trying to find their way to meetings. It was suggested that this issue should be looked at by Officers to find a satisfactory solution to the problem.

It was noted that it had not been an Officer decision to change the location of this meeting from LGF4 to the Council Chamber.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Paul Feven and Councillors Laura Blumenthal and Shahid Younis.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 21 March 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Matters arising

Judith Ramsden, Director of People Services agreed to circulate a list of governors' vacancies to all elected Members.

Judith Ramsden offered to showcase MOSAIC to Councillors Blumenthal and Younis if they were still interested. Luciane Bowker, Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist would contact the Councillors regarding this.

4. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Rowland declared a personal interest in Agenda item 12, *School Improvement and Educational Standards: Schools Causing Concern*, on the basis that she was a governor at Highwood Primary and South Lake Primary.

It was understood and expected that all Councillors would have a personal interest in the schools within their local wards.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

6. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

7. CHILDREN'S SERVICES PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Committee considered the Children's Service's Performance Indicators report which was set out in agenda pages 13-26.

The Committee noted that there had not been any significant changes since the last report.

Councillor Miall commented that it was useful to know that the red indicator *% Children who became subject of a Child Protection Plan (CPP) who are subject to a CPP for a second or subsequent time within 24 months*, related to three children from one family and one child from another family. Although statistically there were four children, there were only two families involved.

The Chairman noted that the indicator relating to *% Secondary Schools with a current Ofsted rating of "good" or better* was still amber. However, the Chairman recognised that it was more difficult to achieve a "good" rating under the new Ofsted regime.

RESOLVED That the Children Services Performance Indicators report be noted.

8. SCHOOL PERFORMANCE AND OFSTED REPORTS

The Committee considered the School Performance and Ofsted reports which were set out in agenda pages 27- 48. The Chairman asked that a list containing the Ofsted ratings of all the schools in the Borough be included in future reports. Jane Winterbone, Interim Head of Learning and Achievement agreed to include this information going forward.

During the discussion of the item the following comments were made in relation to the schools that were recently Ofsted inspected:

Hatch Ride Primary

- Members were pleased to note the positive comments that were made in the report in relation to leadership and governors.

St Crispins Secondary

- St Crispins had undergone its first Ofsted inspection under the new current Headteacher and continued to be rated 'Good'. Jane Winterbone stated that she had had a meeting with Ginny Rhodes, St Crispins Headteacher in the previous week and had visited the new Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision within the school. Jane stated that the school was striving to achieve an outstanding rating, and for this to happen it was necessary to reduce the school variance between pupils.
- Jane had had a dialogue about St Crispins' plans to convert to an academy and had been assured that the school would continue to work with the Local Authority;
- The Chairman made reference to the comments made in the Ofsted report about the History and Science departments and asked Jane what plans were being put in place to improve those departments. Jane stated she encouraged the sharing of good

practice from other departments, but she would have to go back to St Crispins for a more detailed answer to this question.

Emmbrook Secondary

- Jane stated that one of the priorities identified was to reduce the variation in the progress made between pupils in receipt of Pupil Premium Grant and their peers;
- The Chairman noted that the report contained in the agenda pack was not the “full” report and asked that in the future an executive summary be submitted to the Committee;
- Jane offered to send more information regarding Emmbrook’s Ofsted report findings, including the priorities identified;
- Judith suggested the inclusion of a web link to the full reports so that Members could read in their own time.

Hawthorns Primary

- The school continues to be good.

Councillor Rowland noted that maintaining a ‘Good’ Ofsted rating was a really good achievement as the current Ofsted standards were much more rigorous than previously.

The Chairman suggested that Councillor Ashwell, Executive Member for Children’s Services undertake the task of writing a letter of congratulations to schools that achieve a ‘Good’ or ‘Outstanding’ rating by Ofsted. Judith Ramsden confirmed that such letters were already sent to schools by her, but she would be happy for Councillor Ashwell to write the letters going forward.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) the report be noted and
- 2) future reports would contain a list of all schools in the Borough and their last Ofsted inspection ratings.

9. CHILD CARE SUFFICIENCY 2017

The Committee received the Child Care Sufficiency 2017 report which was set out in agenda pages 49-90.

The Chairman stated that the Committee had requested this report in order to assess the sufficiency of childcare in the Borough in order to deliver the additional 15 hours of childcare that parents will be entitled to from September 2017. Members had been concerned that providers may not be able to afford to deliver the extra hours.

The Chairman expressed her appreciation of the thoroughness of the report and wished to thank all the Officers involved in its production.

Councillor Rowland raised concerns that the situation was not as good as set out in the report. She stated that the school where she was a governor at had not received further information about this strategy.

Judith Ramsden explained that this was a draft strategy which was still to be submitted to the Executive, and it was important to understand the wider context of the situation. It was very complex for the Local Authority to set a strategy because childcare services were based on market forces, and the Local Authority was not the provider. The commissioner had tried to find out: how many parents would be taking the offer of extra hours; what their

work patterns were and how it would change as a result of the additional hours; how many parents from Wokingham worked outside of the Borough and were using out of the Borough childcare.

Judith stated that none of the providers had indicated that they would not be able to respond to the increased hours. The commissioner would continue to work with childcare leaders to understand the context.

Judith informed that the Early Years team was undertaking a lot of work to ensure that money would follow disadvantaged children to their respective settings, making sure that they receive what they are entitled to.

In response to a question Judith explained that some primary schools were not able to expand due to buildings constraints.

Judith stated that another issue providers were currently discussing, was about potentially having to charge more to parents that can afford to pay more to subsidise the children that do not attract enough funding for their places.

Judith confirmed that a survey had taken place earlier in the year, and this strategy was being proposed as a result of that survey. However, the commissioner would continue to evaluate the market, the level of need and how the providers are responding.

In response to a question Judith stated that the Local Authority had a duty to secure sufficient childcare under the current legislation, but it was not clear what were the consequences of not meeting the demand for places.

Judith informed that in other parts of the country parents had set up charitable provisions to serve their local communities. She emphasized that it was a market led provision.

Councillor Miall asked when and how the money would be paid to providers. Judith agreed to report back with this information.

The Chairman asked for an update in relation to the reported fallen number of Childminders in the Borough to be included with the next report to the Committee.

Councillor Rowland drew attention to the table on page 65 of the agenda and the fact that Wokingham was more than half way down the list which showed the percentage of pupils in good or outstanding primary schools across the South East region.

Members noted from the survey that most parents expressed a wish for more childcare options outside of 9am to 5pm and more childcare in the holidays. Judith stated that this information would be shared with providers and hopefully this would help to shape the strategy.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the report and asked to be kept informed on the development of the strategy, with update reports to the November 2017 and January 2018 meetings;
- 2) the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee recognises that Wokingham Borough Council is accountable for market forces beyond its control;

3) all the Officers involved in the production of the report be thanked for their work.

10. PEER REVIEW REPORT

The Committee considered the Peer Review report which was set out in agenda pages 91-94. Lisa Humphreys, Head of Social Care and Intervention stated that the peer review had taken place in the first week of March 2017 and that the report contained a summary of its findings, including lists of strengths and recommendations. Lisa informed that a joint action plan had been produced following the review. The Chairman asked that this action plan be submitted to the September meeting of the Committee.

In response to a question Lisa stated that she believed the peer review had been a valuable exercise, and the result was a fair assessment.

Members expressed concern over the long waiting times for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). Judith concurred that this had been identified as a priority and other boards had also identified this issue. Judith stated that there had already been some improvement in this area.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) the report be noted and
- 2) the action plan will be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee in September 2017.

11. CHILDREN'S SERVICES O&S COMMITTEE FORWARD PROGRAMME

The Committee considered its Forward Programme for the 2017/18 municipal year.

It was agreed that the Committee would add update reports on the Childcare Sufficiency Strategy to the meetings in November 2017 and January 2018.

The Chairman stated that she would be meeting with Councillor Ashwell, Executive Member for Children's Services and Councillor Blumenthal, Vice-Chairman to the Committee to discuss the Committee's Forward Plan.

RESOLVED That the Forward Plan be noted.

12. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of the Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act as appropriate.

13. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT AND EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS: SCHOOL CAUSING CONCERN

The Chairman explained that '*schools causing concern*' was now a standing item of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This was the result of a recommendation of the Coombes School Task and Finish Group and was intended as a mechanism to inform local ward Members at an early stage of any schools within their wards that were in danger of falling standards.

This item was considered and discussed in a Part 2 session.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) the contents of the report be noted;
- 2) a glossary of acronyms would be included with future reports.