

Medway Council
Meeting of Children and Young People Overview and
Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 1 September 2016

6.30pm to 8.23pm

Record of the meeting

Subject to approval as an accurate record at the next meeting of this committee

Present: Councillors: Cooper, Fearn, Franklin, Johnson, Kemp, Potter, Price, Purdy, Royle (Chairman), Wicks (Vice-Chairman) and Williams

Added members without voting rights:

Peter Martin (Governor representative), Tina Lovey (Head Teacher Representative), Paddy Powell (Healthwatch Medway CIC Representative) and MYP Chairman (Medway Youth Parliament Chairman)

Substitutes: Councillors:
Griffin (Substitute for Saroy)

In Attendance: Ann Domeney, Interim Deputy Director, Children and Adults Services
Jan Guylor, Head of Legal Services/Deputy Monitoring Officer
Teri Reynolds, Democratic Services Officer
Sandy Weaver, Complaints Manager for Social Care
Angela Wellings, Interim Head of SEN and Inclusion

248 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Saroy, Luke Morgan (Medway Youth Parliament) and Alex Tear (Church of England diocese representative).

249 Record of meeting

The record of the Joint Meeting of all Committees held on 18 May 2016 was agreed and signed by the Chairman as correct.

The record of the last meeting of this committee held on 26 May 2016 was agreed and signed by correct, subject to the reference to the short film at the second bullet point under minute number 18, being corrected to read that it was produced by The Robert Napier School and not Medway Youth Parliament.

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250 Urgent matters by reason of special circumstances

There were none.

251 Declarations of interests and whipping

Disclosable pecuniary interests

There were none.

Other interests

Paddy Powell declared an interest in item 6 which made reference to the Young Lives Foundation, for which he worked as an apprentice.

Tina Lovey declared an interest in item 6, as she was a Headteacher at a special school and special schools were referred to throughout the report.

252 Special Educational Needs and Inclusion Strategy 2016-2020

Discussion:

The Interim Head of Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Inclusion introduced the report which provided the Committee with a proposed Medway Special Educational Needs, Disabilities (SEND) and Inclusion Strategy 2016-2020. She explained that the strategy promoted, supported and encouraged greater inclusion for Medway children and young people with SEN and/or disabilities within their local schools and communities, enabling them to have independent living and work skills by the time they reach adulthood.

Members then raised a number of questions and comments, which included:

- **Resources** – concern was raised by a number of Members about the resources within mainstream schools being adequate to manage the additional needs of SEN pupils placed with them. In response the Interim Head of SEN and Inclusion explained that £800,000 was provided from the Dedicated Schools Grant for outreach support for children with SEN in mainstream schools and there would need to be a review of this support to determine whether it should be realigned and provided in different, more effective ways.
- **Pilot** – In addition to the comments relating to resources, the Interim Head of SEN and Inclusion explained that a pilot was currently underway within six primary schools where, with additional resource provided, those schools were each taking a child with additional needs who, in other circumstances, would be placed in a special school.
- **Voices of children and young people** – in response to a question about how the views of children and young people are heard, the Interim Head of SEN and Inclusion explained that a focus group of children and

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young people, all with SEN and/or disabilities, had been set up and meets monthly regularly with a member of the SEN Team and this group advises and comments on major policy initiatives.

- **Looked after children** – in response to a comment about the importance of the strategy in relation to looked after children the Interim Head of SEN and Inclusion confirmed that the Virtual Headteacher had contributed to the strategy and undertook to provide a report to the Corporate Parenting Board on the feedback from looked after children in relation to the strategy.
- **Tribunals** – in response to a request, the Interim Head of SEN and Inclusion undertook to provide Members with data relating to tribunals.
- **Home education** – in relation to a comment made about children and young people with SEND who are home educated, the Head of SEN and Inclusion explained that the role of the local authority to be involved and intervene was limited. However, there was a qualified teacher and support worker within the team to support such families. In addition, it was explained that the needs of a child that are identified by an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) must be met by law and these were annually reviewed.
- **Funding clarification** – In response to a query regarding funding for SEND, the Interim Head of SEN and Inclusion explained that a one year notice had been given to all outreach support providers and a review of these services is being undertaken to determine whether they should be recommissioned or decommissioned in order to ensure the most effective use of resources to deliver the best outcomes for children and young people.
- **Out of area placements** – In response to a comment regarding the impact on out of area placements, the Interim Head of SEN and Inclusion explained that it would be difficult, in a number of cases, to bring children back from out of area placements. However, the shift in accommodating more children and young people in mainstream schools would gradually free up space in special schools for children with high needs.
- **16 and 19 plus provision** – in response to a question the Interim Head of SEN and Inclusion confirmed that the SEN Team had strong links with Medway Youth Trust (MYT) and had contributed to the 16-19 Strategy which had been developed by MYT.
- **Success of SEN Pupils in Medway schools** – in response to a question about the achievements of pupils with SEND, the Interim Head of SEN and Inclusion explained that provisional data for the most recent results at key stage 2 placed Medway as one of the poorest performing local authority area for children with SEND. She added that 90% of those

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children in Medway were placed in special schools and stressed that these results were compared with national data and were provisional results that had not yet been validated.

- **Outcome of the consultation** – following a request the Interim Head of SEN and Inclusion confirmed she would elaborate on the key headlines of the feedback received through the consultation exercises outlined at section 6 of the report.

Decision:

The Committee recommended the Cabinet to

- 1) Approve the draft Medway Special Educational Needs and Inclusion Strategy 2016-2020, and;
- 2) Note the need for funding to implement the Strategy.

253 Complaints and Compliments Annual Report (April 2015 - March 2016)

Discussion:

The Deputy Director, Children and Adult Services (Interim) introduced the report which provided the Committee with information on children's social care complaints handled and compliments received during 2015-16. The Deputy Director gave a broad overview of the data including the number of complaints, the types of complaint and outcomes. The year 2015-16 had seen a rise in the number of complaints but a fall in the number upheld.

- **Complaints not heard within 20 working days** – in response to a question about the reasons behind complaints not being heard within 20 working days, officers confirmed that these usually related to complaints that were far more complex and cross-cutting across various departments.
- **Behaviour and attitude** – in response to a question about the learning from complaints about behaviour and attitude the Social Care Complaints Manager explained that she had worked with staff to help them reframe certain messages that were difficult to deliver to help reduce the number of complaints relating to attitude.
- **Timeliness of complaints in more detail** – it was requested that in future reports data relating to timeliness of complaints responded to should also be broken down by particular services. Officers confirmed that this data was collected and monitored on a monthly basis and that it would be added to future annual reports.
- **Communication** – in response to a question about the learning from communication related complaints, officers explained that a new phone system was in place which would make answering phones for colleagues much easier. Managers were also getting better at returning

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calls. It was also explained that during 2015-16 there had been high levels of work and restructures which had caused added pressure to staff which in turn contributed to delays in getting back to clients. It was hoped that the figures for 2016-17 would demonstrate improvement.

Decision:

The Committee noted the report.

254 Petitions

Discussion:

The Democratic Services Officer introduced the report which provided the Committee with information about two petitions that had been received and fell within the remit of this Committee. She confirmed that neither lead petitioner had used their opportunity to refer to the committee.

In response to a query about whether officers had arranged meetings with the lead petitioners, the Deputy Director explained that this was highly likely but undertook to check with officers.

Decision:

The Committee noted the report.

255 Council Plan End of Year Quarter 4 2015/16 Performance Monitoring Report

Discussion:

The Deputy Director, Children and Adults (Interim) introduced the report which summarised the performance of the directorate in Quarter 4/end of year 2015-16 for the priority, 'children and young people have the best start in life in Medway', which fell within the remit of this Committee.

Members then raised a number of questions and comments, which included: -

- **Exclusions** – it was requested that future reports include, in the narrative, details relating to how exclusion figures breakdown between primary and secondary and academy and maintained. In addition it was suggested that the reasons for the exclusions should also be included, which could also impact on the work relating to SEN and inclusion, which had been discussed earlier in the meeting.
- **Impact of referrals to Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC)** – it was also suggested that inclusion in the narrative of future reports regarding the impact on progress of schools which had been referred to the RSC by the local authority, would be helpful.

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- **Attendance at Sure Start Children Centres** – a Member requested a briefing note for the Committee relating to the attendance at children's centres, to give an accurate up to date figure and to provide an explanation of the decline in attendance.

Decision:

The Committee noted the report.

256 Work programme

Discussion:

The Democratic Services Officer introduced the report which provided the Committee with its current work programme and proposed amendments.

Decision:

The Committee agreed its work programme, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report, subject to adding the Youth Justice Plan to 6 October 2016 meeting and the Sufficiency Report to 6 December 2016 meeting.

Chairman

Date:

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