

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

**Tuesday, 31 July 2018**

**6.30pm to 8.04pm**

**Record of the meeting**

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

**Present:** Councillors: Cooper, Fearn, Franklin, Gilry, Johnson, Kemp, Opara, Paterson, Purdy, Royle (Chairman) and Wicks (Vice-Chairman)

**Co-opted Members with voting rights on educational issues only:**

Clive Mailing (Roman Catholic Church representative)

**Added members without voting rights:**

Thomas Baldock (Medway Youth Council Chairman), Fay Cordingley (Teacher Representative), David Laming (Healthwatch Medway CIC Representative) and Craig Liddell (Medway Youth Council Cabinet Member)

**Substitutes:** Councillor Bhutia (Substitute for Saroy)  
Councillor Griffin (Substitute for Aldous)  
Councillor Howard (Substitute for Joy)  
June Patey (Substitute for Keith Clear – Medway Parent and Carers Forum)

**In Attendance:** Aeilish Geldenhuys, Head of Public Health Programmes  
Jan Guylor, Head of Legal Services, Local Land Charges and Licensing/Deputy Monitoring Officer  
James Harman, Senior Public Health Manager  
Teri Reynolds, Democratic Services Officer  
Ian Sutherland, Director of Children and Adults Services  
David Watkins, Interim Head of School Services  
Sandy Weaver, Complaints Manager for Social Care  
Christopher White, Business Improvement Manager

**213 Apologies for absence**

Apologies of absence were received from Councillors Aldous, Joy and Saroy and from Keith Clear (Medway Parent and carers Forum), Akinola Edun and David Lane (Parent Governor Representatives).

**214 Record of meeting**

The record of the meeting held on 5 June 2018 was agreed and signed by the Chairman as correct.

**215 Urgent matters by reason of special circumstances**

There were none.

**216 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or Other Significant Interests and Whipping**

Disclosable pecuniary interests

There were none.

Other significant interests (OSI)

Councillor Cooper declared an OSI in any reference made to Rivermead School by virtue of her position as a governor at the school and would leave the room should there be any specific discussion on Rivermead School.

Councillor Wicks declared an OSI in item 5 (Member Item: Medway University College) by virtue of his position as governor at the UTC and left the room during the discussion of this item.

Other interests

There were none.

**217 Member Item: Medway University Technical College (UTC)**

**Discussion:**

Councillor Johnson introduced the report, explaining his reasons for requesting the item. He referred to the school's recent Ofsted inspection report, which had found the school to be inadequate. He referred to the structural set up of UTCs generally and the difficulty experienced nationally in UTCs recruiting students at Year 10. He also stated how important the UTC was to Medway in developing vital skills that were needed by Medway's community and for the local economy. He raised concern around Medway Council's role as a partner to the school and how it can improve the support it provides to the school.

The Interim Head of School Services then highlighted to the Committee the progress made by the school since the Ofsted inspection in March 2018 and the change in leadership at the school, which together with input from the Department for Education (where responsibility for monitoring and supporting UTCs lay) was having a positive impact.

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

- **Support for Governors** – in response to a question about the support governors would be provided with, officers explained that the report focussed on the support for the local authority governor at the school, in responding to the questions raised by Councillor Johnson in the report. However all Governors would be supported by the School and the Committee would have the opportunity to discuss support for all governors with the Principal at a future meeting.
- **Admission zones** – a Member asked for specific numbers of pupils accessing the school by area zone, which was referred to at page 27 of the agenda. Officers undertook to provide this information to the Committee.
- **Impact on young people** – the Medway Youth Council Chairman referred to the 2017 results (24 % of students achieved a grade 4 and above with 10% achieving grade 5 and above) and whether support would be provided and data collected to measure the impact on these young people. In response the Interim Head of School Services confirmed that a significant amount of support was being provided to young people and the Principal had demonstrated his support and commitment to young people when officers had visited the school. He added that the Principal would be able to expand on this further when he attends a future meeting of the Committee.
- **Role of local authority** – in response to a comment about the limited scope of the local authority to address the issues, the Director of Children and Adults explained that previously a letter had been sent to all parents of Year 9 pupils making them aware of Medway UTC and what it has to offer and that the letter would be sent again this year. A Member then suggested that the local authority could go further and target parents while their children are younger, for example in Year 6, to road map a path for young people in terms of the journey in getting to the UTC for Year 10, for those children interested in this route. Officers confirmed that Year 7 and Year 9 were key transition points and that together with the Principal, options around publicising the UTC would be considered. The relationship between the UTC and other secondary schools would also be raised with the Medway Secondary Head Teacher Association.

### Decision:

The Committee noted the report.

218 Complaints and Compliments Annual Report April 2017 - March 2018

**Discussion:**

The Complaints Manager for Social Care introduced the report which provided information on children's services complaints handled during 2017-18. She highlighted that the number of complaints had fallen compared to the previous year, which was considered to relate to more issues being resolved informally via dispute resolution meetings, before concerns were made into formal complaints. The number of complaints about lack of communication had also fallen as had the number of complaints relating to the behaviour of social workers. Young people were continuing to make complaints via the use of advocates at the Young Lives Foundation although efforts were continuing to promote this to children and young people.

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

- **Support to complain** – in response to a question officers confirmed that all support was put in place for complainants as necessary, for example, a translator, sign language interpretation or support for people who are visually impaired.
- **Complaints from different ethnic groups** – a Member asked if the table displaying how many complaints had been received by each ethnic group (5.18 of the report) was representative of the ethnic make up of Medway and Medway's looked after children. Officers confirmed that although it was comparable with Medway as a whole it was not as comparable with the ethnicity of children receiving a service from children's services.
- **Percentage of complaints responded to in 20 days** – in response to a question about the dip in performance of this statistic in December 2017, officers explained that dips sometimes occurred around holiday periods although arrangements had been put in place to mitigate against this as much as possible. When dips in performance occurred, these were highlighted with the service urgently. Performance against the statistics was monitored on a monthly basis in order to identify trends and take action to address issues at the earliest opportunity.
- **Benchmarking** – in response to how the performance compared with other local authorities, officers explained that this was very difficult because it was purely dependent on local authorities having similar numbers of looked after children or children accessing services. However, it was added that the Local Government Ombudsman, who was aware of the national picture, had confirmed that there were no concerns with Medway. It was also confirmed that officers did not dissuade service users from complaining but did try to find informal resolution where possible and appropriate.

**Decision:**

The Committee noted the report.

**219 Universal Health Support for Vulnerable Families - update**

**Discussion:**

The Senior Public Health Manager introduced the report which provided the Committee with an update on the progress made in supporting vulnerable young families following the reconfiguration of support to vulnerable parents transitioning from the Family Nurse Partnership model.

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

- **Level of support for life skills** – in response to a question about how vulnerable parents were supported with life skills such as basic cooking or supported back into education, officers explained that there was a huge package of support in place from debt advice, mental health advice or pathways into education and training. This was a universal health service but the health visitors were trained to be able to effectively sign post to partner agencies where relevant. In addition, because of the flexibility of the programme, it enabled time to work with families and to encourage parents to move back into education or training at a time when they are ready to re-engage, which for some was when their child was a bit older.
- **Impact of home education** – concern was raised regarding the assumption made in the case study (Appendix 3 to the report) that the mother had a lower level of education due to being home educated. Officers confirmed this was not always the case but that there was often various issues related to young people that were home educated which included a greater risk of lower educational attainment as well as social isolation issues.

**Decision:**

The Committee noted the report.

**220 Council Plan Performance Monitoring Report - Quarter 4 and End of Year 2017/18**

**Discussion:**

The Director of Children and Adults introduced the report which summarised performance in relation to Council Plan monitoring, during quarter 4 of 2017/18, where relevant to this Committee's remit. He highlighted the following:

- The percentage of primary schools judged good or better which although still below target, was improving with 93% of local authority maintained schools and 79% of academies reaching this standard;

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- Key Stage 4 results, explaining that the marking scheme changed in 2016/17 and therefore benchmarking the forthcoming data for 17/18 results would be more useful;
- The number of permanent exclusions, which was still a high priority and focus for the Council but was improving, with Medway recently being ranked as 109<sup>th</sup>, as opposed to 136<sup>th</sup> in the country;
- Children's social worker posts, which continued to run at a high vacancy rate. However, he explained that the Council had improved its offer for these employees from April and it was hoped this would slowly start to see an improved retention and recruitment rate.

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

- **Trackers** – following a request for further information on the appointment of the Youth Service Team to the 'Tracker' positions the Director of Children and Adults explained that the purpose of these roles was to pursue young people whose activity since leaving the education system was not known. There had been a reduction in the percentage of children and young people who were not in education, employment or training and it was anticipated this would continue.
- **Rate of child protection cases** – in response to a query about the rate of child protection cases the Director of Children and Adults explained that the number of children who were subject to a child protection plan had been very high at the point of the last Ofsted inspection into Children's Services in 2015. However, the service had worked to reduce the number of children on a Child Protection Plan and that position had been maintained for some time and had become more proportionate to other local authorities. Officers were however also cautious for this to not reduce too much and additionally, a focus on timeliness of children on a child protection plan was being made to avoid any drift among cases.
- **Smoking at time of delivery** – officers explained that performance against this target still required improvement with the rate in Medway still being higher than the national average, however, there had been 3.1% drop in the rate between quarter 1 and quarter 4 of 2017/18. There was a great deal of work that was contributing to this decrease which included intervention support by midwives, more accurate recording and support for families as a whole to become smoke free homes.

### Decision:

The Committee noted the report.

### 221 Work programme

#### Discussion:

The Democratic Services Officer introduced the report which advised the Committee of the current work programme along with a number of suggested changes and additions to it.

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

- **Procurement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) Transport** – A Member raised concern about this issue listed on the Cabinet Forward Plan. Reference was made to an email that had been sent to Councillors from the Medway Parent and Carers Forum which had raised concerns relating to the implementation of changes to SEN Transport, following approval of the policy by the Cabinet in April 2018. A Member raised concern about the time difficulties, with some families being unclear about what their home to school transport arrangements would be from September. The Director of Children and Adults explained that the implementation of the new policy and the changes it brought was a difficult process and that he, along with the Interim Assistant Director – Commissioning, Business and Intelligence, would be meeting with the co-chairs of the Medway PCF to discuss the issues and he assured Members officers were very mindful of the timescales.
- **Appearance of the Portfolio Holders** – A Member suggested that the appearance of the Portfolio Holder for Children Services (Lead Member) and the Portfolio Holder for Educational Attainment and Improvement be brought forward for when provisional schools performance data was available. The Democratic Services officer explained that the appearance of both Portfolio Holders was currently aligned to when the Committee receives the Annual School Performance report. She added that officers were investigating the possibility of bringing this forward but explained the difficulty in timing due to when the Department for Education publish validated data.
- **Medway Test Audit briefing note** – in response to a query the Democratic Services Officer confirmed this briefing note was being drafted and would be circulated shortly.
- **Scrutiny of Transformation** – in relation to the suggestion from the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee that each Committee receive an update on the transformation programme, as it relates to the relevant terms of reference, a Member supported this and suggested that a demonstration of the MoMo app be brought as part of that item, rather than separately as originally planned.
- **Youth Police Advisory Group** – a member suggested that the Committee receive information about the Group and what it does and it

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was suggested that this be discussed at the next agenda planning meeting of the Committee.

### Decision:

- 1) The Committee agreed the work programme as set out at Appendix 1 to the report, subject to the following changes:
  - a) A report on Early Help and Targeted Services to be scheduled for the October meeting which will address Children and Family Hubs, Youth Offending Team, Youth Service, children not in education, employment or training (NEETS) and Troubled Families and that the items relating to Sure Start and the Integrated Youth Support Service, currently listed as date to be determined be deleted.
  - b) A report on the progress of the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Improvement Plan to be scheduled for the October meeting and therefore removed from the 'date to be determined' list.
  - c) A report on Aut Even and the transfer of services to Parklands to be scheduled for the December meeting and therefore removed from the 'date to be determined' list.
  - d) An update report on Tackling Racism in Medway to be scheduled for the January meeting and therefore removed from the 'date to be determined' list.
  - e) An update report on the NHS England Commissioned Childhood Immunisation Programme in Medway to be scheduled for the January meeting and therefore removed from the 'date to be determined' list.
  - f) A demonstration of the Mind of My Own (MoMO) app to be provided 15 minutes before the start of a future meeting, date yet to be set.
  - g) A presentation by Youth Mentors in the Fostering Service to be delivered to the Corporate Parenting Group and therefore removed from the 'date to be determined' list.
  - h) A report on the outcome of the Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) and Statement of Action to be scheduled for the December meeting.
  - i) An update on the Children and Young People Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Service to be added to the work programme, date to be determined.
  - j) A presentation by the Medway Children and Young People Council on the anti-stigma campaign to be added to the work programme, date to be determined.

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- 2) The Committee noted the recommendation from the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee and agreed to consider whether to schedule an update on the transformation programme at the next agenda planning meeting.

**Chairman**

**Date:**

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