

Report of the Children's Scrutiny Standing Overview Group of 21st January 2021

1. Introduction

The Children's Scrutiny Committee Standing Overview Group meets regularly throughout the year to consider key updates and pertinent issues from across Children's Services, with the aim of developing Members' knowledge and understanding, and bringing to the forefront any areas which may benefit from further scrutiny.

This report outlines the topic(s) covered at the meeting of 21st January 2021, highlights the key points raised during discussion and details any agreed actions.

2. Attendance

Scrutiny Councillors: Rob Hannaford (Chair), Debo Sellis (Vice Chair), Su Aves, Christine Channon, Ian Chubb, George Gribble, Linda Hellyer, Richard Hosking, Tony Inch, Andrew Saywell, Margaret Squires and Mrs Christina Mabin (Church of England)

Cabinet Member for Children and Schools: Councillor James McInnes

Children's Services: Dawn Stabb (Head of Education & Learning), Fiona Fleming (Head of Commissioning – Children), Kate Mulford (Commissioning Manager – Children's Services), Andrew Simkins (Procurement Category Manager), Katherine Charman (Project Manager).

Independent Advisor: Kevin Crompton

Scrutiny Officers: Charlie Fisher and Camilla de Bernhardt Lane

3. Notes and Actions

3.1 Education and Inclusion

Dawn Stabb (Head of Education & Learning), Kate Mulford (Commissioning Manager – Children's Services), Andrew Simkins (Procurement Category Manager) presented on the recommissioning of Education and Inclusion Services.

The presentation re-capped previous information shared with members, the outcomes of the public consultation, an overview of the SEND Transformation plan, financial information on the different option 'bundles' and the outcomes of market engagement.

The information shared was on a confidential basis with members due to the information being market sensitive and the legal process of tendering services.

After the presentation, there was an opportunity for members to raise any questions about the presentation with officers.

Member discussion topics:

- Members asked officers about the public consultation and the types of people engaged in the consultation.
- Members asked about alternative delivery models in the procurement process rather than just public or private providers. Officers explained options were being explored and would become clearer once options were finalised.
- Members discussed the timeliness of Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP) and officers explained that by providing an inclusive wrap around service, the number of EHCPs would decrease and timeliness would improve.
- Members discussed the impact of moving services in house and the rationale of the original contract of services and the approach being taken now.
- Members asked about other services which were not included in the discussion. Officers highlighted that the proposals reflected improving outcomes and providing a better service. Officers and the Cabinet Member highlighted 'bundles' or options are open for discussion and no decision had been made on the final proposals.
- Members discussed professional development and training of the local workforce and working with local education providers.

Actions:

1. Future briefing note or agenda item focusing on professional development of local staff and acknowledging the local workforce of professionals.

Officers outlined the next steps of the process to Members and highlighted their focus on ensuring Members are informed of the decisions.

4. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Children's Standing Overview Group is scheduled for Tuesday 16th February 2021.

The meeting began at 3:00pm and ended at 4:40pm

Councillor Rob Hannaford
Chair of the Children's Scrutiny Committee