

# Minutes



To: All Members of the Children's Services Cabinet Panel, Chief Executive, Chief Officers, All officers named for 'actions'

From: Legal, Democratic & Statutory Services  
Ask for: Michelle Diprose  
Ext: 25566

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## **CHILDREN'S SERVICES CABINET PANEL WEDNESDAY, 7 FEBRUARY 2018**

### **ATTENDANCE**

#### **MEMBERS OF THE PANEL**

N Bell, B A Gibson, J M Graham, D Hart, T C Heritage (Chairman), T Howard, T R Hutchings, P Mason (substitute for S Brown), G McAndrew (Vice-Chairman), A Plancey, M A Watkin, T Williams (substitute for A Rowlands)

#### **OTHER MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Upon consideration of the agenda for the Children's Services Cabinet Panel meeting on Wednesday, 7 February 2018, 2 November 2017 as circulated, copy annexed, conclusions were reached and are recorded below:

*A conflict of interest was declared in relation to the Scrutiny of the Integrated Plan 2018/19 – 2021/22 and is recorded at 3.1 below.*

#### **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman advised that she had requested that the Panel be provided with an update on Cuffley Camp and Nascot Lawn Respite Centre, that update is summarised below:

##### Cuffley Camp

Members were informed that Human Resources are working with staff at Cuffley Camp to carry out training and support to help them apply for alternative employment. Cuffley Camp will be handed back to the Landlord in April 2018. Cuffley Camp were still delivering services to schools until the end of March.

##### Nascot Lawn

Members were informed transition plans for children were in development and all children now had up to date care plans to facilitate this. A two day hearing for a Judicial Review in relation to the decision by Herts Valley Clinical Commissioning Group to end funding for Nascot Lawn was currently taking place. Members would be updated once the Judgement was known. Children's Services continues to work with parents. Refurbishment work at West Hyde short break centre is on target and officers are looking to explore the possibility to extend the premises. Training for staff at the three short break centres commissioned by the Council was being carried out to meet the individual needs of children who may transfer

from Nascot Lawn.

**PART I ('OPEN') BUSINESS**

**ACTION**

**1. MINUTES**

1.1 The Minutes of the Cabinet Panel meeting held on 2 November 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**2. PUBLIC PETITIONS**

2.1 There were no public petitions.

**3. INTEGRATED PAN 2018/19 – 2021/22 (CHILDREN'S SERVICES)**

[Officer Contact: Simon Newland, Operations Director, Education (Tel: 01992 556617), Lindsey McLeod, Head of Corporate Finance Tel: (01992) 556431 ]

3.1 M A Watkin – by virtue of his wife being employed as a part-time teacher in the music service in Hertfordshire. He has been granted a dispensation by the Standards Committee to participate, debate and vote in business in which this Disclosable Pecuniary Interest is mentioned provided that the business to be considered does not directly affect his financial position or that of his wife; which he considered it did not.

3.1 The Panel was invited to comment and identify any issues on the areas of the Integrated plan which related to Children's Services.

3.2 The Labour Opposition Member requested that his comments that, he was against the budget cuts to YC Hertfordshire and the Children's Centres, be recorded in the minutes.

**Conclusions:**

3.3 The Panel provided comment to Cabinet on the proposal relating to the Integrated Plan in respect of the Children's Services Portfolio. The Panel also identified any issues that it felt that the Cabinet should consider in finalising the Integrated Plan proposals.

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#### **4. SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE IN HERTFORDSHIRE**

[Officer Contact: Andy Manson, Head of Services for Young People Tel: (01992) 555014, Peter Hosier, Head of Service for YC Hertfordshire Youth Work Tel: (01992) 555406]

- 4.1 The Panel received a report in relation to the continuum of support and opportunities for young people to achieve their aspirations within the County and the role of YC Hertfordshire in promoting the national Social Mobility agenda. The report proposed a targeted approach to address the needs of young people who were challenged in education, their community or home life to access a range of opportunities enjoyed by their peers with a successful transition to adulthood.
- 4.2 Members were informed that consultation had been carried out with young people, parents and significant partners. The consultation looked at key priorities for young people. It was noted the focus of the local offer to young people would be:
- Education, skills and progression to employment and independence.
  - Physical, sexual and mental health - achieving emotional well-being, resilience and reducing the risk of self-harm.
  - Diversion from crime, reducing gang association, youth violence, child sexual exploitation and supporting the out of court disposals process.
  - Project work with young people in their communities and to address specific issues or challenges faced by them.
  - The voice of the young person and co-production.
  - Integration within the Families First Prevention & Early Help Multi-Agency Model.
  - Strong links with partners, including the voluntary sector and district / borough councils, to coordinate and enhance the wider local youth offer.
- 4.3 The Panel were informed that an example of the work would be with a young person in year 11 not attending school in his or her last term, therefore at risk of becoming not in education, employment or training. They would receive individual support, participate in a targeted programme to increase skills and in the National Citizen Service. Work placements would be offered and mentoring support, this would help to enhance their CV and interviewing skills to support them in applying for apprenticeships.
- 4.4 Members were informed of the empathy project which is delivered at Watford and Lister hospitals emergency departments, identifying and engaging young people at risk. This is relatively

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new and innovative work in the early stages of its development, initial feedback has been positive. Members hoped that this would be expanded to other hospitals in the future.

- 4.5 In relation to the consultation in December 2017 Members were informed that the young people's feedback was from those already known to the Service. The consultation was also with County Council's partners. Members requested that the planned further consultation was longer in time to ensure the right information on individuals needs was received and to ensure that those of minority groups were captured. It was also requested that any signposting was relevant and not just a circle of referrals to other programmes.
- 4.6 In relation to how the County Council were tackling gang culture, the Panel were informed officers were talking on a strategic level with the Police to tackle county lines which is leading to a piece of work to develop protocols to incorporate a plan for vulnerable adolescents. There was lots of work developing and Families First were also involved. Members were informed of a designated crime week taking place to launch 'Operation Sceptre' and because most of the panel Members did not sit on district and borough council's Community Safety Panels they were unaware of events that were taking place. Officers agreed to provide the Panel with regular bulletins to update Members on action that is being taken with local Community Safety Panels.
- 4.7 A concern was raised in relation to YC Hertfordshire's ability to be a universal service. Concern was also raised at the ability of YC Hertfordshire to be successful with twenty percent less staff. Members were informed YC Hertfordshire does not provide a universal service but rather a targeted and focused offer. In response to the reduction in staffing, Members were informed the first 10% of savings has largely been focussed at management and senior practitioners through the area teams being reduced from 5 to 4. The change process is in progress to implement this. The second 10% will largely affect full-time and part-time practitioners.
- 4.8 The Panel were informed of existing partnerships including with schools and colleges. It was further noted that all schools including academies were targeted and there was a programme that independent schools could purchase.
- The Chairman suggested the following wording to be included in the recommendations:
- 4.9 In 1.b) insert 'district and borough councils' after 'working with partners'  
In 1.c) insert 'specifically listening to young people's voices' after

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work with stakeholders

The Panel supported the amendments to the recommendations detailed at 1 b) and 1 c) below.

**Conclusions:**

- 4.10 1. The Panel commented upon the content of the Report and noted that the proposal sought to:
- a) Develop further the focus of YC Hertfordshire, on targeted prevention and early intervention with young people primarily aged 11-25 who face particular challenges, by delivering services within the areas described in the report. This will include work with individuals, their families and opportunities for informal education and learning within a group work setting.
  - b) Increase the ability of YC Hertfordshire, working with partners including district and borough councils, to be flexible and innovative in addressing emerging needs such as the recent increase in gang association, youth violence, crime, child sexual exploitation and its impact on Hertfordshire young people.
  - c) Undertake further consultation with stakeholders, specifically listening to young people's voices', to further develop the local offer.

Following a vote by show of hands the recommendations, as amended in 4.9 above, was unanimously agreed.

2. That the Panel recommends that Cabinet approves the proposed integrated approach by YC Hertfordshire to supporting young people in line with the Council's and Children's Services priorities.

Following a vote on show by show of hands the recommendation was agreed:

Agreed	7
Abstentions	3
Against	1

**5. CHILDREN MISSING FROM HOME AND LOCAL AUTHORITY CARE ANNUAL REPORT**

[Officer Contact: Kate Lochmuller, Team Manager Analytical and Information Services Hertfordshire County Council Tel: (01992)556861, Zaynab Aslam, Missing Children Co-Ordinator Safeguarding and Specialist Services Hertfordshire County Council Tel: (01438) 843934]]

- 5.1 The Panel received the Annual Report for the Children Missing from Home and Local Authority Care. The report provided a breakdown of the number of children missing from home and care and the number of missing episodes between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017. It was noted the report had been previously shared with the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board in December 2017.
- 5.2 Members noted there was a slight increase of children recorded as missing by 1.4% for those missing from care there was a downward trend to 54%.
- 5.3 Members were informed the category of 'absent' had been removed and a child could be classed as missing in 5 minutes if the child met the criteria of being at risk or harm. It was noted there were figures available for Watford; Welwyn & Hatfield and Stevenage, officers agreed to circulate the information to Panel Members and would include the breakdown in any future reports.
- 5.4 In relation to the system review Members were informed that all missing children would be given a chance to an independent interview or a meeting with their review officer.
- 5.5 It was noted that Children Looked After (CLA) have a key contact list which contained family members, friends that they child may contact if they go missing. One of the main reasons a child goes missing is because they want to spend more time with a friend or boyfriend.
- 5.6 The Panel were informed that officers were working with foster carers and Children in Care Council (CHICC) to produce a guideline for appropriate acceptance of behaviour guidelines.

**Conclusions:**

- 5.7 That the Cabinet Panel commented and noted the Annual Report and the continued focus to improve the rate of engagement and prevention.

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**6. PROGRESS REPORT ON THE OUTCOMES FROM FAMILY SAFEGUARDING**

[Officer Contact: Rebecca Price, Head of Innovation Tel: (01992) 588746]

- 6.1 The Panel received a report updating them on the progress of Family Safeguarding in Hertfordshire and to outline the outcomes achieved. Members noted Family Safeguarding was a whole system change on how child protection services were delivered in Hertfordshire. For the purpose of the new Members to the panel, officers gave an overview of the process from when the Family Safeguarding team received its funding of £4.86m from the DfE's Innovation Fund (Wave 1) in January 2015 to date.
- 6.2 Members noted that through changing adversarial systems and processes, it allowed staff to spend more time with families and improvements were made within 8 months of the process starting.
- 6.3 The University of Bedfordshire undertook an evaluation on Family Safeguarding in Hertfordshire using data gathered between June 2015 and June 2016. The evaluation proved the implementation of the project achieved better outcomes than expected and the DfE and Children's Service departments across the country were impressed with Hertfordshire's Family Safeguarding service. During the first year of operation savings of £2.6m were identified for the County Council. The evaluation concluded that all local authorities considered that multidisciplinary working would improve practices and outcomes for Children's Services across the country.
- 6.4 Members noted that with the wave 2 funding the County Council supported four other local authorities over the past year to launch their own Family Safeguarding services. It was noted there could potentially be a cost benefit to Hertfordshire acting as a consultant to other interested local authorities.
- 6.5 Members were informed the reduction in spend was partly due to the improvements of recruitment and retention. There had been a reduction in agency costs in Family Safeguarding which resulted in stability within the teams. Children's Services are also hosting the national Front Line social worker training programme and have recently been asked to increase the number of social work students on the programme. It was hope that following the training these students would be retained in permanent social work positions in the County Council.
- 6.6 Members congratulated officers on the excellent work that has been carried out to achieve this service and on how the work of Hertfordshire has changed the attitude of other local authorities.

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6.7 Members were also pleased to see the reduction in expenditure for Child Protection, Children in need cases and the reduction in days a child is in care.

6.8 It was noted as part of the Wave 2 Innovation Funding the DfE was interested in the impact of social work and multidisciplinary teams and had commissioned evaluations of the Family Safeguarding programmes in the 4 other authorities Hertfordshire is working with..

**Conclusions:**

6.9 That the County Council works closely with the partnership to continue to gather data on a cross agency basis in order to further build on the evidence base for this way of working and the improved outcomes for reduced costs that could be achieved.

**7. PROPOSED CHILDREN'S EQUIPMENT OFFER AND PUBLIC CONSULSTATION**

[Officer Contact: Oliver Barnes, Senior Commissioning Manager 0-25 SEND Commissioning Tel: (01992) 556309]

7.1 Members received a report inviting them to support a proposed equipment offer which would be accessible to all children and young people in Hertfordshire. The report also informed the Panel of the Director of Children's Services intention to begin a public consultation on the proposed equipment offer.

7.2 The Panel were informed the policy for the Children's Equipment Offer was not a new policy but an existing one that needed updating to have a clear offer for families to access equipment.

7.3 Members welcomed the consultation and asked officers to ensure that response times for the proposed offer was key for families accessing the right equipment at the right time.

**Conclusions:**

7.4 That the Panel noted:

- and commented upon and supported the proposed Children's equipment offer.
- that the Director of Children's Services intended to commence a public consultation on the proposed offer.
- that the outcome of the Consultation would be brought back to Cabinet Panel and then onto Cabinet for a final decision.

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**8 OTHER PART 1 BUSINESS**

8.1 There was no other business

**PART II ('CLOSED') AGENDA**

**1. MINUTES**

The Part II Minutes of the Cabinet Panel meeting held on 2 November 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

**KATHRYN PETTITT  
CHIEF LEGAL OFFICER**

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