

# 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 THURSDAY, 8 MARCH 2018**

### **ATTENDANCE**

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

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

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

Upon consideration of the agenda for the Children's Services Cabinet Panel meeting on Thursday, 8 March 2018 as circulated, copy annexed, conclusions were reached and are recorded below:

*Note: No conflicts of interest were declared by any member of the Cabinet Panel in relation to the matters on which conclusions were reached at this meeting*

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

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

##### **Nascot Lawn**

The Judicial Review in relation to Nascot Lawn had taken place the beginning of February 2018. In the Judge's summing up he advised that he needed to determine if Nascot Lawn was a health service or not as each followed different procedures regarding consultation. In his judgement he found that Nascot Lawn was a health service and therefore Herts Valley Clinical Commissioning Group (HVCCG) was required to consult with the County Council via its Health Scrutiny Committee as required by regulation 23 of the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013. Shortly after the judgement was issued The Council received an email stating that HVCCG was entering into consultation with the County Council regarding ceasing funding of Nascot Lawn, a response from the Council was required by 4 April 2018. From the 4 April 2018 until 18 April 2018 consultation with parents would take place and then the HVCCG would make a decision regarding its proposal to cease funding Nascot Lawn. A meeting of Hertfordshire County Council's Health Scrutiny Committee has been arranged for 21 March to consider questions regarding alternative arrangements for receiving services and how the County Council and HVCCG will work together. The outcome of the scrutiny would be fed back to HVCCG and they would then make their decision. If the County Council was not

happy with the decision then the matter could be referred to the Secretary of State.

The position prior to the Judicial Review was that East & North Herts Clinical Commissioning Group (ENHCCG) would continue with the same level of funding and HVCCG would fund £100k that would be tied to the children that met continuing health care criteria.

Officers have since met with the CCG's and have reached an agreement that the money would be put into an integrated pot and ENHCCG would match the funding of HVCCG of £100k to meet the needs of the children with complex health needs. Those who met continuing health care criteria, if they had specific nursing care needs, would be considered separately. It was noted that West Hyde in Rickmansworth was the preferred site for most families to receive services from which was leading to lengthy waits due to capacity issues. The County Council have spoken to officers at HVCCG and all sides were keen to move forward. It was noted the financial commitment from HVCCG would be received in writing.

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

### **ACTION**

#### **1. MINUTES**

- 1.1 The Minutes of the Cabinet Panel meeting held on 7 February 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### **2. PUBLIC PETITIONS**

- 2.1 There were no public petitions.

#### **3. CHILDREN'S SERVICES PERFORMANCE REPORT Q3 2017/18**

[Officer Contact: Paul Dryden, Performance improvement Manager (01992) 588196]

- 3.1 The Panel received a report which summarised performance during Quarter 3 2017/18 (September 2017 to December 2017). Members were referred to presentation papers for key performance indicators on Targeted Services and Early Help, Contact, Referral and Assessment (Safeguarding); Child Protection and Children Looked After (CLA). The figures were based using in-year monthly snapshot information.
- 3.2 Members noted there were a slight decrease in percentage of referrals to social care between September and December 2017 and there had also been a reduction month on month for Children subject to Child Protection Plans. It was also reported the majority of children subject to Child Protection Characteristics were white British. In relation to children looked after (CLA) Members noted there were 85 children with 3 plus placements, 75

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of these were aged 11 and over. Members were informed there was a working group looking at why these children were subject to multiple placement changes.

3.3 In response to a Member question as to why the number of CLA in care had gone up for children aged 10-11 and did the statistics include the children that had left care, officers responded that it was the children aged 10-12 that were currently in care had been in care at aged 8 and therefore had been in care for 3 years or more, this age group were seen as too old to be adopted. Statistics monitored length of time in care and children that had left care. Officers agreed to provide further information to a future meeting of the panel. The panel were informed there had been 32 young people placed back home through focused reunification and it was noted it was always the plan to support a child to return home where it is safe to do so.

Paul Dryden to action

3.4 Members heard there was supportive work being carried out with adopters to adopt older children and Members were informed foster carers would not usually adopt but would apply for Special Guardianship Orders (SGO's). It was noted that if parents wanted to adopt a baby, adoption agencies would approach the local authority for babies that had a care order placed on them, the parents would foster the baby for the first six months, if the babies family home became stable through the care order proceedings then the baby could be placed back with the natural parents.

3.5 It was noted there were a low number of children that had been adopted and who had come back into care at a later date. Members heard these children were extremely distressed due to having an adoption breakdown. The Panel were informed of the 3 centres available for short breaks for children and families which could be used in a crises situation, these were located in Watford, Welwyn and Stanborough and these were part of Adolescence Resource Centre (ARC) services. Members requested a report on ARC services be presented to a future meeting of the Panel.

Marion Ingram / Lindsay Edwards to action

3.6 The Panel commended officers on the good work that has been carried out. Members requested that they would like to see more information to a future meeting of the Panel in relation to the district breakdown of figures for NEET and CLA. *NB this information was circulated to Members post meeting.*

Paul Dryden to action

**Conclusions:**

3.7 The Panel scrutinised current performance and commented on areas for improvement and/or interest.

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#### **4. THE ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE VIRTUAL SCHOOL HEAD**

[Officer Contact: Felicity Evans, Head of Achievement, Virtual Schools, Tel: (01992) 555926]

- 4.1 The Panel received the Annual Report from the Virtual School Head. The report set out information on the attainment and progress of children looked after (CLA) at each key stage in 2017 and the progress and achievement of care leavers between the ages of 16 and 19. The report also outlined the progress and impact of the Virtual Schools improvement plan that included development across Children’s Services, with schools both in and out of Hertfordshire, senior Ofsted Inspectors in the Eastern region and with children and young people.
- 4.2 Members were informed the data provided in the report was not complete, but once the statistical first release information had been received from the DfE the report would be updated. Officers indicated the current data collection methods could be strengthened and plans have been put in place to improve next year’s report. It was anticipated there would be greater information on year by year progress and achievement and key stage results. The Panel were pleased with all the improvements that had been made to Virtual Schools.
- 4.3 Members noted the attainment of young people had improved; the outcome in relation to phonics was better; the numbers of CLA was reducing although school age groups are not so affected and the Virtual School had not seen a fluctuation in numbers; the absence rate of CLA had fallen since April 2017 and the exclusion from schools is rare and there were more young people going into further education and onto university.
- 4.4 In relation to voice of the child, Members were informed all looked after children (LAC) would have an opportunity to review their education through their electronic Personal Education Plan (ePEP) with their designated teacher. In relation to Bright Spot research which was a survey of the views of LAC and young people aged 4-18 in Hertfordshire it was noted that only a third of children and young people completed the survey but support for education was a ‘Bright Spot’.
- 4.5 In response to a Member question on attainment at Hertfordshire schools and where a child or young person had personal issues that need addressing when being placed in a school. Members were informed the child would be placed at a school rated good or better where there would be a best match in terms of the skills at the school and the pastoral care support that was available. Officers were able to develop support packages for individual children and advise schools to help achieve better outcomes for

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children and young people.

- 4.6 The Panel heard that officers had invited a statistical neighbour in to carry out a peer review to assess the performance of the Virtual School. It was noted the Improvement Plan for the Virtual School 2017-18 was based on the research carried out by the DfE and the National Foundation for Educational Research which outlined common factors where schools were most effective in improving the achievement of disadvantaged children.
- 4.7 In response to a Member query on the low level of apprenticeships, it was noted work was being carried out to increase opportunities with the Council's contractors and suppliers, brokered by the Chief Executive and Virtual School. There have been offers of work experience to young people to help direct them onto the right apprenticeship scheme for each individual. Officers confirmed that the percentage of apprenticeships was expected to rise. It was also noted that another area of achievement for CLA was those who were involved on the National Citizens Programme.
- 4.8 Members were informed of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) which is a screening tool for children and adolescent's wellbeing and mental health that had been introduced in Hertfordshire in April 2017. The SDQ scores involved scores from Carer and Teachers for all ages and also the CLA aged 10 and above. It was noted that a Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) report would be presented to a future meeting of the Panel.
- 4.9 In response to a Member question it was noted that counselling support through schools for CLA was supported through the Pupil Premium, and schools can use the money to 'buy in' counselling support. The Panel were informed if a CLA was struggling with a subject this would be highlighted in the ePEP and would be supported by intervention paid through the Pupil Premium to give further support where needed.
- 4.10 In relation to school records being made available to the school that a child or young person had transferred to, officers informed Members that although there should be records for each child, there were challenges in tracking the child's records and getting them transferred across Local Authority areas.

**Conclusions:**

- 4.11 The Panel noted and commented on:
- a) the summary of performance in 2017, attached as Appendix 1 to the report

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b) the development of the Virtual School Improvement plan for 2017-18

**5 OTHER PART 1 BUSINESS**

5.1 There was no other business

**KATHRYN PETTITT  
CHIEF LEGAL OFFICER**

**CHAIRMAN** \_\_\_\_\_

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