

ROYAL BOROUGH OF KINGSTON UPON THAMES
CHILDREN'S AND ADULTS' CARE AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

21 MARCH 2019

7:30 pm – 9:35 pm

Councillor Margaret Thompson (Chair)
Councillor Diane White (Vice Chair)

Councillor Stephanie Archer, * Councillor Mark Durrant, Councillor Sam Foulder-Hughes,
Councillor Ed Fram, Councillor Maria Netley, Councillor Munir Ravalia,
Councillor Anita Schaper, *Councillor Chris Stuart, and Councillor Annette Wookey
Advisory members: * Dr Naz Jivani and *Dr Pete Smith and Jane Marwood

* Absent

54. Public Question Time

The Committee dealt with questions and other matters raised by residents. A summary of the questions and answers is attached as an Annex but does not form part of the Minutes of the meeting.

55. Apologies for Absence and Attendance of Substitute Members

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mark Durrant for whom Councillor Liz Green attended as alternate Member and from Councillor Christine Stuart. Apologies for absence were also received from GP advisory members, Dr Naz Jivani and Dr Pete Smith.

56. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

57. Petitions

No petitions were submitted.

58. Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the following meetings be confirmed as a correct record:

- i) the meeting held on 7 February 2019; and
- ii) the meeting held on 13 February 2019

59. Children's Centre Strategy

Appendix A

At its meeting on 20 September 2018, the Committee had received a report which provided an overview of Achieving for Children's strategic vision and proposed a future direction for Children's Centre provision in Kingston upon Thames. The strategy set out to strengthen outreach provision, maximise resources, and target the most vulnerable families in the deprived communities in Kingston.

The statutory definition of a children's centre is a place or group of places:

- i) which is managed by or on behalf of, or under arrangements with, the local authority with a view to securing that early childhood services in the local authority's area are made available in an integrated way.
- ii) through which early childhood services are made available (either by providing the services on site, or by providing advice and assistance on gaining access to services elsewhere); and
- iii) at which activities for young children are provided.

The key focus of the above statutory definition is that children's centres are as much about making appropriate and integrated services available, as about providing premises in particular geographical areas. The strategic aim is therefore for the Council to work with Achieving for Children (AfC) to identify further opportunities to use Children's Centres as a focal point for services for the whole family and make them a multi-agency hub in the local community.

The Committee had endorsed the strategic vision as a basis for public consultation. The consultation included a proposal to continue to provide a core offer of children's centre activities at: Chessington, Kingston Town, Old Malden and Tolworth and to decommission four children's centres at: Norbiton, Surbiton, New Malden and North Kingston. The proposed remodelling of children centre provision reflected savings of £240,000 required as part of the £12.1m savings agreed within the Council's budget setting process for 2019/20.

The public consultation was undertaken between 12 December 2018 and 4 February 2019. 744 responses were received, representing approximately 15.0% of service users who are currently accessing children's centre provision. The Committee considered a report which set out the outcome of this consultation (summarised in paragraph 13 of the report and detailed in Annex 1 of the report). The Committee also heard representations at the meeting from members of the public including from Ms J Lister who presented a petition requesting that all of the children's centres remain open. The petition (which had been submitted at the Council meeting on 26 February 2019) had received over 500 eligible signatures (345 online and 234 in hard copy) and would therefore be debated at full Council (on 24 April).

Responding to feedback from the consultation, the report recommended a revised option of a phased approach to the remodelling of the four children centres over 2019/20 and 2020/21. The Committee noted that the revised option created a funding gap of approximately £105k for 2019/20; the intention is to achieve the full required savings by 2020/21.

The Committee's discussions included the following points:

- the children's centre services are very highly regarded by service users
- even though the centre may be in what appears to be an affluent area, there are local families in North Kingston with vulnerabilities such as mental health problems who value the resource there which is in a purpose-built building. (In response it was indicated that services, particularly health services, will continue to be provided by outreach; however, the intention is to focus resources on those areas where deprivation is resulting in children under-performing in education.)

- decisions on the future use of assets lie with another Committee (Finance and Partnership Committee) as an asset may be developed for other types of community purposes
- children's centre services are an important opportunity for early intervention which is a significant element of the SEND Transformation Plan
- the Council will be assessing the impact of these changes – the focus will be on measuring actual access rather than just registrations
- the importance of engaging with and upskilling local community groups, childcare providers and faith groups and users whose first language is not English – there will be partnership work with Community Development team and use of translation services
- outreach allows for a service to be more flexible, wider in the community, reaching families who might not seek to access services in buildings
- the importance of retaining staff with expertise and experience, particularly in relation to mental health – the majority of staff in the service, many of whom are highly skilled, have been working in the service for many years – parents value their relationships with specific staff who they trust and to access them at specific critical times – services will continue to run with existing programmes at the remaining centres – the building of a similar level of trust with staff in the outreach services will be a priority - concern that the level of savings required would result in loss of staff as well as loss of buildings; also concern of additional demands on already stretched staff – staff already manage these demands by meeting any new parents to discuss how they can be accommodated – outreach will need to be staffed, for example, with an administrator or bank staff in addition to practitioners to respond to new families
- the value of provision of clinical services at a trusted and safe location (which has appropriate facilities and privacy) is recognised
- it was noted that critical support services for disadvantaged families (benefit advice, foodbank vouchers, Job Centre Plus advice, language support) had been considered least important in the consultation – this was considered to be a reason to re-focus children's centres services to ensure access to these services
- the children's centres services are delivered in a context of many other services including Youth Services, Strengthening Families team, respite services, and through social prescribing services through the Connected Kingston platform
- it will be vital to publicise and communicate clearly the programme of services and signpost where these will be held across the borough (and families can access services at any centre, wherever they live) – including actual signposts to the Old Malden centre
- request for a report back a year after implementation of the remodelled service – there will be an implementation plan which will be shared – the decision would be subject to community call-in
- some parents in the centres were not aware of the consultation until 9 January because of the holiday period, although not all centres were closed during this period. The consultation was on the AfC website on 13 December but not on the Council website until the following week and not on the consultation portal until the first week of January - there is an intention to employ a Consultation Officer within the Communications Team to improve

coordination of consultation and communications, for example notifying respondents to a consultation of the date of the Committee when a decision on that proposal will be made

- quality assurance will be key; for universal services as well as targeted services – need to link the provision to the wide range of other services including Connected Kingston services.

Resolved that -

1. the results of the public consultation (as set out in paragraphs 12-15 and Annex 1 of the report) on the future direction for children's centres provision in Kingston are noted and considered; [Voting – unanimous]
2. Norbiton and Surbiton Children's Centres are remodelled from June 2019 and the provision of services will be offered through outreach into the local communities; and
3. New Malden and North Kingston Children centres are remodelled from April 2020 with a phased reduction in children centre activity to target those most in need (as set out in paragraph 10 of the report).

Voting –

For: 7 Members of the Committee (Councillors Margaret Thompson, Diane White, Sam Foulder-Hughes, Liz Green, Munir Ravalia, Anita Schaper and Annette Wookey)

Against: 2 Members of the Committee (Councillors Ed Fram and Maria Netley)

60. Statutory Social Care Complaints Annual Report

Appendix B

Complaints regarding services provided by adult and children's social care are subject to statutory complaint procedures; an annual report is submitted to inform the Committee of the operation of this statutory process. The report covered the period 1 April 2017 - 31 March 2018, with the Adults Social Care Complaints report attached at Annex and the Children's Social Care Complaints report attached at Annex 2 to the report.

Adult social care services are required to operate a statutory complaints procedure in accordance with the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009 and the Local Authority Social Services Complaints (Amendment) Regulations 2009. Any complaint, which does not fall under these provisions will be considered under the Council's corporate complaints procedure.

During the year a total of 65 complaints were received:

- 29 enquiries concerning Adult Social care, of which 11 were logged as stage 1 complaints (This compares to 42 complaints received in 2016/17)
- 36 enquiries concerning children's social care, 22 of which were logged as complaints.

In relation to the cases referred to the Local Government Ombudsman:

- of the 9 Adult Social Care cases (same number as 2016/17): 3 were upheld, 2 not upheld and 4 referred back for local resolution
- of the 9 Education and Children's Services cases (no cases in 2016/17): 2 were upheld, 4 closed and 3 referred back for local resolution.

There continues to be a determination on the part of those responsible for responding to complaints to ensure that a full and comprehensive response is provided at the initial stage and this is likely to be part of the reason for the comparatively low number of requests for formal investigations. There have been no Stage 3 Review Panels this year.

In response to the Committee's questions about the methods used by the Customer Experience team to investigate complaints from residents who are not as able to articulate concerns and also in relation to residents suffering dementia, the Head of Service for Customer Experience described a range of approaches used including visits, facilitation by those with professional expertise, and advocacy and support.

Resolved that the report (and Annexes) on annual statutory social care complaints for 2017/18 are formally received.

61. Urgent Items authorised by the Chair

There was no urgent business authorised by the Chair.

Signed.....Date.....
Chair

Public Questions

The following public questions (on items which were not on the agenda) were raised at the meeting:

1. Shop Mobility

Mr James Giles asked about the reliability of and publicity for the Shopmobility service.

Stephen Taylor, Director of Adult Social Care, replied that he was pleased to confirm that the manager of the service would be continuing in post; the Council would be investigating options for the service going forward in discussions with Staywell and Kingston Carers Network, to offer a more sustainable service.

Councillor Green commented that because there is only one member of staff, the plan is to ask the voluntary Councillor Green asked that the website should be kept up to date with the dates when the service is available clearly advertised, and for the service to be coordinated with RAKAT or Dial a Ride to provide a link with transport to the Eden Walk shopping centre.

2. New PSHE/RE Curriculum Protests

Mr Giles also asked, in view of the increasing number of parent groups protesting against the new PSHE curriculum, what the Council would be doing to ensure an inclusive curriculum in its schools to promote tolerance in relation to LGBT issues.

Pauline Maddison, Interim Director of Children's Services, replied that the borough's schools are generally inclusive in their curriculum and policies. AfC are discussing with headteachers the training opportunities which could be provided to support the new curriculum. Councillor Foulder-Hughes added that much good work was already being done in the borough's schools such as the recent LGBT history week in Hollyfield School. In relation to broader community acceptance, he had asked for a scheme to be investigated in licensed clubs for reporting potential hate crime to bar staff. The Chief Executive, Ian Thomas, added a reminder that the Council has a limited role in the delivery of the curriculum as most schools are now Academies (not under local authority control), though AfC and the Council can aim to influence through partnership working. Iona Lidington, Director of Public Health, referred to school health services organising teacher training and health days and a charter for schools to sign up to, to promote an inclusive ethos.