

Update from Scrutiny Chairman to Cabinet: 12 July 2016

This report provides an update on the following scrutiny meetings:

Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee – 9 June 2016

Scrutiny Committee – 29 June 2016

Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee – 9 June 2016

1. The Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee met on 9 June 2016, when it considered evidence and made recommendations in respect of the following items:

Agenda Item 5 – Suffolk Family Focus (SFF)

2. The Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee recommends to Cabinet, the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, and the Director of Children and Young People's Services, to:
 - a) Commend the continued successful work of officers and partners in Phase 2 of the SFF programme, adopting a similar approach to that used for Phase 1.
 - b) Raise for the attention of the Suffolk Public Sector Leaders Group and the Suffolk Health & Wellbeing Board:
 - (i) the challenges regarding effective collaborative sharing of multi-agency data relating to Suffolk Family Focus, in particular NHS data, and to ensure regular progress reporting of Suffolk Family Focus to public sector leaders.
(Reference pg.16 & 18 of the report to the meeting)
 - (ii) with regard to early partnership intervention in the mental health of young people – the perception that there is insufficient capacity in the system for those viewed to be 'not yet at crisis' or who do not meet current thresholds.
 - c) Undertake some focused work to look at further alignment with the findings from the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission Report
(Reference pg.17 of the report to the meeting)
 - d) Request an information briefing on the current work with Essex University on 'Predictive Modelling', to enable early intervention.
 - e) Look to provide further feedback and training to school Head Teachers regarding SFF good practice case studies.

Agenda Item 6 – Making Every Intervention Count (MEIC) Update

3. The Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee recommends to the Cabinet, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, and the Director of Children and Young People's Services, to:

- a) Commend the work by officers and partner organisations, as evidenced by the good results and the recent Ofsted Report.
- b) Further improve the clarity and referencing of the helpful summary 'dashboard' that was produced for the Committee meeting.

(Reference pg.45 & 54 of the report to the meeting)

- c) Undertake further investigation, including geographical analysis, of the reasons why Age 16-18 NEET figures, whilst decreasing year-on-year, are higher than the national average, and what MEIC or other initiatives including 'MyGO' are focused on addressing this.
- d) Provide additional information about the baseline data used to derive the staff survey improvement percentages.

(Reference pg.52 of the report to the meeting)

Agenda Item 7 – School Education Performance and Trends

4. The Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee recommends to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, and the Director of Children and Young People's Services, to:
 - a) Commend the efforts of all those involved, inside and outside schools, in achieving the recent improvement in educational performance in Suffolk.
 - b) Investigate and evaluate any improvement in literacy from initiatives such as provision of free dictionaries in schools, building on the recent partnership with the Educational Endowment Fund, and how awareness of this is being given to School Governors.
 - c) To recommend to all Councillors to consider having an email 'strapline' making reference to the good educational performance of Suffolk schools, with an optional link to the newly launched Raising the Bar video.
5. The minutes of the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee meeting will be formally agreed at the Committee's next meeting on 6 September 2016.

Scrutiny Committee – 29 June 2016

6. The Scrutiny Committee met on Wednesday 29 June 2016, when it considered and made recommendations in respect of the following items:-

Call-In on Cabinet Decision on Ipswich Park and Ride

7. The Committee considered a report at Agenda Item 5, setting out: a decision made by the Cabinet on 14 June 2016 in relation to Ipswich Park and Ride; the reasons why the decision had been called in; and the response by the Director of Resource Management to the call-in.
8. Following consideration of the evidence presented to the Committee, on a vote being taken, 10 members voted in favour of referring the decision back to the Cabinet and 1 member abstained. The voting indicated that the majority view of the Committee was to refer the decision back to Cabinet with a request that Cabinet consider additional recommendations (as follows), in addition to those recommendations set out in the original report:-

- i) that a Memorandum of Understanding with bus operators be agreed before notice was served on the existing Park and Ride contract and;
- ii) to agree that, if the Park and Ride services had to close, consultation would take place and a further decision by Cabinet would be required.

9. Further information is set out at Agenda Item 11 for today's Cabinet meeting.

Provision of Library Services in Suffolk

10. At Agenda Item 6 the Committee considered how the County Council is delivering its statutory responsibilities in relation to library services, and the current opportunities and challenges faced by Suffolk Libraries IPS Ltd. In light of the evidence received, the Committee agreed:

- a. To congratulate Suffolk Libraries and officers in Adult and Community Services on: the considerable progress made since 2011 when the Council decided to move away from the previous "in-house" approach and to establish Suffolk Libraries Industrial Provident Society Ltd in order to deliver library services in the county; and on the fact that nationally Suffolk Libraries have been described as the "gold standard" of a modern library service.
- b. To endorse Suffolk Libraries' view that its role should be to improve the service by working with its staff to update the service offer and encourage more engagement with customers, communities and volunteers, and not be one of managing a decline in service.
- c. To recommend that a councillor should be given specific responsibility for library services in order to champion the interests of library users and represent the Council in discussions with Suffolk Libraries. Further, to recommend to that councillor that he or she should:
 - i. consider ways in which the Council can assist Suffolk Libraries to make the necessary contacts and gain support for developing opportunities to broaden the use of libraries, for example by siting post offices or job centres on the same premises; and
 - ii. consider how to encourage town, parish, district and borough councils to support their local libraries in developing their role as community hubs and making best use of community assets.
- d. In light of the role Suffolk Libraries plays in helping the County Council to achieve its corporate priorities to ask the Corporate Management Team to consider whether resources could be provided from within the corporate centre, on a fixed term basis, to assist in identifying commercial opportunities and developing a strategy to make Suffolk Libraries more sustainable, including investigating the possibility of seconding a staff member to work with Suffolk Libraries on a time limited project to help plan and evaluate service development options.
- e. To recommend to the Corporate Director Children and Adults Services that plans for the future development of rural provision should be expedited in light of the need for three active mobile library vehicles to be replaced in the next 12 to 18 months.
- f. To recommend to Suffolk County Council Commissioners that in discussions concerning extension or a re-tender of the Library Services contract, they

explicitly recognise the emerging role of libraries as community hubs and catalysts for community engagement; and prioritise measures that promote beneficial social and community outcomes, alongside the statutory duties of a Library Service.

- g. To highlight the importance of developing new ways of measuring the performance of library services, which are relevant and reflect the range of services and different ways of delivering services, in order to gauge how well Suffolk Libraries are enabling the Council to meet its statutory responsibilities and contributing to the Council's priorities.
 - h. To ask that the County Council take action to ensure that accurate and efficient measurement devices for footfall are maintained in library premises and renewed when necessary.
 - i. To request an Information Bulletin item providing:
 - i. a summary of the activities which contribute to the success of those libraries in the county which have a high footfall;
 - ii. details about how Suffolk Libraries is working to develop its marketing expertise.
 - j. To keep the service under review as part of the Committee's forward work programme, with a particular focus on:-
 - i. the emerging proposals for the development of services in rural areas. This should be pre-decision scrutiny, timed to provide an opportunity for the Committee to make recommendations during the development of the proposals; and
 - ii. the arrangements for commissioning or renewal of the contract in July 2017.
11. The minutes of the meeting are due to be confirmed at the next meeting on 28 July 2016.