

Minutes of the Meeting of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 1 December 2021 at 7.00 pm

- Present:** Councillors Sara Muldowney (Chair), Alex Anderson, John Kent (*substitute*) and James Thandi
- Apologies:** Councillors Graham Snell (Vice-Chair) and Lee Watson
Sally Khawaja, Parent Governor Representative
- In attendance:** Lucy Boatman, Youth Support Worker
Dr Jo Broadbent, Director of Public Health
Priscilla Bruce-Annan, Safeguarding and Children's Manager
Michele Lucas, Assistant Director Education and Skills
Sheila Murphy, Corporate Director Children's Services
Janet Simon, Assistant Director Children's Social Care and Early Help
Sarah Williams, Service Manager – Education and Support Service
Lucy Tricker, Senior Democratic Services Officer
- Jenny Coles, Independent Chair & Scrutineer – Thurrock Local Safeguarding Children Partnership
- Sarah Barlow, Church of England Representative
Nicola Cranch, Parent Governor Representative
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Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting may be filmed and was being recorded, with the audio recording to be made available on the Council's website.

The Chair stated that there was a time limit for the use of the Beehive venue, which was 9.30pm. She explained that if items on the agenda were not concluded by 9.30pm, the meeting would be adjourned and would recommence at the next Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 8 February 2022.

31. Minutes

The Chair highlighted page six of the minutes and stated that she had specifically requested a RAG rated action plan on the LSCP recommendations. She added that she had also proposed additional recommendations to both the report on Children's Services Savings – Education and Skills, and the report on Proposed Budget Reductions for Children's Social Care and Early Help, and requested that these be added to the minutes in bold.

Subject to these amendments, the minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2021 were approved as true and correct record.

32. Items of Urgent Business

The Chair stated that she had one item of urgent business that she wished to raise, which related to the nurseries consultation that had recently finished. The Assistant Director Education and Skills explained that a briefing note had been sent to the Committee, and would form part of the report that would be submitted to Cabinet in January.

The Chair felt that a good number of responses had been submitted to the consultation, as almost 300 responses had been received. She questioned if the consultation had been digital only. The Assistant Director Education and Skills replied that it had been mostly digital, but paper copies had been supplied to the relevant affected services. The Chair highlighted that 96% of respondents had felt that access to local nursery placements was either important or very important. The Chair stated that the Committee had seen a Childcare Sufficiency Report that evidenced a lack of childcare places in Tilbury St Chads, before the potential closure of these nurseries and the loss of another 126 places. The Assistant Director Education and Skills replied that there were a small proportion of schools and the rest were local nurseries, but that she did not have these numbers to hand, but would find this information and report back to the Chair. The Chair questioned if there would be enough time between January Cabinet and the potential closure in March to find an alternative provider. She explained that to her knowledge there was only one other local nursery in Tilbury St Chads. The Assistant Director Education and Skills replied that both nurseries discussed in the report would remain open until August, but initial interest had been received for when the procurement process began in January. She added that feedback had also been received from other providers that more placements could be opened if necessary. The Chair welcomed the news that the nurseries would stay open until August. The Corporate Director Children's Services added that it was difficult to gauge the level of interest until Cabinet gave approval for the procurement process to proceed at January's Cabinet meeting. She explained that the team would then go to market for the procurement of the nurseries and feedback would be given to the Committee during this process.

Councillor Thandi questioned if initial interest in the procurement of the nurseries had been strong. The Corporate Director Children's Services replied that it was difficult to say but there had been an indication of initial interest, and the team were hopeful that this would be developed once the full procurement pack had been released. The Committee agreed the briefing note.

33. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

34. Youth Cabinet Verbal Update

The Youth Cabinet Representative stated that the Youth Cabinet had been holding monthly meetings, and had been focussing on three main projects. She explained that these projects were: pollution and recycling, particularly promoting the idea of plastics recycling to pre-school children by creating a sculpture made out of waste plastic; mental health; and working with the police to create a YouTube video. The Youth Support Worker added that Essex Police had been working well with the Youth Cabinet to produce this video.

Councillor Kent questioned how the Youth Cabinet had met during COVID-19. The Youth Cabinet Representative replied that they had been meeting monthly via Zoom, but had also been holding regular Zoom activity evenings, taking part in online quizzes and making friends. She added that the waste plastics sculpture had been delayed due to the pandemic, but Youth Cabinet were hopeful that this could begin in the New Year.

35. Items Raised by Thurrock Local Safeguarding Children Partnership - Verbal Update

The Chair highlighted that she had requested a RAG rated action plan report be brought to this Committee meeting, and requested that a written report, with the RAG plan included, be brought to February's Committee meeting.

The Independent Chair and Scrutineer Thurrock LSCP introduced the report and stated that she had recently been chosen for the role, and would be focussing on the future of scrutiny and safeguarding in terms of children. She stated that Sir Alan Wood had carried out a national review of Local Safeguarding Childrens Boards four years ago, and from this LSCPs had been developed, and had been enshrined in legislation in 2017. She explained that this legislation made the local authority, the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), and the police equally responsible for child safeguarding, and the LSCP had an overarching role to co-ordinate safeguarding in the area and implement learning from serious case reviews. She added that Thurrock's LSCP had a constitution that enshrined these principles, and helped to hold partners to account. She stated that Thurrock's LSCP were currently working on: early identification of vulnerability; increased learning within the partnerships to ensure learning was embedded and changes could be made when required; and ensuring information was shared effectively.

She explained that Thurrock's peer review last year had highlighted the need for scrutiny and governance, which was why she had been appointed into the role. She stated that she would be reviewing the arrangements for broader scrutiny aiming for it to be objective and a critical friend. She explained that the peer review had driven actions to support Thurrock's scrutiny, particularly through the increased use of Key Performance Indications (KPIs) and improved multi-agency partnerships, such as with the police, health colleagues, and schools. She added that additional quality assurance had been implemented, such as multi-agency audits from the LSCP. She summarised and stated that the LSCP could provide safeguarding assurance

information to Committee Members, and a report would be brought to Committee next year which would outline their upcoming priorities.

The Safeguarding and Children's Manager stated that there were four reviews and one peer review action plan currently underway. She stated that these were:

1. Frankie – 14 actions identified (11 blue and 3 amber)
2. Sam and Kyle – 18 actions identified (16 blue and 2 amber)
3. Leo – 14 actions identified (1 blue, 4 green, and 9 amber)
4. Shay and Ashley – learning published but not yet ratified through governance processes.

She explained that blue actions meant the work had been embedded into the service; green meant complete but not yet embedded; and amber meant work had been started but not yet completed. She added that the peer review had identified 26 actions, 23 of which were now blue and 3 of which were amber.

The Safeguarding and Children's Manager added that the reviews had identified four overarching themes of: information sharing; professional curiosity; thresholds and escalations; and working with resistance. She stated that lots of work was ongoing on these actions and data was being collected via the LSCP Dataset to form the basis of the 2022-2024 LSCO delivery plan.

Councillor Anderson questioned if the amber actions were on course for completion, and if they had deadlines. The Safeguarding and Children's Manager replied that all amber actions were on course for completion. She mentioned that the team had been holding numerous awareness sessions, and were trying to deliver these on a more spread-out timescale to ensure maximum attendance.

The Safeguarding and Children's Manager, and the Independent Chairperson and Scrutineer Thurrock LSCP left the meeting at 7.45pm

36. Fees and Charges Pricing Strategy 2022-23

The Assistant Director Education and Skills introduced the report and stated that it was presented before the Committee on an annual basis. She highlighted the charge that related to Grangewaters which had increased by 64% and explained that this was because it was an activity that required the whole lake and staff onsite to manage. She explained that previously this had been undertaken by volunteers or by holding other activities that required onsite staff at the same time, but this was no longer feasible. She summarised and stated that the team tested the market for fees and charges, and the proposals would be implemented in April, if agreed by Cabinet.

Councillor Kent highlighted the increase of 64% at Grangewaters, and asked if this was for the Water-ski and Jet-Ski Club, and if any consultation had been undertaken with them. The Assistant Director Education and Skills replied that

conversations had been ongoing throughout the season, as they used the whole lake and it had been difficult to identify space for them. She explained that there were no volunteers identified in future, so staff costs would increase. She stated that the Club had felt disappointed that there had been no space for them this year, but the team would continue to work closely with them in future. Councillor Anderson questioned how the overall pricing of Grangewaters related to the national average. The Assistant Director Education and Skills answered that pricing at Grangewaters was lower than the national average, but Grangewaters followed a different pricing strategy as it was aimed for local community use.

The Chair stated that over 50% of the fees and charges increases outlined in the report were above inflation. She asked if any consultation had been undertaken for these increases. The Assistant Director Education and Skills replied that some of the fees and charges had only been increased by approximately £1 above inflation, and this was low when compared to the national average. She stated that the team had spoken with services and service users before proposing an increase in fees and charges. The Chair questioned why the commercial rate hall charge had been removed. The Assistant Director Education and Skills responded that this related to the Thurrock Adult Community College building, which was not in operation. She stated that the removal of fees and charges relating to Grangewaters had been to simplify and streamline the system.

Councillor Kent questioned the approval process for the report. The Assistant Director Education and Skills explained that the report would go to February's Cabinet meeting for their sign off. Councillor Kent stated that he would not agree to give director delegated authority to change the fees and charges in year, and felt that this should have some Member oversight, for example in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder. Councillor Anderson questioned if the recommendation relating to director delegated authority had been previously included in fees and charges reports. He also questioned how regularly director delegated authority was utilised. The Assistant Director Education and Skills replied that the recommendation relating to director delegated authority had been included on fees and charges reports for the past few years, but had rarely been used by directors to amend a charge once it had been agreed.

Councillor Kent suggested that recommendation two be amended to include "director delegated authority, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder, or appropriate Member oversight". A vote was held on this recommendation amendment. There were two votes in favour (Councillors Muldowney and Kent), and two votes against (Councillors Anderson and Thandi). As the vote was tied, the Chair received the casting vote and voted for the recommendation. Therefore, the recommendation was amended.

Councillor Kent suggested an additional recommendation which read "The Committee did not support fees and charges increases above the current rate of inflation of 4.2%". A vote was held on this recommendation. There were two votes in favour (Councillors Muldowney and Kent) and two votes against

(Councillors Anderson and Thandi). As the vote was tied, the Chair received the casting vote and voted for the recommendation. Therefore the proposed additional recommendation was agreed.

RESOLVED: That the Committee:

1. Noted the revised fees and charges including those no longer applicable, and commented on the proposals currently being considered within the remit of the Committee.

2. Noted that director delegated authority, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder or other appropriate Member oversight, will be sought via Cabinet to allow Fees and Charges to be varied within a financial year in response to commercial requirements.

3. Did not support fees and charges increases above the current rate of inflation of 4.2%.

37. Impact of COVID-19 on Education and Children's Social Care

The Assistant Director Education and Skills introduced the report and stated that a previous report presented to the Committee in July had requested data on attainment, but explained that this was currently not available. She stated that therefore this report outlined how the service was supporting children on a holistic level. She stated that a survey had been sent out to schools to collect this information, and the completed report had been sent back to schools for their information. She added that it was also good to hear that the Youth Cabinet were undertaking work relating to mental health, as this was a concern within the service.

The Assistant Director Education and Skills stated that the main elements of the report related to the socialisation of children, particularly those children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), as children required socialisation with their peers that they did not necessarily receive during the pandemic. She stated that some children had enjoyed isolation, whereas others had not, so the report highlighted a mixed individual picture. She explained that work was being undertaken to support children's socialisation and consultation had been undertaken during the pandemic to find out what schools needed. She commented that from this consultation the team had set up 'The Hangout' and 'The Junior Hangout' to improve children's socialisation.

The Assistant Director Education and Skills stated that the pandemic had also had an impact on children's learning, as schools had reported that children had lower stamina and resilience for learning. She highlighted that the School's Forum had also reported increased speech and language problems among the EYFS cohort, which could lead to an increased number of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) in the future. She stated that the team were therefore working closely with schools to ensure teachers and other professionals were working with children experiencing speech and language difficulties.

The Assistant Director Education and Skills added that the team were also seeing challenges amongst Year 11 pupils in schools, but highlighted that the government was still planning for exams to take place next summer, but this was dependent on a number of factors including the new Omicron variant. She clarified that schools were still experiencing problems relating to COVID-19 as some schools were seeing significant outbreaks, and children and staff were having to self-isolate, so the team were working to mitigate these challenges. She stated that attendance was currently 90% which was lower than pre-COVID levels, but in line with the national average.

The Assistant Director Children's Social Care (CSC) and Early Help added that the team had now moved to business as usual, with 98% of contact happening face-to-face, with remote contact only occurring as an exception after being risk assessed. She explained that the team were also using hybrid working, with some people in the office and some people working from home. She added that the courts had also decided to maintain a hybrid system, with the majority of court proceedings occurring via video, and only occurring in-person if necessary. The Assistant Director CSC and Early Help explained that an Ofsted focussed visit had occurred in June, which had found that Thurrock had been creative during the pandemic and staff had received regular updates on guidance and advice. She added that teams were now starting to meet in-person, particularly when a new starter entered the team as it provided a chance for them to meet and get to know everyone.

The Assistant Director CSC and Early Help stated that throughout the height of the pandemic the team had continued to help children, and had mostly moved online, including all training and the monthly forum meetings. She added that during the height of lockdown, central government had lifted some duties required by social workers, but Thurrock had continued as business as usual for as much as possible. She stated that face to face meetings with foster carers were now beginning again, but felt that foster carers had adapted to using the technology well. She added that some children who had not been living at home had struggled as they could not have regular face to face contact with their families, but some older children and teenagers had enjoyed the video calls with their families as it meant they could talk to their families more regularly and fit these contact meetings around their lives. She explained that in May 2021, 129 contacts had been via video and 67 contacts had been in person. She explained that the team had also worked to help care leavers who had felt isolated during the pandemic, by providing them with laptops, Wi-Fi and bikes to maintain work and social contact. She added that some care leavers had also been affected by the reduction in Universal Credit payments and the rise in gas and electricity payments.

Councillor Anderson highlighted the rise in domestic violence incidents during the pandemic, and asked if these were reducing now lockdown measures had eased. He queried what Thurrock Council could do to reduce domestic violence in the borough. The Assistant Director CSC and Early Help replied that Thurrock worked closely with partners such as the Domestic Violence Board to look at trends in domestic violence, both within Thurrock and on a

national level. She stated that domestic violence rates had increased during COVID-19, but referral rates for children had decreased due to the closure of schools. She added that Thurrock had a specialist Domestic Violence Worker that worked with both men and women to create a safe environment for them, and worked with police to ensure children at risk of domestic violence were quickly assessed.

Councillor Kent stated that Children's Social Care had moved mostly online during the pandemic, and asked how this had impacted staff. The Assistant Director CSC and Early Help replied that some staff had caught COVID, and two staff remained off work due to long COVID. She explained that during the pandemic staff had worked on a rota basis and had supported each other. She clarified that all staff had access to the required PPE when appropriate, and had utilised creative ways of visiting children, such as meeting at the park. The Corporate Director Children's Services added that she had liaised with the Director of Public Health and ensured that social workers and foster carers were prioritised for their vaccines. She stated that once the vaccine resource base had increased, some schools, SEND pupils, and vulnerable staff were also prioritised for their vaccines. Councillor Kent thanked teachers and social workers at Thurrock Council for their hard work throughout the pandemic. He stated that schools had continued to teach and had remained open for the children of key workers, whilst moving teaching quickly and efficiently online. He commented that he had heard anecdotal evidence of older teenagers working better and having better learning outcomes whilst learning from home, and asked how the Department for Education would take forward the learning from the pandemic, and implement different modes of learning where appropriate. The Assistant Director Education and Skills replied that the Department for Education were currently undertaking research into learning experiences for children and looking at the positives and negatives of different types of learning modes. She stated that during the pandemic schools had worked together to help one another, and met with Thurrock Council weekly to discuss their needs and concerns. She added that any learning identified by the Department for Education would take some time to be agreed, but would utilise and implement those positive experiences in the future. Councillor Kent felt it was good to see laptops and Wi-Fi being provided to those families that needed it, but asked if families had received help with connection and data costs. He stated that prepaid Wi-Fi cards were available relatively cheaply, and asked if the Council had looked into this. The Assistant Director CSC and Early Help replied that these had been offered to care leavers when necessary. The Assistant Director Education and Skills added that school's had picked this up with the appropriate families and had worked with the Council to identify solutions, particularly with SEND children.

The Chair felt it was good to see Children's Social Care had returned to business as usual as soon as possible, and thanked the team and schools for their efforts throughout the pandemic. She stated that COVID-19 had been the biggest educational disruption since World War 2 and had affected different parts of the country in different ways, due to regional lockdowns. The Parent Governor Representative stated that it had been challenging to ensure all children maintained their learning during the pandemic, but schools had

provided both online and paper based materials as required. She explained that governors had met virtually either weekly or twice weekly during the height of the pandemic and schools had continued to work hard. She thanked all the teachers for their hard work during this difficult time, and for their continued work now as COVID cases in schools continued to rise. She stated that COVID in schools created a domino effect, which often meant the majority of the class and the teacher could be self-isolating at any one time.

The Parent Governor Representative explained that primary schools were now seeing their EYFS cohort struggle with phonics, particularly those children for whom English was a second language. She stated that schools were now offering early morning tutoring and breakfast clubs, but there was some reluctance to take this offer up by parents. The Assistant Director Education and Skills thanked governors for their hard work during the pandemic, and felt that the whole schools system had done well to adapt. The Church of England Representative stated that she was a teacher who had changed jobs during lockdown. She felt that different schools were using different methods of teaching, but all were providing laptops and SIM cards where necessary.

The Chair questioned what support was being offered to Year 11 pupils who would be sitting their GCSEs next summer. The Assistant Director Education and Skills replied that schools were offering additional booster classes and catch up sessions. She stated that although the government had confirmed that exams would be held next summer, this was dependent on COVID levels, and this uncertainty could cause anxiety for some students. The Youth Cabinet Representative stated that a vaccination bus had been stationed outside of her college, which she had found useful and a positive experience. She added that lots of her friends and teachers had attended the vaccination bus to get their vaccine, although she felt advertisement of the bus and the vaccine rollout as a whole had been poor on social media. Councillor Thandi questioned how vaccines were being delivered in schools. The Parent Governor Representative replied that the schools immunisation scheme were delivering the programme.

RESOLVED: That the Committee:

1. Supported the work that schools are undertaking to enable children and young people to experience positive learning opportunities.

2. Recognised the work of children's social care to improve outcomes for children and meet their needs as we have entered into the recovery phase of COVID-19.

38. Pupil Place Plan Update (2021-2025)

The Service Manager Education and Support Service introduced the report and stated that it was produced for Committee on an annual basis and provided the key highlights of the PPP. She explained that birth rates had hit a record high in 2015/16, but had reduced by 7% in 2020, which could leave

surplus places in schools in five years' time. She stated that the PPP allowed the team to think strategically about capital works, such as where to place bulge classes, and which schools to work with for additional places. She stated that all schools were consulted on the PPP and when finding additional placements as required. The Service Manager Education and Support Service stated that the team currently had concerns regarding capacity in Stanford-le-Hope and Corringham, which she hoped would be rectified by Abbots Hall Primary becoming a two form entry. She stated that the team also had concern regarding capacity in Tilbury and talks were underway with both the Gateway Free School and Tilbury Pioneer Academy regarding additional placements. She stated that the team considered the PPP regularly at monthly meetings and were currently considering Year 1 placements following the high birth rates in 2015/16. She mentioned that there had been over 4000 in-year applications received for primary and secondary school placements, due to families moving to England, moving to Thurrock, or requesting different school placements. She explained that approximately 2000 places had been offered, and explained that not all 4000 requests had been offered a place due to factors such as parents not moving to Thurrock after they had requested a place. She explained that both Thames Park Academy and Orsett Heath Academy were currently in temporary locations, with Thames Park Academy scheduled to move to their permanent location in September 2022 and Orsett Heath Academy scheduled to move to their permanent location in Easter 2023. She explained that Treetops School had recently accepted additional classroom space, so would be moving to their permanent location in Easter 2022.

The Parent Governor Representative asked if bulge classes could be removed once they were added. The Service Manager Education and Support Service replied that bulge classes were applied to a particular cohort, and the bulge class would remain until that cohort had left the school. The Parent Governor Representative then asked if some schools were oversubscribed. The Service Manager Education and Support Service replied that those areas marked in red in the report were areas of concern, such as Stanford-le-Hope, Corringham and Tilbury, but these were monitored monthly alongside in-year applications. Councillor Kent welcomed the report as he felt the PPP led to proactive decisions and was comprehensive. He questioned point 3 on page 77 of the agenda, and queried if parents had a choice in school places, and if not, if the report could be reflected to amend this. The Assistant Director Education and Skills replied that parents could only express a preference rather than having a choice and this would be removed.

RESOLVED: That the Committee:

- 1. Reviewed the PPP and noted the areas within Thurrock that will require additional school places going forward.**

The Service Manager Education and Support Service left the meeting at 8.27pm.

39. SEND Inspection Outcome - Written Statement of Action Update

The Assistant Director Education and Skills introduced the report and stated that Ofsted would be revisiting Thurrock in relation to the Written Statement of Action (WSOA) in December, and would be on site between 13 and 15 December. She explained that all relevant documents would be submitted to Ofsted by their deadline, which would identify how actions within the WSOA had been addressed. She explained that Thurrock needed to show sufficient progress on the recommendations, and the key document would be the Impact Statement which had come before Committee. She added that Ofsted had previously identified action regarding governance and scrutiny, and felt that the Committee had taken their role of scrutiny seriously. She mentioned that this a revisit rather than a re-inspection, and Ofsted would be talking to schools, health colleagues, young people, parents, Directors and Senior Managers. She summarised and stated that the RAG rated document provided for Committee would form part of the evidence submitted to Ofsted.

The Corporate Director Children's Services added that the team had worked hard since the last inspection two years ago, and had worked collaboratively with colleagues from health and education. She stated that there was a large agenda for Ofsted's onsite visit, although some meetings with parents and young people would be held virtually. She explained that both the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and Ofsted would be visiting and their findings would be presented in a progress letter next year. The Assistant Director Education and Skills added that as part of the local offer, SEND children had been asked to design a mascot, which had been judged by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee. She felt that the team had been undertaking lots of engagement work and the evidence of this would be presented to Ofsted.

The Chair thanked officers for the report and wished them luck on the re-visit. She added that choosing a winner for the mascot competition had been difficult, and thanked everyone for their hard work on the entries. She felt glad to see that the majority of recommendations were now blue or green RAG rated. Councillor Anderson echoed the Chair's comments and thanked the team for their hard work, as well as wishing them luck for the upcoming visit.

RESOLVED: That the Committee:

1. Scrutinised the work that has been undertaken during the period outlined in the report and offered support and challenge.

40. Update on the Progress of the Recommendations in the Annual Public Health Report of Serious Youth Violence and Vulnerability

The Director of Public Health joined the meeting at 8.45pm.

The Director of Public Health introduced the report and stated that it had been completed by the previous Director of Public Health in 2019/20 and since then the Violence and Vulnerability Board (VVB), which had been set up in the summer, had begun working to take forward the recommendations. She

stated that the VVB had held two meetings so far, which had established governance processes and the future work programme, ensuring that they added value and did not duplicate work. She stated that direct action had been undertaken with the perpetrators and victims of youth violence, and areas of further work had been identified, such as exclusions. She stated that the report had identified four areas of work, and the VVB had added a fifth area regarding raising awareness. She explained that the four areas were:

1. Surveillance, which was mainly undertaken by the police, and information was then pulled together by the public health team. There had been some progress in this area, but the team had had difficulty in recruiting an experienced data analyst. A data analyst had now started this week who would develop a predictive model of violence.
2. Primary prevention, which improved protective factors and reduced risk through work with parents and schools.
3. Secondary prevention, which included youth outreach work in schools.
4. Tertiary prevention, which reduced harm and took action on gangs.

The Director of Public Health stated that a number of projects were being developed and provided a comprehensive programme.

The Chair thanked the Director of Public Health for the comprehensive report and asked for clarification regarding the levels of prevention. The Director of Public Health explained that the levels of prevention were developed using a public health model, and gave the example in a public health setting that primary prevention considered increasing physical activity; secondary prevention considered treatment by the GP; and tertiary prevention considered treatment at hospital to prevent further adverse outcomes. The Assistant Director Education and Skills added that the VVB had links across Essex and had received funding for the Olive Academy to undertake outreach work for children at risk of permanent exclusion. She stated that this funding, and other funding avenues, were a direct result of the report.

Councillor Kent stated that this approach had first been undertaken in Glasgow, which had seen long term investment. He queried if the Council were committed to the approach in the long term, and if any tangible outcomes had been seen so far. The Director of Public Health replied that the Council was committed to the long term approach, and would start to see the benefits in five to ten years. She stated that the Council were also committed to ensuring the entire system and a range of organisations remained committed. She stated that lots of work was ongoing, for example the multiagency operation to tackle gangs in Thurrock, so it was difficult to determine which outcomes were the result of the report or other operations. She stated that the team were now starting to use intelligence to prevent youth violence, and were also utilising a holistic approach.

The Chair stated that in December 2020 two knife point muggings had occurred in Chadwell St Mary, and she had found it difficult to follow these up with the police. She felt that residents had been frightened by these incidents and asked what the team were doing to prevent stabbings and muggings by

young people. The Director of Public Health replied that the Health and Wellbeing Strategy that was being developed considered the fear of crime and violence. She explained that actions could be taken by the police that could not be disclosed to the public for confidentiality reasons, but that it was important to ensure good communication channels with residents, and this had been one of the recommendations from the report. The Corporate Director Children's Services added that the Community Safety Partnership worked closely with the police on anti-social behaviour, and residents could contact them at any time. The Youth Cabinet Representative stated that the Youth Cabinet had been working with the police to build a relationship, but felt that the police did not have a large enough social media presence. She stated that the Youth Cabinet were producing a YouTube video with the police regarding crime, which would be shown to young people.

RESOLVED: That the Committee:

1. Assured themselves of the progress of the recommendations in the Annual Public Health Report of Serious Youth Violence and Vulnerability.

2. Contributed to the delivery of the agenda, ensuring that communities have a voice within the agenda.

3. Agreed an annual report on the work of the Violence and Vulnerability Board be brought to the Committee.

41. Work Programme

The Work Programme was amended as follows:

1. An update on the Ofsted re-visit be provided to the Committee.
2. The report on the impact of COVID-19 would be removed.
3. The report on Inspire would be provided to the Committee as a briefing note.

The meeting finished at 9.08 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact Democratic Services at Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk