

## CHILDREN'S SELECT COMMITTEE

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### DRAFT MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN'S SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 5 SEPTEMBER 2017 AT THE KENNET ROOM - COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE BA14 8JN.

#### Present:

Cllr Mary Champion, Cllr Anna Cuthbert, Cllr Andrew Davis, Cllr Christopher Devine, Cllr Mary Douglas, Cllr Sue Evans, Cllr Jon Hubbard, Cllr Chris Hurst, Cllr Jacqui Lay, Cllr Hayley Spencer, Ms J Hughes, Miss Sarah Busby and Mr J Hawkins

#### Also Present:

Cllr Laura Mayes and Cllr Philip Whalley.

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#### 45 **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr David Halik (who was substituted by Cllr James Sheppard), Cllr Deborah Halik (who was substituted by Cllr Peter Fuller), Dr Mike Thompson, Miss Tracy Cornelius, Mr Paul Daniel and James Wilkins.

#### 46 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

##### **Resolved:**

**To approve and sign the minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 June 2017 as a correct record.**

#### 47 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

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

The Chairman made the following announcements:-

- a) **Mr Terence Herbert** On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman warmly congratulated Mr Terence Herbert on his appointment as Corporate Director, Children & Education with effect from 14 August 2017.

- b) **Mrs Carolyn Godfrey** The Chairman reported that this would be the last meeting that Carolyn Godfrey would be attending as a Corporate Director prior to her retirement in October 2017. Together with members of the Committee, he warmly thanked her for her outstanding assistance and support for the work of this Committee and wished her every success and happiness in her future endeavours.
- c) **Cabinet Items** At its meeting on 3 July 2017, Cabinet considered the following items:-
- Children's Services Integration Project
  - Adoption Agency Annual Update 2017
  - Wiltshire CSE Action Plan Update
- d) **Outdoor Education Item** For information the item originally scheduled on the Children's Select Committee's forward work programme for this meeting regarding Outdoor Education in Wiltshire had been removed. This item had been referred to the Traded Services for Schools Rapid Scrutiny Exercise for in depth consideration. The outcomes of this and their meeting would be received by this Committee at its next meeting in the form of their rapid scrutiny report.

#### 49 **Public Participation**

No questions had been received from councillors or members of the public.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. He then explained the rules of public participation and procedure to be followed at the meeting.

#### 50 **Activities of the Wiltshire Assembly of Youth (WAY)**

The Committee received a report which set out a summary of activities of the Wiltshire Assembly of Youth (WAY) during the period April to August 2017.

It was noted that WAY organised its activities according to its Agenda for Action which had the following five priorities:-

- **Priority 1: Improve emotional wellbeing and mental health support for young people** Attention was drawn to the design of an illustrative interpretation of this service to assist children, families and professionals in understanding the service. A film clip had also been prepared for the home page of the [www.onyourmind.org.uk](http://www.onyourmind.org.uk) website. Members requested that copies of the briefing slides previously received by this committee on Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services be recirculated.
- **Priority 2: Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education** No specific work had been carried out in this period, although the link with the Healthy Schools had been maintained and young people would be

reviewing the next round of applications for Healthy School status as well as having input into a review of the standards.

- **Priority 3: Bullying** WAY members were working on the development of podcasts which would be available during Anti-Bullying Week 2017 (13-17 November). These recordings would consider specific themes and areas of concern, such as racial discrimination and the causes of bullying. It was suggested that area boards be informed of initiatives that were being planned in their areas. . It was also requested that the WAY update to 31 October include an update on anti-bullying.
- **Priority 4: Public Transport** It was noted that WAY had been holding discussions about transport issues and that they had a number of issues as set out in the report. WAY intended to raise the profile of these issues and arrangements were being made for representatives to attend a meeting with bus company representatives in Salisbury. WAY also intended to convey its concerns to members of the Youth Safeguarding Board at a joint meeting later in this month. A progress report would be made back to this Committee in due course.

**Resolved:**

**To note the update from the Wiltshire Assembly of Youth (WAY).**

## 51 **Provision of SEND Schools**

Consideration was given to a report by the Associate Director, Commissioning, Performance Management & School Effectiveness which provided an overview of the work undertaken since January 2016 on securing appropriate and adequate special school provision for children and young people in Wiltshire.

It was the Local Authority's responsibility for commissioning and securing provision to meet children and young people's identified special education needs. The Local Authority would also retain responsibility for the oversight and management of the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools grant.

It was reported that since January 2016 the Local Authority had been discussing with Wiltshire's special schools the potential to re-shape provision, including the possibility of creating a Multi-Academy Trust involving a number of special schools working together so as to improve the services provided for children and young adults with special educational needs and disabilities. Special schools had put forward a proposal to form a Special School Collaborative Partnership (SSCP) with potential for each special school to join a Multi-Academy Trust that also included mainstream schools.

Following receipt of a number of concerns, a joint steering group had been set up supported by a specialist SEN consultant, with agreed terms of reference. This work had now concluded and steering group's terms of reference and the key findings and summary of the consultant's findings were noted as set out in the report, which were categorised into short term, medium term and long term recommendations.

Representations were received from the following special school representatives, copies of which are appended to these minutes:-

Paul Cooke, Chair of Governors, Downland School  
Annette Foster, Chair of Governors, Rowdeford School  
Tanya Rhodes, Bursar, Downland School

In particular, the school representatives drew attention to Para 14 of the report which stated that education outcomes were not as good as they should be for children with SEN. The representatives went on to say that:-

- (a) This claim was unsubstantiated and strongly refuted by the Special Schools. The statement included all SEN students across the entire county including those in mainstream schools, and
- (b) In relation to the SS outcomes this was misleading. With the exception of Springfield Academy, who were rated RI at their last inspection and recent section 8 monitoring visit, all other Special Schools were rated by Ofsted as Good or Outstanding.

In response, the Committee was informed that there was certainly no criticism of individual schools which were recognised as providing an excellent service but rather that there was insufficient provision for children and young adults with SEN in Wiltshire, particularly in the south of the County.

It was noted that a number of Special Needs placements were made outside the County which were very costly to the Council. There was also considerable pressure on the Council's transport budget due to SEN travel costs. Some children had to travel significant distances to attend a school that could meet their individual educational needs.

The Committee recognised that options for reducing spend were limited, with long lead in times and it was noted that the current pattern of provision to meet the changing needs of children and young adults needed careful attention as this was driving unaffordable cost into the system. However, there was no easy way to deal with the projected overspend.

During discussion it was suggested that the various proposals set out in the short and medium term categories of the Wood Report should be prioritised but Members considered that receipt of the complete consultant's report was needed before any meaningful discussion could take place.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services stated that the provision of services for SEND children was continually being monitored and there was a need to be receptive as the situation changed.

**Resolved:**

**To recommend to the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee that a task and finish group be formed to consider the future provision of education for SEND children and young people, specifically working with Officers, Schools and Parents to identify and consider the challenges outlined in the Wood Report and other associated documents.**

**52 DfE Changes - Update from Department for Education -**

The Committee received an update from Carolyn Godfrey, Corporate Director, on developments relating to children's services arising from the Department for Education from June to August 2017 as follows:-

- 30 hours free childcare: LA and early years provider guide
- Future arrangements for school and high needs funding
- Preventing bullying in schools
- Exclusions guidance
- Publication of EBacc consultation response
- Academies update
- SEND provision capital funding for pupils with EHC plans
- Further education area reviews
- The Children and Social Work Act 2017 – new local safeguarding and child death review arrangements

Reference was made to the excellent GCSE results in Wiltshire and the Committee extended its congratulations to both the students and the teaching staff on achieving these results. Members also looked forward to receiving a detailed analysis once these results had been fully validated at a future meeting.

**Resolved:**

**To note the update provided.**

**53 Task Group Updates**

The Chairman reported that a discussion had been held between the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, the Portfolio Holder for Children's Safeguarding and Martin Davis, Head of Service Care and Placement, regarding the potential for scrutiny input on children transitioning out of care

from which it was being recommended that a one-off piece of rapid scrutiny should take place in October to consider the draft covenant.

**Resolved:**

**To hold a rapid scrutiny exercise on Children in Care Leavers in October 2017.**

**54 Forward Work Programme**

The Committee received a document showing the relevant items from the Overview & Scrutiny Forward Work Programme.

The Chairman reported that meetings between the Chairman, Vice Chairman and the Executive had been arranged to take place as follows:-

- 21 September 2017 to consider safeguarding issues
- 18 October 2017 to consider education and skills issues
- 19 October 2017 to consider issues relating to disabled children and adults

He asked members of the Committee to let himself, the Vice Chairman or the Senior Scrutiny Officer have any questions on these topics which could be discussed and considered at these meetings.

**Resolved:**

**To note the Forward Work Programme for this Committee.**

**55 Date of Next Meeting**

**Resolved:**

**To note that the next scheduled meeting is due to be held on Tuesday 31 October 2017 at County Hall, Trowbridge, starting at 10.30am.**

**56 Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items of business.

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 am - 12.50 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Roger Bishton, of Democratic Services, direct line 01225 713035, e-mail [roger.bishton@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:roger.bishton@wiltshire.gov.uk)

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