

Wiltshire Council

Early Years Reference Group

Minutes of a meeting held on Friday 11 January 2018 at County Hall, Trowbridge

1.0 Welcome and Introductions

Jane Boulton, Angela Brennan, Mark Cawley, Rosemary Collard, Jennifer Harvey (minutes), Clare MacKinnon, John Proctor (chair), Marie Taylor, Fiona Webb, Judith Westcott

2.0 Apologies

Angela Everett, Ashley Harris, Sarah Hawkins, Juliette Heal, Nicola McCann, Russ Martin, Natalia Reyner, Trudy Surman

3.0 Minutes of last meeting held on 16 November 2018

The minutes of the meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record.

4.0 Matters arising

Outstanding action from last meeting - Have the changes to 30 hour code consent form been made? *The telephone number field is being removed from the checker system, so there is now no need to update the consent form.*

ACTION: AB to look into and JH to add note to the minutes.

5.0 Early Years and Childcare team update (additional agenda item)

Judith Westcott (JW), Acting Head of Commissioning & Joint Planning introduced herself to the group and requested their assistance in developing a new Early Years strategy. The overall Early Years team was split up several years ago, and different teams were spread across the organisation. The team now needs a service review with a focus on what the future of Early Years is as well as defining a new and relevant strategy.

JW would like EYRG to be involved in the discussions around how this can be achieved. All elements of Early Years are to be examined including Early Years Advisory Teachers, Early Years Inclusion Officers, Safeguarding, District Specialist Centres etc. JW stated that the new strategy needs to reflect the changing structure of the Early Years sector and business requirements. JW will be tasking AB as Strategy Lead on the Reference Group

JW also confirmed that other reviews are taking place, including a review of Children's Centres and the Childcare team.

There was general group discussion about the current Early Years structure and concerns. MT asked if there was a current (or old) strategy being used? AB/JW confirmed that the strategy would be an old version.

5.0 2018/2019 budget monitoring and 2019/2020 budget

19/20 budget

MT circulated a report to the group. DfE guidance and allocations have now been received and Early Years funding has not increased. DAF has increased slightly, whereas EYPP funding has remained same.

MC had noticed a few minor errors in MT's report, namely the hourly rate mentioned. The current rate is £4.16, so a proposed rate increase would be £4.18.

There was group discussion on point 13 regarding high needs block funding pressures. JP brought up that Schools Forum had previously agreed that inclusion costs were to come from High Needs, not Early Years surplus. Central Government has made available to Local Authorities a further £350 million for High Needs, school staff have received pay awards and had a 1% increase in funding, whereas Early Years providers have received nothing.

MT discussed the table in point 16 with the group which is based on a slight reduction in take up (as detailed in point 12), and 2 hourly rates are profiled. MT is proposing Budget A – hourly rate of £4.18. MT stated that whilst it is a risk to increase the hourly rate, there is enough contingency in place to cover any funding recovery from the DfE.

The group asked MT to reprofile the hourly rate in the event that the High Needs difference isn't sought from Early Years. MT did say that any difference would be added to the surplus. The group then asked that if this surplus were to be distributed, then what would the hourly rate be. MT asked for caution as an increase in the rate for 19/20 could mean a reduction in funding the following year.

ACTION: MT to reprofile hourly rates in the event that the High Needs difference isn't sought from Early Years and share with the group before Schools Forum meeting on Thursday 18th January.

18/19 budget monitoring

MT circulated a report to the group MT report. MC pointed out a minor error in the hourly rate mentioned; the proposed increased hourly rate is £4.18. MT is proposing to vire the surplus over to High Needs.

JP said a compromise would be redistribute the 18/19 surplus to the hourly rate as a one off, but he will be challenging the High Needs virement as the next Schools Forum meeting

There was general discussion on provider costs pressures getting increasingly worse and the number of Early Years provider closures, meaning sufficiency will become even more of an issue.

ACTION: MT and AB to discuss further as to where an Early Years strategic response is coming from/should come from.

6.0 Childcare sufficiency

AB stated that there are a number of different issues for provider closures not just funding or staffing issues. The Childcare team are planning ahead and supporting areas where possible.

AB went through each community area and informed the group of number of closures, concerns and expansion plans.

ACTION: None

7.0 Confirmed dates for future meetings

Date	Day	Time	Venue
10 May 2019	Friday	10.00 – 12.00	Lacock Room, County Hall, Trowbridge, BA14 8JN

8.0 Any other business

Childcare Sufficiency report – This will be happening in April so providers will be asked to complete a survey requesting information.

AB will be working with Claire Shipley (Early Intervention team) to develop and submit a grant application to support some settings/schools in the most disadvantaged areas of the county. The aim is to improve outcomes for children with SEN&D. A decision on applications is expected in Summer 2019.

AB asked the group if they were all aware of the changes to the inspection framework. There will be more information on this in the coming weeks/months.

MC asked about Council IT system/portal progress. JH informed the group that testing is currently taking place, with an aim to having a live system in July 2019.

ACTION: JH to ask if NM can give an update on the Liquidlogic system and EY module at the May 2019 meeting.