

Wiltshire Council

Children's Select Committee

06 July 2022

Task Group and Rapid Scrutiny Update

Purpose

To provide an update on any recent work from task groups and rapid scrutiny exercises linked to the Children's Select Committee (CSC), as well as information on any upcoming overview and scrutiny (OS) activities for the committee.

Updates from active Task Groups

1. Children's Select Committee – Standing Task Group

Supporting officer: Marie Gondlach

Membership

Cllr Helen Belcher
John Hawkins
Cllr Jon Hubbard (Chair)
Cllr Jacqui Lay
Cllr Caroline Thomas
Cllr Jo Trigg

Terms of Reference

At its 6 July 2021 meeting, the Children's Select Committee resolved to establish this Standing Task Group:

1. To undertake detailed reviews of the regular reports that come within the Children's Select Committee's remit and to bring updates to the Committee on its work;
2. To present any key issues, findings and recommendations to the Children's Select Committee, and / or other relevant committees, for discussion, endorsement or further scrutiny where appropriate;
3. To invite all members and substitutes of Children's Select Committee to its meetings, should they wish to attend and participate.

Recent activity

The Standing Task Group met on Monday 20 June to consider the mid-year Traded Services report.

The main decision from that meeting was for the Standing Task Group to consider the draft of the report scheduled to come to Children's Select Committee to ensure that it provides the information the committee requires to perform effective scrutiny, including:

- Identifying trends (year on year),
- RAG (red, amber, green) rating,
- Targets to measure progress against.

3. Fostering Excellence Task Group

Supporting officer: Marie Gondlach

Membership

Cllr Liz Alstrom
Cllr Chuck Berry (Chair)
Cllr Ruth Hopkinson
Cllr Sam Pearce-Kearney
Cllr Mark Verbinnen

It should be noted that Cllr Jack Oatley was appointed to the task group but had to resign at the second meeting as he was no longer able to attend the scheduled meetings of the task group.

Terms of Reference

For the Fostering Excellence task group to:

1. review how the Fostering Excellence project has been / is / will be addressing the issues identified in the report presented to CSC on 10 March 2020:
 - a. Increase initial enquiries and therefore assessments and approvals of Wiltshire Council foster carers;
 - b. Improve the retention of Wiltshire approved foster carers;
 - c. Increase the percentage of Wiltshire children in foster care cared for by Wiltshire Council foster carers (at the time 46%);
 - d. Maintain high occupancy rates of Wiltshire approved foster carers (at the time 80%+).
2. identify how the effectiveness of the Fostering Excellence project will be measured and reported, and be satisfied that this is robust and delivering improvements whilst achieving the savings identified in the budget 2022-23;
3. identify how the benefits of being placed with Wiltshire Council foster carers (who are receiving enhanced training / support as part of Fostering Excellence) for children in care will be measured and reported, and be satisfied that this is robust;

4. identify best practice across the country for recruitment and retention of in-house foster carers.

Recent activity

The task group has not met since the last meeting of the committee.

The work of the task group has been impacted by unavoidable pressures, including ill-health and job changes.

The task group had hoped to complete its work and present its final report to this meeting, but it would like to take the opportunity of having more time to complete its work and would propose to report at the November meeting (as there would be limited opportunities for meetings between now and the September meeting).

Proposals

1. **To note the update on task group and rapid scrutiny activities provided.**

Report authors:

Marie Gondlach, Senior Scrutiny Officer, 01225 713 597, E:
marie.gondlach@wiltshire.gov.uk