

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 9 JUNE 2011 AT COUNCIL CHAMBER, MONKTON PARK, CHIPPENHAM.

Present:

Cllr Paul Darby, Cllr Andrew Davis, Cllr Peter Fuller, Mr J Hawkins, Cllr Jon Hubbard, Rev. A Kemp, King, Cllr Jacqui Lay (Vice Chairman), Cllr Bill Moss, Cllr Helen Osborn, Mr N Owen, Cllr Carole Soden (Chairman) and Dr M Thompson

Also Present:

Cllr Anthony Trotman

160. **Election of Chairman**

Cllr Carol Soden was appointed Chairman for the ensuing year.

161. **Election of Vice Chairman**

Cllr Jacqui Lay was appointed Vice-Chairman for the ensuing year.

162. **Apologies and substitutions**

Apologies received from the following Committee members: Cllrs Christine Crisp, Mary Douglas, Cllr Mark Packard, Cllr Russell Hawker and Rosheen Ryan.

Apologies were also received from Cllrs Sheila Parker, Richard Clewer, Lionel Grundy, and Carolyn Godfrey.

163. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 17 March 2011 were approved and signed as a correct record.

164. **Declarations of Interests**

There were no declarations of interest.

165. Chairman's Announcements

1. Children's Congenital Heart Services in England.

On 19th May the Health and Adult Social Care (HASC) Select Committee resolved to undertake a rapid scrutiny exercise to respond to a consultation on proposals to reduce the number of hospitals providing children's heart surgery in England. This review of paediatric cardiac surgical services began in 2008 following concerns around the sustainability of the service configuration.

As this service area fell within the remit of both the Health & Adult Social Care (HASC), and Children's Services Select Committees, the HASC Chairman, Cllr Mike Hewitt, requested a representative from the Children's Services Select Committee take part in the exercise.

Cllr Bill Moss, having expressed interest as the Children's Services Select Committee representative, was duly appointed.

Resolved:

That Cllr Bill Moss be appointed as the Children's Services Select Committee representative on the Rapid Scrutiny Exercise to be undertaken on Children's Congenital Heart Services.

2. 13-19 Commissioning Strategy

The Council's 13-19 Commissioning Strategy was out for consultation until 5 August 2011, with Cabinet scheduled to make final decisions at its meeting on 13th September. The consultation document contained four suggestions on how Youth Services, which faced a budget reduction of £600k next year, would go forward.

Members of the Committee discussed the benefits of formulating a response prior to completion of the consultation exercise taking into consideration the likelihood of significant changes to youth services.

It was agreed that a rapid scrutiny group would meet to form a response to the consultation document, with any conclusions of this being referred to the Select Committee for endorsement on 22nd July. It was likely a further rapid scrutiny exercise would be required after the Committee's July meeting to consider the final consultation results and subsequent proposals to Cabinet.

Cllrs Osborn, Lay and Hubbard and Chris King expressed their interest in taking part in the Exercise.

Resolved:

- 1) **The Committee would undertake a rapid scrutiny exercise to respond to the 13-19 Commissioning Strategy consultation document, with the results of the exercise being presented to the Committee at its meeting in July.**
- 2) **The Committee would agree arrangements for scrutiny of the 13-19 Commissioning Strategy consultation results and subsequent proposals at its meeting in July.**

166. **Public Participation and Councillors Questions**

There was no public participation.

167. **Coalition Update - May 2011**

Sharon Davis, Service Director for Children & Families Social Care attended to provide the Committee with an update report on Coalition Government proposals for children's services and education.

It was confirmed that the national Child Poverty Strategy had been published in April, with an independent review of Capital Schools Expenditure and Schools Funding also recently published.

The independent Munro report on Child Protection was currently being considered by government with a response expected in July. The Service Director would provide the Committee with an update at its next meeting.

In relation to Improving Underperforming Schools, the Council had produced a plan to address those schools falling below the new floor standards, which had been submitted to the Department for consideration. Referenced within the plan was those schools falling below the benchmark and those receiving unsuccessful Ofsted inspections.

A more detailed consultation on schools funding was expected to be issued during the Summer period and therefore the Committee would include schools funding on its agenda for consideration in July 2011.

Resolved:

- 1) **To note the update provided.**
- 2) **That Schools Funding would be added to the Committee's Forward Work Programme for consideration in July 2011.**

168. **Budget & Performance update**

An edited version of the latest Cabinet budget monitoring and performance papers, containing only information pertinent to DCE, was circulated electronically on 7 June 2011 and hard copies provided at the meeting.

The Committee welcomed the improvement in Key Stage 2 and 4 figures but requested clearer guidance on the performance indicators to be used by the authority following the removal of certain national indicator sets by central government.

It was clarified that following the restructure of the Children and Families Social Care team in July 2010, the two previous duty teams subsequently merged to improve performance.

Resolved:

To note the latest budget and performance data provided.

169. **Update on the Strategic Direction of Small Schools**

The Head of School Improvement presented an update report in relation to the developments and progress made with the strategic direction of small schools, particularly in the primary phase.

It was reported that by working with schools the number of primary schools with less than 70 pupils had significantly reduced and work was ongoing to further support these schools at both a national and local policy level.

Further budgetary changes in relation to funding were expected. The Core Strategy showed the need for further housing, and thus school places, within Wiltshire. The authority was considering the southern part of the Core Strategy at present but would, as the core strategy unfolded, consider the rest of Wiltshire in turn.

It was clarified that home education was monitored by the Education and Welfare Service and officers would circulate figures showing the number of children and young people being home educated following the meeting.

Members also noted that the report did not contain details of the Council's changing transport policy, which would have an impact on schools transport. It was clarified that once further details were known further information could be provided to the Committee.

Resolved:

To note the update provided.

170. **Consultation on School Funding Reform**

The Head of Finance and Schools Funding presented a joint response from Wiltshire Council and Schools Forum to two consultations on school funding reform published by the Department for Education (DfE).

Following publication of the Government White Paper, *The Importance of Teaching*, two consultations had been issued; *A consultation on school funding reform: Rationale and Principles* and *Academies pre-16 funding: Options for the 2012/13 Academic Year*.

Work had been undertaken with colleagues within Schools Forum to formulate the responses circulated. A more detailed consultation on schools funding was expected later in the year and it was hoped these could be presented to the Committee for consideration at its meeting in July.

The consultation on academy funding had been undertaken to consider a new funding model, with the present system being complex and insufficiently transparent. The Government had stated a clear principal that schools should be neither advantaged nor disadvantaged by converting to academy status.

Of the 29 secondary schools within Wiltshire approximately half were likely to have achieved academy status by September 2011 and 6 primary schools were known to be considering academy status at present. Members noted that some local authorities may soon have no maintained secondary schools. With this in mind, how the authority organised itself to support both academies and maintained schools was discussed. An umbrella body called The Wiltshire Learning Trust had been set-up to show what could be offered to schools. Members felt that a report on the future direction of support for all schools would be of benefit.

A simplified funding stream already in place had resulted in some schools receiving additional funding this year. However, it was clarified that from January 2012 schools would be held to account on how funding received had been spent.

Wellington School had been identified as an excellent academy school although members requested that the minutes reflect the success of Melksham Oak School which had also undergone significant improvements whilst remaining a maintained school.

Resolved:

- 1) **To note the responses to the consultations on schools funding reform.**

- 2) To receive a report on the next phase of school funding consultations once they are available.
- 3) To receive a report on the arrangements being put in place by the Council to support both academies and maintained schools in the future.

171. **Review of Special Educational Needs (SEN) Provision - Update on Implementation**

The Manager for Inclusion presented a progress report in relation to the implementation of proposals following the Review of SEN Provision 2009/10.

This report followed a rapid scrutiny exercise last year and an update in November 2010 on how individual transition plans for those young people affected by the Review were progressing. Progress

The delegation process had been completed and fully implemented from 1 April 2011 and included primary schools funding for up to 10 hours of additional support to cover all areas of need.

The second stage of the review was now underway in relation to sports services with activity levels being considered.

The third element of the SEN review related to specialist learning centres (now known as Resources Bases) all of which would have service level agreements and a new funding formula in place for 1st September 2011. In the meantime work continued on transitional arrangements for pupils all of which had an agreed plan in place.

It was clarified that all schools had taken a very positive role in the transition and had worked well with the local authority to ensure a smooth transfer.

The Chairman thanked officers for a clear and valuable report.

Resolved:

To note the progress made with establishing individual plans for each pupil affected by changes to Specialist Learning Centres.

172. **Task Group Update**

The Chairman introduced the standing update report on Task Group activity for the Committee's consideration and comment. The Task Group Chairmen provided the following additional information:

Further Education in the Salisbury Area Task Group

The Task Group was scheduled to meet with the Laverstock schools on 10th June, and further meetings had been scheduled with the Wessex Partnership of Secondary Schools and Trafalgar School at Downton.

Major Contracts Task Group

No meetings had taken place since the Committee's previous meeting.

Placements for Looked After Children Task Group

The next meeting of the Group would take place on 8th July.

Green Paper – Children & Young People with SEN and Disabilities

The planned rapid scrutiny exercise was now considered unnecessary due to scrutiny involvement in a workshop to co-ordinate a joint Wiltshire response.

The draft response from this workshop was expected to be ready for comment on 23 June 2011 and would be circulated to members who could submit further comment if necessary.

Special Schools and Post-16 Task Group

Following the scoping meeting of the Group held on 12 May 2011 no further meetings have taken place whilst further news is awaited on the national SEN picture.

Whilst further news was awaited, the Service Director for Schools and Learning would request that the Head of Targeted Learner and Support contact the Chairman of the Group to discuss the direction the Task Group should take whilst further information was awaited.

Resolved:

To note the updates provided.

173. **Scrutiny of Procurement & Commissioning**

The Senior Scrutiny Officer presented a report proposing a revised approach to the scrutiny of procurement and commissioning.

The report had already been approved by both the Overview and Scrutiny Liaison Board in addition to the three other Select Committees.

The proposal was to abolish the existing major contracts task groups and create a single Procurement and Commissioning Task Group under the Organisation and Resources Select Committee. This would scrutinise the delivery of the overall procurement and commissioning programme on a quarterly basis with specific reporting on the performance of major contracts to continue by exception.

To retain continuity of knowledge and a link to the individual select committees the Committee was asked to appoint a member from the Major Contracts Task Group to the new Procurement and Commissioning Task Group.

Members expressed concern that the scrutiny that had been undertaken within the Major Contracts Task Group had been valuable and that the knowledge gained by the existing members could be lost should the Task Group be disbanded.

Although the concept of establishing the new Task Group was supported, there was concern that the close monitoring undertaken by the Major Contracts Task Group would simply end.

With this in mind, it was proposed that the Procurement and Commissioning Task Group should be established but that the Committee would also retain its Major Contracts Task Group.

Cllrs Bill Moss and Jon Hubbard both expressed an interest as the Committee's representatives on the Procurement and Commissioning Task Group.

Resolved:

That the Committee:

- 1) Notes the considerations given to this issue by the O&S Liaison Board.**
- 2) Agrees with the creation of a Procurement and Commissioning Task Group and nominates Cllr Jon Hubbard and Cllr Bill Moss as representatives on the Task Group.**
- 3) Notes the extensive work undertaken by the Children's Services Major Contracts Task Group and recognises the added value that results from members with specialist interest and skills scrutinising contracts relevant to children's services.**
- 4) Recommends retaining the Children's Services Major Contracts Task Group to continue scrutiny of existing contracts, many of which will not receive the same level of scrutiny from the new Procurement and Commissioning Task Group.**

174. **Forward Work Programme**

The Chairman presented the Forward Work Programme for consideration and comment by the Committee.

Resolved:

To note the Forward Work Programme.

175. **Date of Next Meeting**

Friday 22 July 2011.

Cllr Jon Hubbard, Cllr Peter Fuller and Mrs Alice Kemp provided apologies for the next meeting.

176. **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items for consideration.

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 am - 1.20 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Sharon Smith, of Democratic & Members' Services, direct line (01225) 718378, e-mail sharonl.smith@wiltshire.gov.uk

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