

## CHILDREN'S SELECT COMMITTEE

---

### **DRAFT MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN'S SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 22 MARCH 2016 AT KENNET ROOM - COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE BA14 8JN.**

#### **Present:**

Cllr Jon Hubbard (Chairman), Cllr Jacqui Lay (Vice Chairman), Cllr Pat Aves, Cllr Mary Champion, Cllr Sue Evans, Cllr Chris Hurst, Cllr Simon Jacobs, Cllr Bill Moss, Cllr Ricky Rogers, Cllr Philip Whalley, Rev Alice Kemp, Dr M Thompson, Miss Sarah Busby, Miss Tracy Cornelius, Mr J Hawkins, Miss Cathy Shahrokni and Cllr Stewart Dobson (Substitute)

#### **Also Present:**

Cllr Richard Gamble, Cllr Simon Killane and Cllr Laura Mayes.

---

#### **16 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Mary Douglas (who was substituted by Cllr Stewart Dobson), Cllr Helen Osborn, Cllr James Sheppard and James Wilkins.

#### **17 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

##### **Resolved:**

**To confirm and sign the minutes of the previous meeting held on 26 January 2016.**

#### **18 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

#### **19 Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman made the following announcements:

- **Cabinet items**

On 15 March 2016 Cabinet considered the following item:

### **Wiltshire Council CSE Action Plan Update (Non-Key Decision)**

Cabinet was informed of progress made on implementing the Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Action Plan.

On 17 May 2016 Cabinet would consider the following item:

### **Wiltshire's Obesity Strategy 2016-2020 (Non-Key Decision)**

Cabinet would be requested to approve the Strategy following public consultation before final submission to the Health and Wellbeing Board in June 2016.

- **Special meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee – Draft 2016/17 Budget**

A Special Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee Meeting was held on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> February to consider the Draft 2016/17 Budget. The Chair and Vice Chair of the Children's Select Committee were in attendance to discuss the following budget issues relevant to Children's Services:

- Increased pressures, such as Special Guardianship Orders
- Dependency on agency workers
- A commitment to reducing the number of looked after children in residential or out of county care
- Local Youth Network funding
- Pressures on Special Educational Needs and Early Years grant funding.

The draft budget had since been received by Cabinet on 9 February and Full Council on 23 February and had been adopted.

- **Amendment on PAUSE Project**

At the Budget Meeting of Full Council on 23 February 2016 those present considered the recommended budget amendment to investment in the 'Pause' initiative.

Pause was a national initiative to reduce the demand and cost placed on Children's Services by working with families who had experienced, or were at risk, of repeated removal of children from their care in an attempt to break that cycle. A national pilot scheme was currently running.

A proposed amendment to invest £0.125m into the initiative was accepted at Full Council. The initiative was considered a worthwhile investment and members were informed the cost would get the initiative running in Wiltshire. Feasibility studies with other local authorities had shown

significant savings in following years as a result of the project's successful implementation.

A pre-meeting information briefing on this PAUSE initiative would be arranged for this Committee when the plan was in place.

- **Cllr Helen Osborn**

The Committee was informed that Cllr Helen Osborn was currently in hospital. Members and officers joined the Chairman in extending their best wishes for a speedy recovery and looked forward to welcoming her back to meetings of this Committee.

## 20 **Public Participation**

There were no members of the public present or councillors' questions.

## 21 **Activities of the Wiltshire Assembly of Youth 2015**

Consideration was given to an update report from James Wilkins, Children's & Young People's representative on this Committee. Unfortunately, James was unwell at present and his report was presented by Judy Edwards, Senior Commissioning Officer, Joint Commissioning.

The report presented a summary of the activities of the Wiltshire Assembly of Youth during the period February 2015 to January 2016.

It was noted that WAY members had attended a residential conference at Oxenwood and had developed an Agenda for Action, which included the following three main areas of focus:

- (1) Improve emotional wellbeing and mental health support for young people.
- (2) Work with schools to improve Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education.
- (3) Work together to beat bullying.

Members noted that the UK Youth Parliament (UKYP) had set mental health as one of its priorities for 2016 and this was supported by WAY who had promoted a UKYP campaign – *Mind the Gap*. WAY and UKYP members had met local MPs to discuss support for mental health campaigns both nationally and locally.

WAY had expressed continued concern about the quality and relevance of PSHE teaching in schools. During 2015, WAY had designed and planned a conference for teachers and pupils on involving children and young

people in planning PSHE curricula together, to ensure that need was met. Unfortunately, this was postponed due to a low take-up. Officers were now working with WAY to consider the development of short video messages from WAY to governors and teachers, to be screened during PHSE and Healthy Schools' training.

WAY had also requested a presentation at the conference from Wiltshire Police on the law regarding sexting, this being an area WAY felt was not well covered in PSHE. WAY would now include this as an area of focus for video messaging.

Members expressed their disappointment that the conference had to be postponed and felt that every effort should be made to encourage teachers and pupils to jointly plan PSHE curricula in schools. They also considered that the problems associated with sexting should remain a high priority.

The Chairman referred to the need to ensure that there was mental health counselling available for young people and explained the facilities that were being provided in Melksham. These had proved to be very well taken up and enquiries were being received from young people in Warminster and Westbury. It was suggested that this needed to be referred to the Wiltshire Association of Secondary and Special School Headteachers (WASSH) for their views and Sarah Busby agreed to report back to this Committee on the outcome.

It was also noted that WAY had written to WASSH to express their concern at the careers advice offered post 16, particularly in relation to the promotion of opportunities within apprenticeships and a response was awaited. Sarah Busby stated that it was not always possible to offer advice to young people in this respect as apprenticeships were not always available locally. She agreed to report back the views of WASSH in due course. Cathy Shahrokni, Further Education representative, explained that Wiltshire College had been trying to match vacancies with demand and had been arranging Apprenticeship Evenings with parents and employers to take this forward.

**Resolved:**

- (1) To note the contents of the report.**
- (2) To receive in due course the views of WASSH regarding mental health counselling for young people and careers advice offered post 16.**

## 22 **Final Report of the Obesity and Child Poverty Task Group**

Consideration was given to a report which presented the conclusions and recommendations of the Obesity and Child Poverty Task Group.

Cllr Pat Aves, Chairman of the Task Group, introduced the report and explained that in 2015 this Committee and the Health Select Committee had agreed to undertake a joint exercise looking at the links between child poverty and obesity.

The Task Group was established to explore and help develop the work already underway in Wiltshire communities to tackle obesity amongst children living in poverty and their families. This included looking at healthy lifestyle initiatives in Wiltshire, the Wiltshire Obesity Strategy, and the potential contribution from Wiltshire's public services towards tackling obesity amongst children in poverty and their parents.

The Health Select Committee considered the report at its meeting on 8 March 2016 and concurred with the conclusions and recommendations of the Task Group, subject to endorsement by this Committee, and referred it to the relevant Cabinet Members and Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) for response.

During the subsequent discussion, in which the Committee considered the conclusions and recommendations of the Task Group, it was pointed out that obesity was a complex issue and it had been shown that to some extent there were links with poverty due to many calorific foods being generally less costly to purchase. There was a need to identify the availability cheap healthy foods and also to encourage an uptake in free school meals which were generally nutritious. It was noted that only about 1% of packed lunches met national nutritious standards and Members were pleased to be informed that a significant number of schools were now teaching cooking skills and nutrition.

Members considered that there was a need to find ways of educating families into providing and cooking good and nutritious food and recognised that, although a significant start had been made by the introduction of food nutrition and cooking at schools, there was still much to do in educating and encouraging families in this provision at home.

### **Resolved:**

**To endorse the conclusions and recommendations of the Task Group and refer them to the relevant parties for response.**

## 23 **Draft Annual Report of Corporate Parenting Panel**

The Committee received a report which formed the annual update to Council from the Corporate Parenting Panel (CPP) in accordance with the Council's

Constitution. It was noted that the Corporate Parenting Panel had been established to secure Councillor involvement and commitment throughout the Council to deliver better outcomes for children and young people who were looked after.

It was noted that the Corporate Parenting Panel was suggesting the following key improvements:-

Para 5.5 of report –

A review of the Corporate Parenting Terms of Reference had been completed and a new strategy incorporating these had been agreed by CPP on 26 January 2016.

Para 5.6 of report –

Corporate Parents, working with the Children in Care Council had agreed seven new strategic priorities. To ensure that strategic oversight and critical challenge was effective, each member of the Panel would have a lead role in relation to delivery of one strategic priority.

Para 5.7 of report –

The Panel would now report its work through the Wiltshire Council Children's Select Committee. Following each meeting the Chairperson would send a copy of the Panel minutes to the Chairman of Children's Select Committee. On a six monthly basis the Panel Chairperson would prepare a report for Chairman of the Children's Select Committee, addressing progress against each of the seven strategic priorities. In addition to this the Chairperson of the Corporate Parenting Panel would present an annual report to Full Council which would be shared with the Children's Select Committee prior to submission.

Para 6.1 of report –

The Corporate Parenting Panel had struggled in recent years to fully evidence its impact. The introduction of a Corporate Parenting Strategy, with new strategic priorities and an enhanced reporting system should help to ensure greater impact in the future.

During discussion, it was noted that the Virtual Head had stated that attendance for the first half of the academic year had achieved 94.8% which was an improvement on 93% overall for the academic year 2014/15. Although absence was currently slightly higher than the final reported figure for 2014, it was dominated by authorised absence, details of which were known and effective actions were being taken.

Members were also reassured to note that no Looked after Children were being educated in a school rated Inadequate either in Wiltshire or placed in another authority. Furthermore, there were fewer children placed out of county with other authorities and those that were so placed tended to be more challenging with complex needs which were not always catered for in Wiltshire.

**Resolved:**

**To note the Draft Annual Report and ratify the improvements required to strengthen Corporate Parenting in Wiltshire.**

**24 Rapid Scrutiny - Children's Community Services Rapid Scrutiny Exercise**

The Chairman reminded the Committee that on 21 July 2015 this Committee received an update on Children's Community Health Services when it had been noted that children's community health services in Wiltshire were being retendered with a single provider rather than by five organisations. A decision had been made by Cabinet on 13 October 2015 regarding the preferred provider.

On 13 October 2015 this Committee resolved for a rapid scrutiny exercise to take place in January 2016 addressing the opportunity available to contribute to how the services included in the contract would be monitored.

Cllr Chris Hurst, as Rapid Scrutiny Lead Member, reported that concerns about a number of issues had been raised including:

- a. The importance of ensuring that the new provider's IT system used to collect data was at a level where it was able to handle future capacity prior to its implementation on 1 April 2016. It was stressed that it was important to get the system fit for use before its implementation to ensure data was collected in the most effective way.
- b. It was also important to ensure that the IT system could be used to create a single master profile for each user/child, so that all data collected by individual services for the user could be attributed to that single profile.
- c. Much of the data collected from 1 April 2016 would not provide clear or meaningful results until 1 April 2017 onwards. As such it was important to ensure that the right data sets were agreed by April 2016 to ensure these results would be received in the future. It was also important to provide a clear commentary alongside data to provide an explanation on this data.
- d. There were difficulties in comparing many data sets with other local authorities, as not all were performing measurements based on the same KPI's. Challenges were also noted regarding the ability to break down current data into local areas within Wiltshire due to a lack of data quantities and the way data is currently collected. The Task Group noted that a new system could contain better functionality for data collection, such as post code searching.
- e. In the case that a service, for example portage, would be delivered by different providers in the county the Task Group queried whether the data measuring methods would be common across all providers.

After some discussion,

**Resolved:**

**To endorse the recommendations and send to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services for consideration and response.**

**25 Executive Response to the Interim report of the Safeguarding Children and Young People Task Group**

The Chairman reminded Members that the Safeguarding Children & Young People Task Group had been established by this Committee in May 2012 and the current terms of reference had been endorsed by this Committee on 28 March 2013.

An interim report had been submitted to this Committee on 28 January 2016 outlining progress and further work to be completed before the Task Group was disbanded. A number of recommendations from the report were endorsed by this Committee and submitted to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services for response, these being detailed in the report together with the Cabinet Member's responses.

Cllr Laura Mayes, Cabinet Member, explained that the Safeguarding Children and Young People Panel, of which she was Chairman, would be taking over the ongoing work of this Task Group and she would ensure that checks were made on available data and performances.

**Resolved:**

**To note the executive response to the Interim report of the Safeguarding Children and Young People Task Group.**

**26 DfE Changes - Update from Department for Education - January to March 2016**

The Committee received an update from Carolyn Godfrey, Corporate Director, on developments relating to children's services arising from the Department for Education from January to March 2016 as follows:-

- Childcare and early years survey of parents: 2014 to 2015
- Schools national funding formula consultations
- High needs funding reform consultation
- Identifying children who are missing education
- Alternative provision
- Academies update
- 16 to 19 study programmes



- Post-16 education and training institutions: area based reviews
- SEND: guide for health professionals
- Special Guardianship: amended regulations relating to assessment
- Review of the Youth Justice System
- The lives of young carers in England
- Children and young people's mental health: peer support
- Fact sheet on mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation
- Statutory definition of child sexual exploitation
- Consultation on re-inspection of inadequate local authorities

**Resolved:**

- (1) To note the update provided.**
- (2) To arrange an additional meeting of this Committee to consider the Government's White Paper "Educational Excellence Everywhere".**

**27 Task Group Update**

The Committee received an update on the activity of the following Task Groups:

- Child Exploitation (CSE) Task Group
- Obesity and Child Poverty Task Group (Joint with Health Select Committee)
- Positive Leisure Time Activities for Young People Task Group (reconvened)
- Safeguarding Children and Young People Task Group
- School Improvement Strategy Task Group

**Resolved:**

- (1) To note the update on task group activity provided.**
- (2) To endorse the terms of reference for the School Improvement Strategy Task Group, as set out in the report.**

**28 Forward Work Programme**

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

**Resolved:**

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

29 **Date of Next Meeting**

**Resolved:**

- (1) **To note that the next scheduled meeting of this Committee would be held on Tuesday 31 May 2016, at County Hall, Trowbridge, starting at 10.30am.**
- (2) **To request the officers to look into the possibility of rescheduling both the May and July meetings of this Committee so that they do not take place during school holidays.**

30 **Urgent Items**

There were no items of urgent business.

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 am - 12.45 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)

Press enquiries to Communications, direct line (01225) 713114/713115