

CHILDREN'S SELECT COMMITTEE

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN'S SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 19 JULY 2016 AT KENNET ROOM, COUNTY HALL.

Present:

Cllr Jon Hubbard (Chairman), Cllr Jacqui Lay (Vice Chairman), Cllr Sue Evans, Cllr Atiqul Hoque, Cllr Ricky Rogers, Cllr Philip Whalley, Rev Alice Kemp, Mr J Hawkins, Miss Cathy Shahrokni, Cllr Chuck Berry (Substitute) and Cllr Bill Moss (Substitute)

Also Present:

Cllr Laura Mayes and Cllr Richard Gamble

57 **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Pat Aves, Cllr Mary Douglas (who was substituted by Cllr Chuck Berry), Cllr Chris Hurst, Cllr Simon Jacobs (who was substituted by Cllr Bill Moss), Cllr Helen Osborn, Dr Mike Thompson, Mrs Lynne Swainston, Miss Sarah Busby, Miss Tracy Cornelius and James Wilkins.

58 **Minutes of the Previous Meetings**

Resolved:

To confirm and sign the minutes of the meetings held on 31 May and 21 June 2016 as a correct record.

59 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

60 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman made the following announcements:-

Cabinet Items

On 19 July 2016 Cabinet considered the following items:-

- **CSE Action Plan Update**
- **Wiltshire Council Adoption Service: 2015-16 Year End Report**
- **Wiltshire's Obesity Strategy 2016-2020**

On 13 September 2016 Cabinet would consider the following item:-

- **Care Leavers Report**

61 **Public Participation**

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

62 **Wiltshire Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report**

Following on from the pre-meeting information briefing the Committee received the draft annual report of the Wiltshire Safeguarding Children Board.

Mark Gurrey, Independent Chair of the Board, introduced the report and explained that the Wiltshire Safeguarding Children Board supported the national campaign organised by the Department for Education to encourage people to report any concern, no matter how small, of child abuse and neglect.

Mark Gurrey reported that the Executive of the Safeguarding Children Board was due to meet the following day when it would be asked to sign off the annual report. He drew attention to the following two external inspections of core services which had been carried out during the past year and, whilst noting that there was still a fair amount of room for improvement in certain areas, it was pleasing to note that there the Inspectors recognised the considerable improvements that had been made.

The two external inspections were as follows:-

- **Ofsted Single Inspection Framework** which found services Requiring Improvement but with some good elements. There were 11 recommendations with a requirement for an action plan to be in place by December 2016. However, the inspection found that no children were being left at risk of harm and that improvement plans were good and highlighted a strong culture of learning. A number of strengths were noted, including child protection enquiries being "timely and robust", effective information sharing and outcomes for the majority of children in care were improving through good quality education and leisure provision.

Inspectors had found that decisions taken in the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) were appropriate. Immediate risk to children received a prompt and effective response. The way in which child

protection strategy meetings were organised was an area of real strength. The Inspectors also noted that the re-referral rate had reduced.

Areas for continued improvement included ensuring that all families and children who needed early help were supported; social care practice was at a consistently good standard and took account of diversity; targeting the recruitment of adopters for children with complex needs and ensuring that care leavers were provided with a copy of their health histories.

- **HMIC Inspection of Vulnerabilities** In October 2015, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies conducted a nationwide inspection in relation to Vulnerability, visiting all Police Forces. The vulnerability inspection looked at how forces responded to vulnerability across a wide range of themes. There was a focus on Missing and Absent, Domestic Abuse and Child Sexual Exploitation. Wiltshire Police had been given a 'requires improvement' grading in relation to the response to Missing and Absent, namely the risk assessment process and the administration of investigations. It was noted that significant work had been conducted since the review to address these areas of concern, with additional training, additional resources and a new IT system to administer incidents and investigations. There would be a further inspection later in the year when it was hoped to demonstrate the significant improvements that had been made.

Mark Gurrey further explained that there would probably be some significant changes to the format of future annual reports following publication of the Alan Wood Report following a review of the role and functions of local safeguarding children boards. The report was fairly critical of the present arrangements for local safeguarding boards and considered that there should be:

- a more effective statutory framework to focus the arrangements on child protection and to ensure key agencies collaborate to deliver more effective services; and
- a move away from an over prescriptive system to one that encouraged and authorised local areas to determine how they organised themselves to improve outcomes for children and meet the requirements of the new framework.

Mark Gurrey emphasised that the criticisms set out in the Wood Report were of a general nature and were not specific to the running of the Wiltshire Board.

During discussion, Members enquired as to how many people involved in safeguarding had been adequately trained. It was explained that it was the responsibility of the various partners to determine the training needs of

their staff. The Chairman requested that future reports should provide information on numbers of staff who were trained and also how many were still to be trained. The Associate Director, Commissioning, Performance & School Effectiveness reported that this information would be available in future.

Resolved:

- 1. To note the contents of the draft Wiltshire Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report.**
- 2. To request that the Wiltshire Safeguarding Children Board refer back to this Committee any substantial changes made to the draft Report.**

63 Adoptions West Update

The Committee received an update regarding progress with Adoptions West and had before them the report which was considered by Cabinet at its meeting earlier that day when the outline proposals for the development of a Regional Adoption Agency were endorsed and public engagement agreed.

The Committee was reminded that the development of Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) proposals was part of the national regional adoption agenda. Through collaboration with five other local authorities and the voluntary sector, Wiltshire Council had embarked upon developing a RAA which was currently known as Adoption West. An expression of interest was submitted in September 2015 to the Department for Education and funding was secured in November 2015. The funding had provided resources to support the project including project management, professional leadership and independent specialist legal, financial and technical advice.

The aims of the RAA were to:

- improve adopter recruitment and adoption support,
- speed up matching and improve the life chances of neglected children, and
- reduce costs.

It was noted that a range of operating models had been considered and a joint venture local authority owned entity had been chosen as the preferred option because it would allow for the deliverance of better outcomes for children, affording greater flexibility and independence to pursue innovation and enterprise.

It was planned to engage and gather feedback on outline proposals in order to develop a full business case for decision making by the end of 2016. This would

be followed by a period of workforce change processes, infrastructure set up and other implementation activity.

During discussion, members felt that a key area of concern regarding the new arrangements was scrutiny and it was considered most important that consideration was given to developing an adequate facility.

More details would be provided to the Children's Select Committee once financial details had been agreed through meetings with Finance and Human Resources.

Resolved:

To note the update on progress with Adoptions West.

64 Final Report of the Positive Leisure Time Activities for Young People Task Group

Consideration was given to a report which presented the conclusions and recommendations of the Positive Leisure Time Activities for Young People Task Group.

Cllr Jon Hubbard as Chairman of the Task Group, introduced the report and explained that it had been established in June 2015 to review the impact of changes made to the community-led youth service model implemented in October 2014.

During discussion, the Chairman considered that the staffing issues should be excluded from the recommendations and referred to the community areas for consideration and decision. Cllr Laura Mayes stated that the Youth Service had been moved from Children's Services and now resided with Community Services. Accordingly, she would refer the Task Group's recommendations to Cllr John Thomson, Cabinet Member for Communities, Campuses, Area Boards and Broadband.

Resolved:

To endorse the final report of the Positive Leisure Time Activities for Young People Task Group and refer to the relevant Cabinet Member for executive response.

65 Activities of the Wiltshire Assembly of Youth (WAY)

The Committee received an update on the activities of the WAY which was presented by Judy Edwards, Senior Commissioning Officer on behalf of James Wilkins, the Committee's Children & Young People's representative. The update

consisted of a report which set out a summary of the activities of WAY during the period March to June 2016, together with a video recording by way of illustration.

It was noted that WAY's agenda for action consisted of the following:

- Improve emotional wellbeing and mental health support for young people.
- Work with schools to improve Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education.
- Work together to beat bullying.
- Address the issues facing young people in relation to public transport.
- Tackle Wiltshire's environmental issues.

Judy Edwards reported that there was an expectation that WAY would have links with the Local Youth Network (LYN) and it was hoped that there would be cross boundary working.

Members warmly supported the plans to work with schools to improve PSHE but recognised that a key factor was to encourage headteachers to support and encourage this in their individual schools.

Resolved:

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

66 **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 May to July 2016 as follows:-

- The Queen's Speech
- Wraparound and holiday childcare
- Keeping children safe in education
- Schools causing concern
- Alternative provision
- Academies update
- Putting children first: our vision for children's social care
- Wood review of local safeguarding children boards
- Children's residential care in England
- Monitoring visits and re-inspection arrangements
- Announcements in social care inspection and regulation

The Associate Director, Operational Children's Services, reported that regarding the Government's reform programme for children's social care in England over

the next five years, the focus would be on integrating early years and social care and further information on this would be provided in due course.

Resolved:

To note the update provided.

67 Task Group Updates

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

- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Task Group
- Safeguarding Children and Young People Task Group
- School Improvement Strategy Task Group

Resolved:

To note the update on task group activity provided.

68 Forward Work Programme and Outcomes from Chair/Vice-Chair/Executive Discussions Regarding the Overview and Scrutiny 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.

69 Date of Next Meeting

Resolved:

To note that the next scheduled meeting of this Committee would be held on Tuesday 11 October 2016 at County Hall, Trowbridge, starting at 2.30pm.

70 Urgent Items

There were no items of urgent business.

71 Exclusion of the Public

Resolved:

To agree that in accordance with section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the public from the meeting for the business specified in Minute No. 72 because it is likely that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act and the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information to the public.

72 Children's Services Case Management Systems

The Committee received an update on the progress of Children's Services Case Management Systems.

Members were reminded that Wiltshire's Children's Services provided a range of services to support and safeguard children and families. Case management systems facilitated this by supporting front line workers in a wide range of services, providing a recording base, workflow tools and functionality, enabling reporting for local use and national returns.

Wiltshire's Children's Services currently used five case management systems with contracts due to expire in the next 3 years. Following current EU rules, the Council was required to go to market to identify and procure the most suitable case management systems via a compliant procurement process. The aim would be to cover all requirements for Children's Services with a minimum number of suppliers.

The Committee received the confidential report and appendices which were considered by the Cabinet Capital Assets Committee on 19 July prior to this meeting when it was agreed to release from the ICT capital budget, an additional amount, as specified in the part II appendix, over the next 3 years to research, procure and implement replacement Children's Services support solutions.

The Cabinet Capital Assets Committee had further agreed that the revenue element was funded from either grant fund bids or if that was unsuccessful the Children's Service. When the procurement process was complete and the providers selected, a full evaluation would be carried out, to assess the requirements around staffing levels in both Children's Social Care and ICT. Future staffing levels and savings would depend on the future system selected.

The Select Committee considered that there should be some scrutiny involvement in this process.

Resolved:

- (1) To note the update on progress with Children's Services Case Management Systems.**
- (2) To arrange a rapid scrutiny exercise after the contract had been signed at the end of the year.**

(Duration of meeting: 2.30 - 4.45 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

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