

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE

TERMS OF REFERENCE

- (1) To review and scrutinise any matter relating to the planning, provision and operation of children's services in Wiltshire
- (2) To consider any matter relating to children's services affecting the area or its inhabitants, including matters referred by area boards and Councillor Call for Action, and exercise the right to call in, for reconsideration, decisions made but not yet implemented by the cabinet
- (3) To make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which the function of education and children's social care services are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness
- (4) To commission groups of members to carry out scrutiny activities and reviews relevant to the annual work programme's priorities
- (5) To carry out strategic oversight of the scrutiny activities the committee commissions, including task groups and rapid response exercises
- (6) To establish and publish an annual work programme that ensures a thorough but focussed overview of the plans, strategies, policies and decisions of children's services in Wiltshire, including those provided and commissioned by the council, and those delivered by partners – using the Wiltshire children's trust board as a key focus
- (7) To foster and encourage an inclusive, structured, non-partisan and non-adversarial approach to overview and scrutiny, which is reliant on evidence rather than anecdote
- (8) To meet at least four times a year to consider reports from task groups and other commissioned individuals/groups, and to receive reports on the assessment/inspection of services within the department for children & education
- (9) To contribute to policy development within children's services
- (10) To use the cabinet forward work plan to identify and provide appropriate contributions to key and other decisions relating to children's services
- (11) To hold the relevant cabinet member/s and officers with delegated responsibility for children's services to account
- (12) To require cabinet members and officers to answer questions raised by the committee, its task groups and other groups or individuals commissioned to carry out its work
- (13) To hold children's services' partners to account, particularly those listed within the local area agreement and local agreement for Wiltshire

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- (14) To work with partners and other public and private sector agencies to identify issues of concern and work together to improve services for children
- (15) To invite and receive evidence from external witnesses, including service users and providers
- (16) To make reports and recommendations to the council, cabinet, department for children & education, or partners on any matter reviewed or scrutinised
- (17) To manage and coordinate the training and development of elected members and other representatives involved in the overview and scrutiny of children's services
- (18) To develop appropriate overview and scrutiny operational protocols, including:
 - (a) involving and engaging with children, young people and their families
 - (b) joint working with the health overview and scrutiny committee on public health matters as they impact on children and young people
 - (c) maintaining effective communication with the Corporate Parenting Group to facilitate joint working where appropriate
 - (d) maintaining and further developing constructive relations with the executive, especially between the relevant cabinet member/s and the chairman and vice chairman of the committee
 - (e) working and involving partners in scrutiny activities
 - (f) developing a productive interface with the area boards, including support for local task groups and links through which Councillor Calls for Action and petition appeal requests can be channelled