

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 26 JANUARY 2012 AT COMMITTEE ROOMS A-C, MONKTON PARK, CHIPPENHAM.

Present:

Cox, Cramp, Cllr Christine Crisp, Cllr Paul Darby, Cllr Andrew Davis, Cllr Peter Davis, Cllr Mary Douglas, Cllr Peter Fuller, Cllr Lionel Grundy OBE, Mr J Hawkins, Rev. A Kemp, Cllr Jacqui Lay (Vice Chairman), Cllr Bill Moss, Cllr Helen Osborn, Mr N Owen, Powell, Cllr Carole Soden (Chairman) and Dr M Thompson

Also Present:

Cllr Trevor Carbin, Cllr Lionel Grundy OBE, Cllr Laura Mayes

1. **Apologies and substitutions**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Mark Griffith, Cllr Jon Hubbard and Mrs Rosheen Ryan.

Carolyn Godfrey also sent her apologies.

2. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

Resolved:

To confirm and sign the minutes of the previous meeting held on 24th November 2011.

3. **Declarations of Interests**

There were no declarations of interest.

4. **Chairman's Announcements**

a) **Future venues for the Children's Services Select Committee meetings**

It was agreed that future meetings would be held at the Monkton Park offices until the County Hall refurbishment had been carried out.

b) Special Joint Budget Scrutiny

The Special Joint Scrutiny meeting would take place on Thursday 9th February to consider the Cabinet's budget proposals for the next financial year. The meeting would commence at 10.00am and take place at Trowbridge Civic Hall. All Councillors were encouraged to attend.

Cabinet would then meet on 15 February and the final budget would be considered by Full Council on 28 February.

5. **Public Participation and Councillors Questions**

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

6. **Coalition Update**

Carolyn Godfrey, Corporate Director, provided an update on the Coalition Government's latest proposals for children's services and education. Lynda Cox, Head of Performance Management & Co-ordination, presented the report.

- Free Early Years education would be extended to more disadvantaged two-year-olds and parents would be able to access the free entitlement more flexibly. This followed the Government's commitment to extend 15 hours of free early education to disadvantaged two-year-olds from September 2013. In Wiltshire, the extended provision would apply to 700 two-year-olds in 2013 and 1,400 in 2014.
- Ofqual had confirmed reforms to GCSEs from September 2012. Students would once again be marked on the accuracy of their spelling, punctuation and use of grammar in key subjects at GCSE. The reforms also effectively ended modular GCSEs, with the intention of ending the culture of re-sits.
- 'Building Engagement, Building Futures' set out the Government's strategy to improve the opportunities for young people. It included five priorities for action:
 - I. Raising attainment in school and beyond
 - II. Helping local partners to provide services that support all young people to achieve full participation for 16-17 year-olds by 2015
 - III. Encouraging employers to recruit young people, offering more high-quality apprenticeships and work experience places.
 - IV. Giving young people the personalised support they need to progress.
 - V. Putting in place a new Youth Contract to help get young people learning or earning.

Members requested a report at a future meeting detailing the implications of the Raising of the Participation Age (RPA) for Wiltshire.

- Almost £450 million would be made available in a Government drive to improve the lives of 120,000 'troubled families'. The Government would offer local authorities up to 40 per cent of the cost of dealing with these families on a payment-by-results basis. The new programme would fund a national network of Troubled Family 'Trouble-Shooters', appointed by local councils to oversee the programme of action in their area. By the government definition, Wiltshire would have around 500 'troubled families'. In Wiltshire the programme was to be called 'complex families'.

Resolved:

1. **To note the contents of the report.**
2. **To request that a report be brought to a future meeting detailing the implications of the Raising of the Participation Age (RPA) for Wiltshire.**

7. **Budget Monitoring**

The Committee received a condensed version of the Revenue Budget Monitoring report presented to Cabinet on 13 December 2011. This had been edited to contain only information pertinent to children and education.

It was noted that pressures continued in the Leaving Care service and against the budget for unaccompanied asylum seeking children. Members requested details of the numbers and nationalities of unaccompanied asylum seeking children in Wiltshire.

There was no performance report this month.

Resolved:

To note the contents of the report.

8. **OFSTED Rating of Children's Services 2011**

A report was received from Carolyn Godfrey, Corporate Director, providing the results of Ofsted's 2011 assessment of children's services in Wiltshire.

Stephanie Denovan, Service Director for Schools and Learning, introduced the report and answered members' questions.

- The Wiltshire rating was "Performs well", as it had been in 2010.

- Improving contact, referral and assessment arrangements for children in need and children who may be in need of protection was identified as an area requiring improvement. The unannounced inspection of social care in 2011 highlighted that three areas for development remained unresolved from the 2010 inspection. An inspection action plan had been put in place, incorporating the outstanding areas identified from 2010 and those from 2011, which is actively being worked through and reviewed on a regular basis.
- A piece of research had been commissioned from Overbeck research to further develop the Council's "front door" services and promote earlier intervention with children and families through the development of a multi agency, referral and assessment duty suite.
- From next year, Ofsted would remove the 'satisfactory' grading.
- Members asked whether it was a concern that the three Wiltshire children's centres inspected were judged only to be 'satisfactory', one year after the management of Wiltshire's thirty centres had been tendered to four providers. It was reported that the assessed centres were judged to have been satisfactory with good features and that the Council had robust monitoring procedures for children's centres in place.

Resolved:

To note the contents of the report and Ofsted's assessment of children's services in Wiltshire as 'Performing well'.

9. Pupil Performance in Public Tests and Examinations 2011

A report was received from Carolyn Godfrey, Corporate Director, providing an overview of Wiltshire school pupils' performance in 2011 and comparing Wiltshire's attainment with national expectations.

Julie Cathcart, Head of School Improvement, presented the report and answered members' questions. National publication of the attainment for young people aged 16 and 18 had been delayed until the day of the meeting, so a report containing these results was tabled. The results were summarised as follows:

- The percentage of children achieving statutory targets in the Foundation Stage Profile (FSP) was 1% above the 2008 and 2009 outcomes, but slightly below the 2010 figure.
- At Key Stage 1, the best ever outcomes were secured at level 2+ in reading, writing and mathematics, bringing all three key measures in line with or exceeding national figures.

- At Key Stage 2, results in English and Maths combined remained at 1% above the national average, 0.7% above statistical neighbours and represented a 7% improvement for Wiltshire since 2005. Key Stage 2 performance in English at level 4 remained in line with statistical neighbours and performance in Maths showed a 1% improvement, exceeding statistical neighbour averages.
- It was reported that improvements at KS1 and KS2 were the result of developing good subject teaching plus improved pupil performance tracking and effective early intervention including one-to-one tuition and target programmes like the Every Child programmes.
- At Key Stage 3, English at both Level 5+ and Level 6+ had improved on 2010 outcomes and reflected the best ever results for Wiltshire.
- At Key Stage 4, Wiltshire secured its best ever performance in terms of pupils achieving 5+ GCSEs at A*-E (inc. GCSE English and maths). The Level 2 performance measure of 5+ GCSEs at A*-C figure rose by 4.2%.
- At Key Stage 5, Wiltshire's level 3 (GCE A level) average point score per examination increased to 215.9, in line with national figure.
- Data for vulnerable groups at KS4 and for post-16 provision was yet to be released and would be circulated at a later date.

The following points were discussed:

- The removal of modular GCSEs could lead to lower attainment figures in future years, making comparison with previous years' figures difficult. Members asked that future pupil performance reports remind members of changes to the attainment measures used.
- It was noted that community schools showed the lowest average attainment as compared with other school types. Future pupil performance reports could yield interesting comparisons between the attainment of academy schools and non-academy school types.
- If the local authority had concerns about an academy school's performance then its only formal avenue would be to approach Ofsted. However, in such cases the Council would always first offer the school support to help improve their performance.
- It was anticipated that most headteachers would continue to seek to offer their pupils a broad range of education, including vocational courses, despite the Government's increasing focus on academic qualifications.

Resolved:

- 1. To note that a further report containing the final pupil performance figures, including those relating to the English Baccalaureate, would be circulated to members once available;**
- 2. To congratulate all children and school staff whose key stages have shown an improvement in their attainment levels for 2010/11, as well as officers involved in implementing the effective improvement programmes detailed in the report.**

10. **Adult Education Review**

Simon Burke, Head of Business and Commercial Services, provided a verbal update on a review of the Council's informal adult learning provision.

On 17 January 2012, Cabinet had resolved that a review of the Council's informal adult learning provision be undertaken to ensure it was appropriate to the needs of Wiltshire communities and the expectations of the Department of Business Innovation and Skill (DBIS). Cabinet has also resolved to undertake a service-led consultation on the development of a service to facilitate provision at a local level instead of the focus being on a fixed place of delivery.

The Chairman asked that members focus on the issue of future delivery of adult education, rather than the issue of building closures. The latter would be the subject of an extraordinary meeting of the Organisation and Resources Select Committee on Monday 30th January following a call-in request from the Chairman of that Committee.

Discussion included the following points:

- Some members expressed concern at the closure of Urchfont Manor House, which provided a significant part of the Council's adult education provision. It was reported that the new service would have a greater focus on localised, community-based delivery, rather than on one residential provider.
- Wiltshire Council would work with providers (for example, Wiltshire College) to improve the variety of the adult educational offer. Libraries and campuses could potentially offer an increasing proportion of this kind of offer.
- The review was at an early stage and officers were meeting with partners to scope the review and agree the consultations to be undertaken.

Resolved:

To note the verbal report and to request that a written report containing further details of the review of adult education, including any consultation undertaken, be received in May.

11. **Forward Work Programme**

The Select Committee received the Forward Work Plan for consideration and comment.

Rev Kemp, SEN Parent Governor representative, reported that she would be submitting comments to Cabinet when it met to consider the item on Passenger Assistant Service on 20th March voicing her concerns about this issue. The Committee was scheduled to receive this item on 29th March.

Resolved:

1. **To note the Forward Work Plan.**
2. **To agree that the report providing an update on the Multi-Agency Thresholds document be deferred to the Committee's May meeting due to a busy March agenda.**

12. **Date of Next Meeting**

Resolved:

To note that the next meeting would take place at 10.30am on 29 March 2012 at Monkton Park, Chippenham.

13. **Urgent Items**

It was agreed that the Task Group update, which had been missed from the agenda, be taken as an urgent item. A written report was tabled.

Resolved:

To note the Task Group update.

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 am - 1.10 pm)

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