

CHILDREN'S SELECT COMMITTEE

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN'S SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 28 MARCH 2013 AT COMMITTEE ROOM A - COUNCIL OFFICES, MONKTON PARK, CHIPPENHAM SN15 1ER.

Present:

Cllr Andrew Davis, Cllr Peter Davis, Cllr Mary Douglas, Cllr Peter Fuller, Mr J Hawkins, Cllr Jon Hubbard, Rev. A Kemp, Cllr Jacqui Lay (Vice Chairman), Cllr Bill Moss, Mr N Owen, Cllr Sheila Parker, Cllr Carole Soden (Chairman) and Dr M Thompson

Also Present:

Cllr Lionel Grundy OBE, Cllr Laura Mayes and Cllr Jane Scott OBE

60 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Mark Griffiths, Cllr Russell Hawker, Kim Hunte, Kaylum House and Mrs Rosheen Ryan.

61 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

To confirm and sign the minutes of the previous meeting held on 29 November 2012 as a correct record.

62 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

63 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman made the following announcements:-

Councillor Induction The Chairman reported that a councillor induction programme to follow the local elections in May had been agreed by the Councillor Development Group.

The programme would include a number of events on the subject of Overview and Scrutiny. The main event would be a full day on Thursday 16 May in Trowbridge. Councillors will have been appointed to the overview and scrutiny

committees at Council on Tuesday 14 May, but this event would be extended to all councillors as most would engage in scrutiny in some form or another.

Experienced current members would be asked to help deliver some aspects of the day. It was hoped that a representative of CLT would be able to attend to emphasise the benefits to the Council of constructive overview and scrutiny.

Teacher representatives on the Committee The Chairman reported that currently this Committee included the following non-voting positions: Primary School Headteacher Representative and Secondary School Headteacher Representative.

It had been noticed that attendance for these positions since their introduction several years ago had been quite low. This was understandable as teachers were very busy people, perhaps increasingly so since the introduction of the academies programme. In May, the Committee would be reappointed by Council and this seemed a good time to review its membership.

Given this lack of attendance, it was suggested that the Committee remove these two positions from its membership. The chairmen of the primary and secondary headteacher associations would still receive copies of the agenda, so they would be aware of any issues of particular relevance to schools and could attend and speak if they wished. The current chairmen of the associations had both expressed their support for this idea.

Members of the Select Committee did not support this suggestion and, whilst acknowledging their heavy workloads, they considered that the input of both primary and secondary headteachers to be of importance to the working of this Select Committee. It was suggested that this matter be discussed by the new Committee at the next meeting with a view to exploring how best to engage headteachers in the work of this Select Committee.

64 Public Participation

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

65 Final Report of the Safeguarding Children and Young People Task Group

Members received the final report of the Safeguarding Children and Young People Task Group which set out its conclusions and recommendations. In introducing the item, the Chairman paid tribute to Cllr Jon Hubbard and the Task Group for the thorough and comprehensive work that had been carried out and thanked Henry Powell for his excellent report.

Cllr Jon Hubbard, Chairman of the Task Group made a presentation setting out the processes and methods which demonstrated how the Task Group had arrived at its recommendations. He introduced and welcomed Cllr Patricia Arculus from West Sussex County Council and a member of the Local Government Association's Peer Mentor Scheme, who had been appointed by the Task Group as an elected peer mentor to help with conducting the review. Cllr Arculus explained that members of the Task Group had approached the work with no preconceived ideas as to how the work should be carried out and much had been learnt during the process.

It was noted that the Task Group had been established by this Select Committee in May 2012 following an Ofsted inspection of Wiltshire in March 2012. The inspection had identified significant failings in the contribution made by local agencies in Wiltshire in ensuring that children and young people were properly safeguarded.

During his presentation, Cllr Hubbard explained that the Task Group had met on 16 occasions in addition to undertaking many other evidence-gathering activities. The report contained 41 recommendations which were grouped under the four work themes chosen by the Task Group at the beginning of its review, these being:-

- Communications
- Children's Social Care workforce
- Locality working
- Members and safeguarding

Cllr Jane Scott, as Lead Member for Safeguarding expressed her appreciation at the thoroughness and for the professional approach in which the Task Group had embarked upon its work in such a large and complex subject and also for the Task Group's decision to meet regularly with teams to work through the vast amount of available data.

Cllrs Lionel Grundy and Laura Mayes, as Cabinet Member & Portfolio Holder for Children's Services respectively, also paid tribute to the work of the Task Group and explained how lessons had been learned for the future, particularly the need to have a deeper understanding of the various processes involved in safeguarding.

After further discussion,

Resolved:

- 1. To endorse the Final Report of the Safeguarding Children and Young People Task Group.**

2. To refer the Task Group's recommendations to the appropriate executive bodies for response at the Committee's next meeting on 6 June 2013.
3. To recommend that on 6 June 2013 the successor Committee establishes a rapid scrutiny exercise to consider the outcomes of the recent Ofsted inspection of Wiltshire's adoption service.
4. To recommend that Cabinet includes the Final Report of the Safeguarding Children and Young People Task Group on its forward work programme at the earliest opportunity, and for it to be accompanied by a report updating on implementation of the Task Group's recommendations.

66 Pupil Performance in Public Tests and Examinations 2012

Consideration was given to a report by Carolyn Godfrey, Corporate Director, which provided an overview of pupil performance at the end of each key stage and which compared Wiltshire's attainment with national, south west and statistical neighbours for all phases.

Some Members explained that they experienced some difficulties in understanding some of the technicalities contained in the report and made a suggestion that future reports on this subject be shortened.

It was explained that much of the statistical information was contained in the appendices to the report and it was noted that, although some improvements had been made in Wiltshire in 2012, there were a number of strategies that had been put into place to further improve Wiltshire schools' performance figures. It was recognised that there was a need for parents to prepare their children for the start of school life which in many cases would significantly help with the advance of their children's education. It was noted that Ofsted would be taking these figures into account when making their inspections of schools.

After further discussion,

Resolved:

1. To note the pupil performance figures at the end of each key stage for 2012.
2. To request that future pupil performance reports include an executive summary in addition to the full report.
3. To request that future pupil performance reports include guidance on whether differences and changes are statistically significant.

4. **To request that the successor Committee considers receiving a ‘mid-term’ report highlighting the strategies in place for improving pupil performance.**

67 **Disabled Children and Adults (DCA) Pathfinder - Update**

Consideration was given to a report by Carolyn Godfrey, Corporate Director which provided an update on the development surrounding the green paper *Support and Aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability* and Wiltshire’s approach to this as a pathfinder.

It was noted that an initial report was considered by this Select Committee in September 2012 and it was requested that an update be provided in 12 months’ time. The update report now summarised the key learning to date and developments from the DfE in relation to the draft legislation.

In February 2013 DfE published a Children and Families Bill 2013 which responded to evidence from pre-legislative scrutiny. Part 3 of the Bill introduced a new single system from birth to 25 years for all children with SEN. It would:-

- Introduce new requirement for Local Authorities and health services to commission education, health and social care services jointly
- Require Local Authorities to publish a “local offer”
- Require better co-operation between the Local Authority and partners and requires Local Authorities to involve parents and young people in reviewing and developing provision
- Introduce a more streamlined single assessment process
- Replace statements and learning difficulty assessments with the single EHCP from 0-25 across education, health and social care (named “My Plan” in Wiltshire)
- Offer families a personal budget to extend choice and control

During discussion it was pointed out that although personal budgets had been a positive option for some, the take up had been limited.

Resolved:

To note the update provided on Wiltshire’s approach to the Disabled Children and Adults Pathfinder.

68 **Coalition Changes - Update November 2012 to March 2013**

The Committee received and noted a report by Carolyn Godfrey, Corporate Director, on developments relating to children’s services arising from the Coalition Government.

Reference was made to the Review of the 2013-14 School Funding Arrangements from which it was noted that the DfE had published a document

summarising how the 2013-14 reforms had been implemented and considering some specific issues that had been raised. It sought views from a range of interested parties including local authorities, headteachers, principals and governors. The review would also consider whether any small changes were needed in 2014-15 in order to address some of the issues raised.

Resolved:

- 1. To note the update provided.**
- 2. To request that a copy of the Council's response to the Review of School Funding Arrangements consultation be circulated to Committee members.**

69 Task Group Update

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

- Special School and Post-16 SEN Task Group
- Major Contracts Task Group

Resolved:

To note the update on Task Group activity provided.

70 Updated Response to the Report of the Further Education in the Salisbury Area Scrutiny Task Group

Consideration was given to a report by Carolyn Godfrey, Corporate Director, providing an update on developments following the final report of Further Education in the Salisbury Area Scrutiny Task Group which was considered by this Committee in May 2012.

It was reported that the bid for the establishment of a University Technical College for South Wiltshire had been approved the previous day, together with a further 11 applications. This bid, which was being jointly sponsored by Wiltshire Council, Wiltshire College and Southampton University, included £10m capital and was worth £40m to the Council over a 10 year period providing 600 places for children aged 14-18 years. £312,000 had been released as interim funding to continue with the planning and development work. Cllr Jane Scott stated that she had worked on the Swindon University Technical College and congratulated the team on not only the success of the application but also the speed in which the work took place to inform the bid.

Neil Owen provided an update on plans to provide a Sixth Form Free School in Salisbury from which it was noted that the scheme had been selected for

consideration at the DfE recently. It was hoped that the Free School would be completed and ready for opening in September 2014.

Resolved:

To note the update on developments following the final report of Further Education in the Salisbury Area Scrutiny Task Group.

71 Review of the Work of the Children's Select Committee

Consideration was given to a report by Paul Kelly, Scrutiny Manager which highlighted key aspects of the work undertaken by the Select Committee during recent times and recommending topics as legacy items to the Management Committee for possible inclusion in a new overview and scrutiny programme after the elections.

Cllr Jacqui Lay referred to a new procedure for determining school governance arrangements and requested that a report setting out the procedure be added to the new overview and scrutiny programme. Stephanie Denovan, Service Director, Schools & Learning explained that all new proposals need to be approved as part of the School Organisation Plan and suggested that an explanation of this procedure be included in the report.

Resolved:

- (1) To recommend that the key pieces of historic work included in the report be forwarded to the O&S Management Committee for noting.**
- (2) To recommend that the O&S Management Committee includes the future items included in the report in the Overview and Scrutiny forward work programme, plus**
 - a) a rapid scrutiny exercise to consider the results of the recent Ofsted inspection of Wiltshire's adoptions service;**
 - b) an item on the School Organisation Plan and the new process for determining school governance arrangements.**

72 Urgent Items

The Chairman announced that Cllr Peter Davis & Cllr Lionel Grundy, Cabinet Member for Children's Services, would not be seeking re-election at the forthcoming Elections and Neil Owen & Rosheen Ryan would be completing their term as parent governor representatives; therefore this would be the last meeting of the Select Committee that they would be attending. On behalf of the Committee, she warmly thanked them for all their help and support to the work of this Committee and wished them all well in their future endeavours.

Cllr Jacqui Lay informed the Committee that Cllr Carole Soden would not be seeking re-election and paid tribute to her Chairmanship of this Committee and previously the former County Council's Education Committee over many years. These sentiments were endorsed by Cllr Jane Scott and other members of the Committee at which point a presentation was made to Cllr Soden. In response she warmly thanked all present for their sentiments and in turn thanked members and officers for their help and support during the period of her Chairmanship.

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 am - 1.30 pm)

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