

CHILDREN'S SELECT COMMITTEE

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN'S SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 25 MARCH 2014 AT KENNET ROOM - COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE BA14 8JN.

Present:

Cllr Pat Aves, Miss Sarah Busby, Cllr Mary Champion, Cornelius, Cllr Andrew Davis (Substitute), Cllr Sue Evans, Mr J Hawkins, Cllr Jon Hubbard (Chairman), Kim Hunte, Cllr Chris Hurst, Cllr Simon Jacobs, Rev. A Kemp, Cllr Jacqui Lay (Vice Chairman), Cllr Bill Moss, Cllr Helen Osborn, Cllr Ricky Rogers, Swainston, Dr M Thompson and Cllr Philip Whalley

Also Present:

Cllr Richard Gamble, Cllr Alan MacRae and Cllr Laura Mayes

14 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Ken Brough, Cllr Mary Douglas, who was substituted by Cllr Andrew Davis, Mr Kaylum House and Cllr Sheila Parker.

15 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Resolved:

To approve and sign the minutes of the previous meeting held on 28 January 2014 as a true record.

16 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

17 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman introduced and welcomed:-

- Mrs Lynne Swainston, from the Bristol Church of England Diocese as the Committee's new Church of England diocesan representative, and

- Miss Tracy Cornelius, Headteacher of Kington St Michael Primary School, as the Committee's new Primary Headteacher representative.

He reported that following on from the Committee's request at its December 2013 meeting, the Cabinet Member for Children's Services together with himself had sent a jointly signed letter to the Secretary of State for Education asking that the Parent Governor Representatives Regulations 2001 be amended. The current regulations only allowed parent governors from maintained schools to be appointed as parent governor representatives on overview and scrutiny committees. This had caused difficulties as most secondary schools were now academies or free schools. The Secretary of State had now replied stating that:

- (1) The Department for Education's powers were limited to requiring education committees to appoint parent governor representatives from maintained schools and the primary legislation did not allow for the introduction of legislation requiring governors to be appointed from academy or free schools.
- (2) However, the Localism Act 2011 permitted education committees to appoint parent governor representatives from academy or free schools, if they wished to do so.

The Chairman stated that he had asked officers to start the process in order to recruit a secondary school parent governor.

18 **Public Participation**

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

19 **Apprenticeships in Wiltshire**

Consideration was given to a joint report by the Associate Director, Commissioning, Performance & School Effectiveness and the Associate Director, Economic Development & Planning which described:

- What apprenticeships were
- The Council's role in supporting young people and employers to provide/take up apprenticeships, including those with SEND
- The number of apprenticeships currently in place in Wiltshire
- Details of the Council's own apprenticeships programme as an employer.

The Employment & Skills Manager, Economic Development & Planning explained work underway to maximise apprenticeship growth in Wiltshire. She

stated that the number of apprenticeship starts had risen from 1,620 in 2005/06 to 5,110 in 2012/13. There had been 1,080 apprenticeship starts in the first quarter of 2013/14. Members were pleased to note, in particular, the steady growth in apprenticeship starts by learners with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD); in this category the percentage of apprenticeship starts aged 16-18 had risen from 11.3% in 2010/11 to 14.1% in 2012/13.

Much valuable work was being undertaken with schools to bring apprenticeship schemes and traineeships to the attention of students. It was noted that traineeships had been introduced in 2013 for young people aged 16-24 who were aiming to look for work within a period of six months. It was explained that traineeships consisted of a high quality work placement and a focused period of work preparation training. They were also flexible to include other elements such as vocational/industry specific content and qualifications.

The Council had been encouraging the growth of apprenticeship schemes within the County through its Apprenticeship Campaign and had been persuading companies of the business benefits of investing in school and college leavers to meet their recruitment needs. Members requested that they be provided with a full list of employers across Wiltshire who were participating in apprenticeship schemes in order to see how evenly spread they were across the County.

Members noted that a new apprenticeship wage rate had recently been approved for lower level apprenticeships and that new jobs advertised as apprenticeship posts would be paid at the bottom of Grade A, currently £6.45 per hour which was well above the apprenticeship national minimum wage of £2.65.

After further discussion,

Resolved:

- 1. To note the progress made on Apprenticeships in Wiltshire, the activity in place to maximise and sustain this improvement, the influence of national policy and funding arrangements, the recent key announcements affecting this area, and to thank the officers for the comprehensive report and briefing provided and commend their determination to increase the employment opportunities available for young people in Wiltshire.**
- 2. To request that a list of employers offering apprenticeships in Wiltshire is circulated to the Committee (unless this is commercially sensitive).**

3. To request figures showing the retention rates of apprentices in Wiltshire and the percentage who go on to further employment or training with the same company once their apprenticeships are complete.
4. To request a report in October 2014 providing further details on what steps the Council could take to include a commitment to providing employment and training opportunities for young people in its assessment criteria when awarding contracts to private companies. To include details of other local authorities and public bodies who do use this criterium when awarding contracts.
5. To recommend that the Cabinet Member for Children's Services makes representations to Cabinet regarding how the Council can increase its use of apprentices, and reports back to the Committee.

20 **Final Report of the Positive Leisure Activities for Young People Task Group**

The Chairman referred to the update report which had been circulated and informed the meeting that the Committee had expected to receive the Task Group's final report at that meeting because Cabinet had originally planned to take its final decision on 22 April 2014.

Cabinet had now decided to take its final decision at an extraordinary meeting to be held on 15 May 2014. Accordingly, it was therefore proposed to hold an extraordinary meeting of this Select Committee to consider the Task Group's final report. This would give the Task Group more time to consider further evidence and undertake a more in-depth scrutiny review in detail. If endorsed, the Task Group's final report would then be referred to Cabinet for consideration on 15 May 2014.

Resolved:

- (1) To note the progress update.
- (2) To agree that, following an extension to the original Cabinet timescale, the Task Group's review should be extended and an extraordinary meeting of the Committee should be held on Thursday 1 May 2014 to consider its final report, prior to referral to the Cabinet Member.

(NOTE: Subsequent to this meeting, it was agreed that this extraordinary meeting be held on Tuesday 29 April 2014, starting at 2.00pm, due to unforeseen availabilities.)

21 **Executive Response: Further Education in the Salisbury Area - 18 Month Progress Review**

The Committee received a report by the Cabinet Member for Children's Services setting out her response to a report of the Further Education in the Salisbury Area Task Group which was received by the Committee on 28 January 2014. This presented the results of a progress review undertaken by the Task Group 18 months after its final report had been endorsed.

Resolved:

To note the Executive Response to the Further Education in the Salisbury Area - 18 Month Progress Review.

22 **Non-Maintained Schools and the Local Authority**

The Chairman reminded the Committee that at its previous meeting, some Members had expressed some concern about the level of Council involvement with non-maintained schools in Wiltshire.

The Associate Director, Commissioning, Performance & School Effectiveness explained that the only responsibility maintained by the Local Authority in respect of private schools was safeguarding. However, there were a number of examples where some private schools worked in partnership with local authorities, including the joint provision of some academies, such as Wellington Academy, Ludgershall and Clarendon College, Trowbridge.

Resolved:

To note the verbal report provided.

23 **Task Group Update**

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

- Education for 16-19s Task Group
- Safeguarding Children and Young People Task Group
- Schools and the Local Authority Task Group

- SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) Task Group
- Positive Leisure Time Activities for Young People Task group

Resolved:

- (1) To note the update on Task Group activity provided.
- (2) To appoint Ken Brough to the Schools and the Local Authority Task Group.

24 Forward Work Programme

The Committee received a document showing the relevant items from the overview and scrutiny forward work programme.

Resolved:

To note the contents of the Forward Work Programme for this Committee.

25 Coalition Update - Changes from the Department for Education

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

Carolyn Godfrey drew attention to advice recently published by Central Government to help schools deliver free school lunches to all infant children. It was noted that each small school (up to 150 pupils) would be allocated a minimum of £3,000 funding to extend or improve kitchen facilities and address transitional costs in addition to the revenue funding.

During discussion, Members recognised the problems of persuading eligible parents to apply for free school meals and considered that more work needed to be undertaken to overcome this problem. It was noted that a cashless system of payment for free school meals was being introduced in a number of schools which would anonymise those pupils receiving free school meals.

Resolved:

To note the update provided.

26 **Date of Next Meeting**

Resolved:

- (1) To note that the next scheduled meeting of the Select Committee would be held on Tuesday 3 June 2014 in the Kennet room at County Hall, Trowbridge, starting at 10.30am.
- (2) To hold an extraordinary meeting of the Select Committee on Thursday 1 May 2014 at 10.30am to consider the final report of the Positive Leisure Activities for Young People Task Group.

(Note: Subsequent to this meeting, it was agreed to hold this extraordinary meeting on Tuesday 29 April 2014 at County Hall, Trowbridge, starting at 2.00pm.)

27 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items of business.

(Duration of meeting: 10.50 am - 1.00 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