

## CHILDREN'S SELECT COMMITTEE

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### **DRAFT MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN'S SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 9 DECEMBER 2014 AT KENNET ROOM - COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE BA14 8JN.**

#### **Present:**

Cllr Jon Hubbard (Chairman), Cllr Jacqui Lay (Vice Chairman), Dr M Thompson, Rev Alice Kemp, Mr J Hawkins, Cllr Sue Evans, Cllr Mary Douglas, Cllr Simon Jacobs, Cllr Christine Crisp, Cllr Mary Champion, Cllr Bill Moss, Cllr Helen Osborn, Mr Ken Brough and Miss Sarah Busby

#### **Also Present:**

Cllr Alan MacRae, Cllr Laura Mayes and Cllr Richard Gamble

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#### **64 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Ms Amanda Burnside, Miss Tracy Cornelius, Cllr Chris Hurst, Cllr Ricky Rogers and Cllr Philip Whalley.

#### **65 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

##### **Resolved:**

**To approve and sign the minutes of the previous meeting held on 14 October 2014.**

#### **66 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

#### **67 Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements made at the meeting.

#### **68 Public Participation**

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

#### **69 Early Help Strategy 2014 - 2017 - Implementation Scorecard**

Consideration was given to a report by Carolyn Godfrey, Corporate Director which reminded Members that at its last meeting the Committee received the final report of the Early Help Strategy Task Group which made recommendations on how the Committee could effectively monitor delivery of the Early Help Strategy. The Committee requested that an implementation scorecard be prepared and brought back to this Committee for approval.

The Committee was reminded that the Early Help Strategy Task Group had recognised the importance of obtaining targeted information to monitor the Strategy's implementation. An Early Help Improvement Plan had been developed and approved which contained the key deliverables and milestones required in order to meet the objectives of the Strategy.

In addition to the Improvement Plan, an Early Help Dataset had been developed to gauge the impact delivery of the Plan was having on outcomes for children and young people. The Dataset was comprised of the following two elements:-

- Part 1 – Outcomes Scorecard
- Part 2 – Early Help Dataset

It was noted that there was no national dataset or benchmarks for early help and it was therefore necessary to develop and build on locally set benchmarks.

Although the Local Authority relationships with schools had been significantly changing in recent years, especially with the establishment of academies and free schools, the Local Authority still retained a key role in the attainment of all young people, and in particular the vulnerable. If the Local Authority was concerned about the standard of education in any school, then there would be discussions with that particular school to explore ways of overcoming the problems. It was noted that the Department for Education had fairly recently set up a group of regional school commissioners to maintain an oversight into the standard of education in academies.

After further discussion,

**Resolved:**

**To refer the Early Help Dataset provided to the Early Help Strategy Task Group to consider whether the dataset is a suitable mechanism for monitoring delivery of the Early Help Strategy and whether it meets the Task Group's recommendations.**

The Select Committee received a report by Carolyn Godfrey, Corporate Director, which provided an update on Wiltshire's participation in the three year National Secondary Exclusion Trial ((SET) and the development of provision for those pupils permanently excluded or at risk of permanent exclusion since the closure of the Young Peoples' Support Service (YPSS).

The Committee was reminded that in July 2011 Wiltshire accepted the Department for Education's invitation to take part in a national trial on permanent exclusion and alternative provision. The purpose was to pilot a new arrangement under which, if a secondary school permanently excluded a student, it would remain responsible for making educational provision for the student.

Following on from this national trial, in May 2012 a Power To Innovate Order was approved by Parliament which transferred the responsibility of the Local Authority to provide suitable education for permanently excluded students to those secondary schools agreeing to take part in the trial. 28 of Wiltshire's 29 secondary schools had agreed to take part and Wiltshire thereupon decided to close the Pupil Referral Units and YPSS, devolving the budget to the secondary schools, this being fully implemented by July 2013.

Unfortunately, from a national perspective this trial had not proved to be successful and came to an end in June 2014 but the responsibility for permanently excluded students remained with the Local Authorities.

In October 2013 the Select Committee agreed that the Council would continue to devolve funding to schools and replace the Power To Innovate with a service level agreement on a trial basis through which secondary schools agreed to provide suitable education for those students permanently excluded or at risk of permanent exclusion. Although Wiltshire Council would not be directly providing education it would ensure the quality of delivery through a robust monitoring process. This would consist of the regular collection of data about individual students, the random sampling of provision through visits, observations and regular dialogue carried out by the Local Authority's attendance at the In Year Fair Access Panels where most of the students were discussed and their progress reviewed.

Initial evidence indicated that these arrangements were working well but a representative group of headteachers had been set up to review the progress of this trial and discuss options to put in place once it ended. They were unanimously in favour of continuing existing arrangements with a service level agreement which would support the adoption of the Select Committee's agreed approach.

After some discussion,

**Resolved:**

1. To note and welcome the updated report and arrangements for continuing the model of devolving funding to secondary schools beyond the end of the exclusion trial in 2014 and to pass on congratulations to all involved in the project.
2. To receive a report in March 2015 providing updated data relating to provision for Excluded Secondary Pupils and further detail on the council's arrangements for monitoring this provision.
3. To receive a further report on this topic in September 2015 and annually thereafter.

#### 71 Task Group Update

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

- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Task Group
- Educational 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

#### **Resolved:**

1. To note the update on task group activity provided.
2. To note that a meeting with the executive and officers to discuss the scope of the Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Task Group has now been arranged for 22 January 2015; non-executive members will now be invited to express an interest in participating; and an update on progress will be brought to the next meeting.

#### 72 Forward Work Programme

The Committee received a document showing the relevant items from the Overview & Scrutiny Forward Work Programme.

#### **Resolved:**

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

#### 73 Coalition 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 Coalition Government as follows:-

- Early years pupil premium
- Universal infant free school meals
- Keeping children safe in education
- Changes to the school admissions code
- School attendance
- Handling strike action in schools
- Preventing bullying
- National Curriculum Reform: KS4 science
- 16 to 19 headline measures
- Academies update
- Looked-after children: improving permanence
- Children Act 1989: transition to adulthood for care leavers
- Care leaver strategy
- State of the Nation Report 2014

**Resolved:**

1. To note the update provided.
2. To receive an information briefing on the council's approach to tackling bullying at schools and colleges around the date of Anti-Bullying Week in 2015.

74 **Date of Next Meeting**

**Resolved:**

**To note that the next scheduled meeting is due to be held on Tuesday 27 January 2015, in the Kennet Room at County Hall, Trowbridge, starting at 10.30am.**

75 **Urgent Items**

There were no items of urgent business.

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 am - 12.25 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](mailto:roger.bishton@wiltshire.gov.uk)

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