

CHILDREN'S SELECT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN'S SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 14 MARCH 2017 AT THE KENNET ROOM - COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE BA14 8JN.

Present:

Cllr Jon Hubbard (Chairman), Cllr Jacqui Lay (Vice Chairman), Cllr Pat Aves, Cllr Mary Douglas, Cllr Sue Evans, Cllr Atiqul Hoque, Cllr Simon Jacobs, Cllr Ricky Rogers, Cllr Philip Whalley, Rev Alice Kemp, Dr M Thompson, Miss Tracy Cornelius, Mr J Hawkins and James Wilkins

Also Present:

Cllr Richard Gamble and Cllr Laura Mayes

16 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Chris Hurst, Miss Sarah Busby and Miss Cathy Shahrokni (who was substituted by Ms Jen Jones).

17 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Resolved:

To confirm and sign the minutes of the previous meeting held on 31 January 2017.

Arising therefrom:

Minute No 5 – Public Participation – Duke of Edinburgh Scheme In answer to a question from Cllr Jacqui Lay, Terence Herbert, Associate Director, Operational Children's services, reported that a written response to the questions posed at the last meeting about the Duke of Edinburgh Scheme would be circulated very shortly.

Minute No 12 – DfE Changes – Update from Department for Education – School Funding In answer to a question from Cllr Mary Douglas about school funding arrangements from April 2019, Carolyn Godfrey, Corporate Director, reported that Cllr Laura Mayes, Cabinet Member for Children's Services, had written to the Prime Minister setting out this Council's objections to the Government's proposals that schools would be directly funded from the department for Education from April 2019. Further details about these initial proposals would be considered by the Schools Forum when received.

However, it was noted that funding for high needs children and early years children would continue to be distributed via the Local Authority.

18 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

19 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman made the following announcements:-

a) Children's Select Committee Parent Governor Representative Nominations

The current term of office for the Parent Governor Representatives (Ken Brough and Rev. Alice Kemp) was due to cease on 30 April 2017, which made this their last meeting. Calls for nomination had been sent out to eligible parent governors and the new representatives would be in office from 30 April 2017 – 30 April 2021.

The Chairman took this opportunity to thank the representatives for their hard work as members of this Committee.

b) Cabinet items

On 23 May 2017 Cabinet would consider the following item:

- Adoption West Implementation Decision Report

c) Last meeting of the Committee

The Chairman reported that along with the Parent Governor Representatives this was the last meeting of this Committee's membership prior to the May elections. He thanked Members of the Committee for their hard work and dedication throughout the last four year term of this Committee. He also thanked officers for their support and co-operation.

20 **Public Participation**

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting or Councillors' questions.

21 **Activities of the Wiltshire Assembly of Youth (WAY)**

The Committee received an update on the activities of the WAY which was presented by James Wilkins, Children's & Young People's representative. He reported that WAY members had met on two occasions since the last report, one of which was at the Wiltshire Youth Summit on 8 February 2017. The January meeting had been held at County Hall, Trowbridge. In addition, members of the UK Youth Parliament had attended a Regional Convention in Bristol in December at which they considered the campaign priority for the coming year, which was Votes at 16.

James Wilkins went on to explain that WAY was seeking to organise its activities in relation to its Agenda for Action which had the following five priorities:-

- (1) Improve emotional being and mental health support for young people.
- (2) Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education
- (3) Bullying
- (4) Public Transport
- (5) Environment

WAY members, Freya Piggott and Rebecca Richards had run a workshop on youth voice at the Wiltshire Youth Summit. The workshop had provided the chance to discuss and evaluate the value and meaningfulness of participation activities they had been involved in. These included opportunities to interview staff, taking part in community meetings, achieving outcomes such as free gym memberships for young people and campaigning for more after school clubs.

The Chairman considered that the Wiltshire Youth Summit was outstanding and included some excellent workshops.

Members referred to the Public Transport issues and recognised the problems faced by many young people living in a rural county, many parts of which did not have good transport links particularly during the evenings. James Wilkins explained that this issue had been addressed and a transport officer from Wiltshire Council had been invited to attend a WAY meeting to discuss the issues involved. Unfortunately, it transpired that there was little the Council could do to help at this time, particularly in view of tight budgets.

Resolved:

To thank James Wilkins for his excellent report and presentation which was noted with much interest.

22 **Children's Services Integration Project**

The Chairman reminded the Committee that the Council's Children's Services Leadership Team on 10 January 2017 had agreed some initial proposals to establish a new service model to achieve the Children's Services vision of:-

"One joined up approach to making a positive difference to outcomes for Wiltshire's children and young people, ensuring they are safe and have high aspirations."

The Chairman noted that a report had been provided which gave an oversight of these proposals.

It was reported that the proposal would impact on all Operational Children's Services teams including Early Help, MASH and Safeguarding & Assessment Services in Phase 1 of the proposal and Children in Care, Youth Offending Team, CSE and SEND in Phase 2. The existing statutory functions would continue to be delivered as well as some non-statutory work. The key change would be the way in which services would be delivered to children and families. The project would be phased to allow a focus on, in the first instance, what could realistically be achieved in the short term (i.e. in Phase 1).

During discussion Members were informed that it was expected that Phase 1 of the proposal would be completed by October 2017 but that Phase 2 was likely to be split into different phases and would take longer to bring into operation.

Resolved:

- (1) To note the report and fully endorse the direction of travel being scoped by the Children's Services Integration Project Phase 2, including the desire to work with partners in a more joined up and integrated way to deliver improved outcomes for children and families.**
- (2) To request the Chairman to write to the Director of Children's Services in support of these proposals, to be included with the bid for financial assistance to progress the Project.**

23 **Obesity and Child Poverty Update**

The Chairman reminded the Committee that the Final Report of the Obesity and Child Poverty Task Group was endorsed by the Health Select Committee on 8 March 2016 and by this Committee on 22 March 2016. An Executive Response was subsequently presented to this Committee on 31 May 2016 and the Health Select Committee on 21 June 2016.

A six month update was being provided on the implementation of Wiltshire's Reducing Child Poverty Strategy following the outcomes, recommendations and executive response of the Obesity and Child Poverty Task Group.

Attention was drawn, in particular, to the most recent data from the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) which showed that across Wiltshire excess weight (overweight and obese combined) among reception year children (4-5 years) had increased slightly by 0.1% and decreased slightly by 0.1% for children in year 6 (10-11 years).

Wiltshire remained below the 2015-16 South West average of excess weight among reception aged children (21.9%) and year 6 children (30.3%). Nationally, during the same period, there had been an increase in the percentage of reception year children with excess weight from 21.9% to 22.1% and in year 6 children from 33.2% to 34.2%. It was encouraging to note that Wiltshire's prevalence of excess weight was positive in relation to rising national and regional prevalence.

Members noted that Wiltshire's Obesity Strategy included a priority to reduce the variation in excess weight in children between the least and most deprived areas by 2% by 2020.

Data had been shared as part of the Community Joint Strategic Assessment (CJSA) events to enable local areas to identify priorities and actions around childhood obesity and child poverty. Several area boards had voted to prioritise the reduction of childhood obesity and a few so far had prioritised a reduction in child poverty, which was very encouraging.

During discussion, Members recognised that the lifestyle of children and their families was a major factor to be taken into account with the eating of fast and convenient foods.

Resolved:

- (1) To note the update provided on the implementation of Wiltshire's Reducing Child Poverty Strategy.**
- (2) To request a progress report in 12 months' time.**
- (3) To draw the attention of all Members to the Obesity Summit planned to be held on 21 July 2017.**

24 **Executive Response to the Final Report of the School Improvement Strategy**

Consideration was given to a report setting out the response of the Cabinet Member for Children's Services to the final report of the Improvement Strategy Task Group. It was noted that the report had been presented to this Committee at its previous meeting and had been endorsed.

During discussion, Cllr Philip Whalley, Chairman of the Task Group, stated that he was very pleased to see the positive executive responses to the recommendations. He stressed the need to offer School Improvement Services as a traded service as soon as possible, especially because of the move to direct funding of all schools. It was most important that the Council had a comprehensive and attractive offer on traded services available as soon as possible. The Associate Director, Commissioning, Performance & School Effectiveness confirmed that the timing of this was regarded as being of a high priority and every effort was being made to ensure that the traded service would be fully implemented by the time that direct funding of all schools was implemented, anticipated to be in September 2018.

Cllr Whalley also stressed the importance of continuing the programme which enabled advisors to make three half-day visits each year to their allotted schools in order that the Council was able to provide timely interventions and appropriate levels of support.

After discussion, during which members supported the views expressed by Cllr Whalley,

Resolved:

To note the executive response to the School Improvement Strategy Task Group's final report.

25 **Executive Response to the Final Report of the Safeguarding Children and Young People Task Group**

The Committee considered a report setting out the response of the Cabinet Member for Children's Services to the final report of the Safeguarding Children and Young People Task Group. It was noted that the report had been presented to this Committee at its previous meeting and had been endorsed.

The Associate Director, Operational Children's Services drew attention to the recommendation regarding the adding of dedicated "practice weeks" to the Council's social care learning and improvement framework. He referred to the current programme of auditing, learning and development which allowed for a more dynamic analysis to lead directly to practice improvement. Consideration had been given to the introduction of "practice weeks" but it was not viewed at present to be an improvement on the current programme. However, this would be kept under review.

The Committee noted that there were a number of social work models currently implemented across the sector, many of which were subject to innovation research and analysis. Wiltshire was developing its intervention on the Relationship Based practice model and its integration into the new Children's Services Integration (CSI) model, which it was hoped would lead to a Good rating.

Resolved:

To note the executive response to the Task Group's final report.

26 **Task Group Update**

The Committee received updates on the activities of the following Task Groups/Boards:-

- SEND Task Group - The Revd. Alice Kemp, Chairman of the Task Group, reported that this was the conclusion of a long and complex piece of work and drew particular attention to the housing needs of young people which was a priority.
- Education Transformation Board
- Design and Task Board

Resolved:

- (1) To note the update on task group/board activity provided.**
- (2) To request the Cabinet Member for Children's Services to consider the recommendations of the SEND Task Group, as set out in the report, regarding additional data to support more effective planning for future SEND housing needs.**
- (3) To thank the Revd. Alice Kemp for all her work, particularly as Chairman of the SEND Task Group, noting that she would cease to be a parent governor representative (SEN) on this Committee.**

27 DfE 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 Department for Education from January to February 2017 as follows:-

- Study of early education and development (SEED)
- Staffing and employment: advice for schools
- Academies update
- Academy conversion grant for local authorities
- Lenehan review into care of children with learning disabilities
- SEND: 19 - 25 year olds entitlement to EHCPs
- Statutory definition of child sexual exploitation
- Tackling child sexual exploitation: progress report
- Special guardianship: statutory guidance update
- Adoption Support Fund 2017/18
- Youth justice reforms

Resolved:

To note the update provided.

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

The Committee considered a report which highlighted key aspects of the work undertaken by the Select Committee during the 2013-17 Council. The report also provided topics recommended as legacy items for consideration to be referred to the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee for possible inclusion in a new overview and scrutiny work programme after the imminent elections.

After some discussion,

Resolved:

- (1) To note the report and send it to the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee for approval.**

(2) To recommend that the following items be included in a new overview and scrutiny work programme:-

- DfE “Vision for Change” Report
- Adoptions West
- Wiltshire Safeguarding Children Board – Annual Reports
- School Improvement Strategy – Disadvantaged Learners
- Children’s Services Integration Project
- Children’s Community Centre Services
- Education and Employment
- SEND Partnership Working Update
- Regular Updates on Topical Issues
- Apprenticeships offered by Wiltshire Council and subsequent opportunities for employment
- Housing

29 **Forward Work Programme**

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

Resolved:

To note the Forward Work Programme for this Committee.

30 **Date of Next Meeting**

Resolved:

To note that the next scheduled meeting of this Committee was due to be held on Tuesday 13 June 2017 at County Hall, Trowbridge, starting at 2.30pm, with an information briefing at 1.30pm.

31 **Urgent Items**

There were no items of urgent business.

(Duration of meeting: 2.00 - 4.20 pm)

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