

CHILDREN'S SELECT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN'S SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 17 APRIL 2018 AT THE KENNET ROOM - COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE BA14 8JN.

Present:

Cllr Jon Hubbard (Chairman), Cllr Mary Champion, Cllr Andrew Davis, Cllr Christopher Devine, Cllr Mary Douglas, Cllr David Halik, Cllr Deborah Halik, Cllr Chris Hurst, Cllr Hayley Spencer, Cllr Roy While, Dr M Thompson, Miss Sarah Busby and John Hawkins

Also Present:

Cllr Trevor Carbin, Cllr Pauline Church, Cllr Laura Mayes and Cllr Philip Whalley.

16 Apologies

Apologies for absence was received from Cllr Sue Evans and Cllr Jacqui Lay.

17 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Resolved:

To confirm and sign the minutes of the previous meeting held on 6 February 2018.

18 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

19 Chairman's Announcements

(a) **Cabinet Items**

On 27 March 2018 Cabinet considered the following item:-

- Outdoor Education
Lead Director: Alan Stubbersfield (Interim Director – Education & Skills)
Contact: Nick Cave, Interim Head of Traded Services

On 24 April 2018 Cabinet would be due to consider the following item:-

- Learning Disabilities In-house Respite Services

Lead Officer: Rhonda Ward

(b) **Outdoor Education**

The Chairman reported that he had both witnessed and had also been informed subsequently that during the debate on the Call-in of the Executive Decision on Outdoor Education which took place at the meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee held on 10 April 2018, some Members tended to speak from a party-political viewpoint. He considered this to be most unfortunate as debates in a scrutiny arena, especially in this Select Committee, were always evidenced based and non-political and he hoped that this would continue to prevail in the future.

20 **Public Participation**

The Committee received a question which had been submitted by Cllr Sue Hughes, a member of Royal Wootton Bassett Town Council and also a member of the Royal Wootton Bassett Local Youth Network (LYN) who she was representing at this meeting. A copy of the question and the response is attached as Appendix 1 to these minutes.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Hughes for her question and explained the 'call-in' process. He stated that this Committee did not have the opportunity to consider the matter as the Committee's Outdoor Education task group report was received at the relevant Cabinet meeting on 27th March and subsequently the matter was debated an extraordinary meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee, both of which met prior to this Select Committee meeting.

Cllr Laura Mayes stated that she recognised the benefits of outdoor education which was seen to be a positive experience for children. However, the decision to close Braeside and Oxenwood was not taken lightly and was made after 18 months of work. There had been no evidence that the due process had not been carried out correctly. She went on to explain that although it was anticipated that there would be an annual saving of £130,000 a year following the closure of these two outdoor facilities, £1.4 million would be required to improve the buildings which were in urgent need of restoration. The Council's Capital Budget was very limited and the Council had to balance this with the needs of other services. The Council was prioritising children with special needs.

Cllr Hughes then asked a supplementary question (Appendix 2) to which she was promised a written response.

21 **Family and Children's Transformation (FACT) - Phase One Assessment**

Consideration was given to a report by the Director, Family & Children's Services, which provided an update on the transformation of the Children & Families Service.

It was noted that the Support & Safeguarding Service was launched on 2 October 2017, alongside a new single point of entry to Wiltshire Children & Families Service, thus marking the completion of phase 1 of the Children's Services Integration Project. The report thus provided an overview of the first six months of operation as requested by this Committee in March 2017.

The service aims and objectives were outlined in a report considered by this Committee on 14 March 2017 and it was noted that the Early Help Service and Safeguarding and Assessment Service and their associated teams, including the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub – MASH were directly affected by Phase 1 of the project. The principle aim was to be able to intervene early, when this was necessary, with a family focused approach and minimising the number of officers working with a family and avoiding duplication. Co-location with other services and partners had been pursued persistently over the previous months resulting in greater integrated working with domestic abuse, drug and alcohol and child and adolescent mental health teams. This had resulted in more flexible and prompter working with families.

It was explained that mechanisms for performance management had been maintained and extended to cover this support activity. This included, amongst other things, fortnightly Performance and Outcomes Group meetings, Support & Safeguarding Managers meetings, Annual Service Reviews and a new overarching whole service Performance and Outcomes Board.

During discussion, Members welcomed the changes that had been made so far but did express some concern at the functioning of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs which appeared to be not functioning efficiently in some areas. It was explained that there were 19 of these Hubs strategically placed around Wiltshire and it was true that some were more successful than others at present.

Resolved:

- (1) To note the progress made by the Family and Children's Transformation Project as outlined in the report.**
- (2) To request a further progress update in six months to mark one year since the launch of the new service and to include an update on the functioning of MASH.**

22 DfE Changes - Update from Department for Education

The Committee received an update from Terence Herbert, Corporate Director, on developments relating to children's services arising from the Department for Education from February to March 2018 as follows:-

- Consultation outcome on eligibility for free school meals and the early years premium under Universal Credit.
- Review of school exclusions

- Alternative provision
- Academies update
- Review of post-18 education
- SEND Tribunal: single route of redress national trial
- Implementation of Children and Social Work Act 2017 Sections 1-7
- Working Together consultation response
- Consultation on Social Work England
- Improvement standards for child and family social workers
- Review of children in need
- Plans to tackle child abuse

Reference was made to the consultation which was currently being carried out on the use of Section 19 permits for road passenger transport in Great Britain and Members enquired as to whether the Council would be responding to this consultation. Officers were aware of this and would respond to Members once they had ascertained the facts.

Resolved:

To note the update provided.

23 **Task Group Updates**

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

- Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS) Task Group
- SEND School Provision Task Group
- Children in Care Leavers Rapid Scrutiny Exercise
- Traded Services for Schools and Outdoor Education Task Group
- Education Transformation Board

Resolved:

(1) To note the updates on task group activity provided.

(2) To endorse the following proposals from the CAMHS Task Group:-

- (a) that Cllr Clare Cape remain on the CAMHS Task Group as a full member.**
- (b) to note that Cllr Hayley Spencer had stepped down from the CAMHS Task Group and endorse that it continue as a 4-member Task Group.**

24 **Forward Work Programme**

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

Cllr Christopher Devine enquired if it might be possible for the officers to produce an executive summary of the work undertaken by this Select Committee, ideally sub-divided into areas of service. The Chairman considered this to be a good suggestion and the summary to include current policies and strategies. The officers agreed to look into the possibility of producing such a document.

Resolved:

To note the Forward Work Programme for this Committee.

25 **Date of Next Meeting**

Resolved:

To note that the next scheduled meeting of this Committee was due to be held on Tuesday 19 June 2018 at County Hall, Trowbridge, starting at 10.30am.

26 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items of business.

(Duration of meeting: 10.50 am - 12.40 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

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WILTSHIRE COUNCIL

CHILDREN'S SELECT COMMITTEE

17 April 2018

Public Question received from Cllr Sue Hughes, Royal Wootton Bassett Town Council

Question

Given what is understood, by Wiltshire County Council and the Children's Select Committee, about the state of young people's mental health in young people across Wiltshire:

1) From the Wiltshire pupil health and well-being survey 2017, which reported that:

- **Poor mental health:** *"by year 12/FE nearly a third of the sample reported poor mental health."*
- **Satisfaction with life:** *"reduced to 57% for the year 12/FE girls"*
- **Confidence in the future:** just *"49% of year 12/FE respondents...felt confident about their future"*
- **Happiness:** 1 in 5 or 21% of secondary and 23% of Year 12/FE, reported being unhappy/quite unhappy over the last week.

2) Which was further documented, in the Wiltshire Children and Young People's Health and Wellbeing Survey 2017: Overview Report as follows:

- **Poor mental health:** *"A national survey found a mean score for 15-year olds of 47.6 (What about youth WAY survey, 2014/15). The mean score from Wiltshire's Secondary children was 47.2. This could suggest slightly poorer mental health in children in Wiltshire than in England."*
- **Satisfaction with life and confidence in the future:** *"Many of the key indicators in the secondary phase have declined since 2015, in particular the percentage of young people who are satisfied with their life and are confident about the future; both of these have dropped significantly in 2017."*

3) Whose findings were echoed, in the report by the Children's Society for James Gray MP, written in the Autumn of 2017:

- **Poor mental health:** *"Based on the latest prevalence survey we estimate that there would be 1,349 young people aged between 5 and 16 with clinically diagnosed mental health problem in Wiltshire"*
- **Satisfaction with life / happiness:** *"The proportion of 10 to 15-year-old girls who are unhappy with their life as a whole has risen from 11% to 14% in just 5 years"*

• **Referral and treatment:** “...thresholds for clinical interventions from their local Child Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) are too high...too many are left waiting an average of 94 days from referral to first appointment.”

4) Which were echoed by findings of:

a) The Princes Trust Macquarie Youth Index Survey 2017:

• **Happiness:** “young people’s happiness across every single area of their lives has never been lower”

• **Confidence:** “54% believe a lack of self-confidence holds them back”

• **Confidence in the future:** “Two in ten young people (21 per cent) think that their life will amount to nothing, no matter how hard they try”

b) The Sport England Youth Insights Pack sport England August 2018:

• **Stress & Pressure:** “A challenging economic environment has added pressure to this generation. They feel more stressed and believe that experiences need to help them develop and progress in life.”

Response

How can Wiltshire County Council be confident, that it can successfully utilise alternative providers, to meet the needs of young people across Wiltshire and protect their mental health and well-being?

Improving children and young people’s mental health and wellbeing is a shared national and local priority. Like many areas across the country the key challenges we are working hard to overcome include rising demand; children, young people and parent/carers feeling ‘bounced’ around what to them feels like a complex system when they do not require a mental health response; long waiting times for assessment and treatment; children and young people having to re-tell their stories to multiple professionals; arbitrary divisions between services; a lack of clarity about thresholds and what support is available; and not enough investment in early help.

Working with the NHS Wiltshire CCG (through our joint commissioning arrangements) along with key partners from across health, education and social care (as well as children, young people and parents/carers) we have developed a Local Transformation Plan for Children and Young People’s Mental Health and Wellbeing. This sets out our vision for improving children and young people’s emotional wellbeing and mental health and how we are using additional investment from central Government to drive service transformation across the whole system. Key priorities include enhancing early intervention and prevention; improving access to the right support first time around; and providing better care for our most vulnerable children and young people.

Through our Local Transformation Plan, in Wiltshire overall annual spend on CAMHS (including the local authority, the CCG and NHS England Specialist Commissioning) has increased from £6.5m in 2015-16 to £6.9m in 2016/17. The

increase is the result of new CAMHS funding which has been made available nationally to CCGs to support the implementation of Local Transformation Plans.

Key local achievements that are making a positive difference to children and young people's life chances include:

- A re-commissioned new and modern CAMHS service across Swindon, Wiltshire and Bath and North East Somerset, which started on 01 April 2018
- Significant improvement in waiting times for both referral to assessment and referral to treatment. For example, the % of CYP waiting 12 weeks from referral to assessment for primary CAMHS have increased from 65% in 2015/16 to 95% in 2017/18 (Year to date). 83% of CYP wait 12 weeks for access to treatment. This compares to a national average of 17 weeks
- Wiltshire has a community eating disorder service that is recognised nationally as an example of best practice – waits from referral to assessment are already on track with the national target that doesn't need to be achieved until 2020/21
- Online counselling service put in place for teenagers – over 2000 registered for the service, 97% would recommend to a friend
- 118 schools engaged with Healthy Schools programme
- 10 secondary schools delivering peer mentoring, 20 school staff trained, 115 peer mentors trained and 123 mentees supported
- Mental Health Liaison workers put into acute hospitals – 100% of children and young people who arrive at A&E presenting with self-harm have a psychosocial assessment
- 100% of referrals to CAMHS that don't need a specialist mental health response are getting an offer of early help
- CAMHS workers co-located / integrated into Wiltshire Council Children and Families teams, 170 children and young people supported
- 12 Thrive Hubs established in secondary schools with named CAMHS workers

There are a wide range of organisations and agencies (including the voluntary and community sector) which are supporting the delivery of these priorities.

The physical and emotional wellbeing of children and young people is also being supported by our successful community led model for youth activities where we have seen better engagement rates than ever before – probably because young people are actually involved in deciding what activities they want. Through our community led model for youth services we've seen our voluntary and community sector grow and take up the challenge of supporting children and young people's needs within their local community. All 18 Area Boards have identified mental health and wellbeing of young people as one of their three top priorities 2017-2019 and, of those, 12 have made it their No.1 priority for action.

We are therefore confident that with the strong commitment of all partners across the system and by working together we can continue to transform services so that all our children and young people have timely access to an integrated system of excellent,

coordinated and effective promotion, prevention, early intervention, and community support and treatment programmes that work.

The proposals to close Braeside and Oxenwood Outdoor Education were reviewed in a special session of the Wiltshire Council Scrutiny Committee on 10/04/18 at which members of the public were present. Key issues were aired and the resolution was that an appropriate process has been followed by the council. It was noted that currently, only approximately 30% of Wiltshire Schools use the residential provision at Oxenwood and Braeside with many choosing to go outside of the county to one of the numerous alternative providers within reasonable travelling distance from Wiltshire. There is no evidence that Wiltshire based children will lose out as a result of the decision because there remain many outdoor education options in the market, many of whom offer a greater range of activities at cheaper rates currently than Braeside and Wiltshire.

Supplementary question to the Children's Select Committee, April 17th 2018

Regarding agenda items:

5: Public Participation / 9: Task Group Updates

This question comes from me, Cllr Sue Hughes, as parent and as a tax payer.

Following:

- 10 months of consideration* ¹
- Direction to complete work "*within 9 months*"²
- Cost savings, which I now understand could be as small as £135k³ **
- And the need to call the decision in, to confirm that it was "*fair*"⁴

As well as, all the Wiltshire County Council documentation highlighting the decision to be (and this is in your words not mine):

- "*premature*"⁵
- lacking in "*evidence*"⁶ and "*due diligence*"⁷
- not having enough understanding of "*costs and risks*"⁸
- being made without alternative outdoor provision^{9,10} or "*AG&T provision in place*"¹¹

¹ Report of the Traded Services for Schools Task Group on Outdoor Education – para 3: "During the 13 June 2017 meeting of the Children's Select Committee, Cllr Laura Mayes, Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Skills asked if the Committee Would consider looking into Traded Services for Schools." – Now April 17th 2018.

² Report of the Traded Services for Schools Task Group on Outdoor Education – para 5: "The Committees agreed the establishment and commencement of the Traded Services for Schools Task Group (thereafter referred to as "the task group"), to complete its work **within 9 months**"

³ Report of the Traded Services for Schools Task Group on Outdoor Education – para 16: "Following the 7 February 2018 meeting it was noted by members of the task group that the budget papers, in the "Summary of Savings and Income Proposals" (page 6 of 10) listed **savings of £0.135m** through "proposal to be brought to Cabinet to consider review of Outdoor Education Centres", however the budget papers included no further details on how these savings would be made."

⁴ Swindon Advertiser, Wiltshire Council Under Scrutiny Over Braeside And Oxenwood Closure, 10th April: "Cllr Hubbard said: "What is fair about a decision where the people who run the facilities are not given the opportunity to contribute towards the decision to close them? Where the users and stakeholders are excluded from the decision-making process. There was nothing **fair** and open about this decision." "

⁵ Report of the Traded Services for Schools Task Group on Outdoor Education – para 38: "Based on the evidence available **the task group could not be convinced that a decision to close both centres would not be premature** and could have a higher cost in the immediate future than retaining the centres."

⁶ Report of the Traded Services for Schools Task Group on Outdoor Education – para 45: "With regards to the draft Cabinet report it considered on 7 February 2018, the task group concluded that there was **insufficient evidence within the draft report for Cabinet to make an evidence-based decision on any of the four options.**"

⁷ Report of the Traded Services for Schools Task Group on Outdoor Education – para 39: "The main reason for this was that **the task group had not received evidence that due diligence in terms of true costs, and potential risks, of closure had been undertaken.**"

⁸ Report of the Traded Services for Schools Task Group on Outdoor Education – para 43: "The task group reached the same conclusions for this option [Option 4] as it did for Option 3 (closing the centres) in so far as it had not received evidence confirming the true costs and potential risks, of closure."

⁹ Report of the Traded Services for Schools Task Group on Outdoor Education – para 40: "**...no alternatives were identified for the relocation of the Able, Gifted and Talented (AG&T) Programme or the offsite services offered by Oxenwood.**"

¹⁰ Report of the Traded Services for Schools Task Group on Outdoor Education – para 36: "there was no consultation with Wiltshire Schools currently using the centres to ensure that they would be able to access those alternative (either because of travelling distance, difference of activities on offer or increased cost."

¹¹ Report of the Traded Services for Schools Task Group on Outdoor Education – para 40: "Additionally, **no alternatives were identified for the relocation of the Able, Gifted and Talented (AG&T) Programme**"

And, in the context of well over 11,000 parents and teachers telling you that this, is the wrong choice, by means of a petition.

Please can the Committee provide clarity, on where Wiltshire County Council plans to go from here, with regards to outdoor provision for our young people?