

CHILDREN'S SELECT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN'S SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 12 NOVEMBER 2019 AT KENNET COMMITTEE ROOM, COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE.

Present:

Cllr Jon Hubbard (Chairman), Cllr Mary Champion, Cllr Andrew Davis, Cllr Christopher Devine, Cllr Sue Evans, Cllr Chris Hurst, Cllr Jacqui Lay, Dr Mike Thompson, John Hawkins and Catriona Williamson

Also Present:

Cllr Trevor Carbin, Cllr Philip Whalley, Cllr Pauline Church, Cllr Peter Hutton, Cllr Alan Hill and Cllr Tony Jackson

80 Apologies and changes of membership

Apologies for absence were received from Sarah Busby.

81 Election of Vice-Chairman

On noting the resignation of Cllr Deborah Halik, Vice-Chairman of this Committee, from the Council,

Resolved:

To elect Cllr Jacqui Lay as Vice-Chairman of this Committee for the remainder of the municipal year 2019/20.

82 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Resolved:

To approve and sign as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 September 2019.

83 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

84 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman made the following announcements:-

a) Accommodation & Support for Care Leavers

The Chairman received a briefing on 2 October 2019, ahead of the report being considered by Cabinet on 19 November.

b) Cabinet items – 17 September 2019

For information, on 17 September Cabinet considered the following item:

Update on Outdoor Education sites

Lead Officer – Paul Redford

Sexual Health and Contraceptive Service

Lead Officer – Steve Maddern

c) There were no Children’s Select related items at Cabinet on 8 October 2019.

d) Cabinet – 19 November 2019 – items to be considered

- Proposals for special schools in the north of Wiltshire
Lead officers - David Paice - Special School Transformation Consultant and Judith Westcott - Acting Head of Children’s Commissioning
- Accommodation and Support for Care Leavers
Lead officer - Lucy Lewis, Lead Commissioner for LAC

e) **Adoption West** – On Monday 9 December 2019 the council would be hosting a meeting of the chairs of the equivalent to Children’s Select Committee for all the local authorities members of Adoption West to review how this new service could best be scrutinised.

85 **Public Participation**

No questions had been received from councillors or members of the public.

86 **Draft Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report**

The Committee received the draft Annual Report of the Corporate Parenting Panel (CPP) prior to its finalisation by the Panel later that day, which would then be presented to Council at its meeting on 26 November 2019 in accordance with the Council’s Constitution.

Members were reminded that the role of the CPP was to secure Councillor involvement and commitment throughout the Council to deliver better outcomes for children and young people who were Looked After. All Councillors were reminded that they had responsibilities as a “corporate parent” for children and young people who were Looked After in Wiltshire.

The Director, Families & Children explained the broad range of topics which had been discussed by the CPP and the work undertaken during the period from May 2018 to September 2019. It was noted that the Children in Care Council (CiCC) was a key stakeholder group relating to matters included in the CPP agenda. There was a mature relationship between CiCC and as a result young people had helped to shape the way in which the work was undertaken. Through the Shared Guardianship sessions, they had helped to influence the work and priorities of the CPP. The following had been identified by the Children in Care Council (CiCC) as its own priorities for 2019/20, some of which were continued from 2018/19. In order of priority they were:-

1. Continuing to raise awareness of mental health and emotional wellbeing.
2. Raising awareness of bullying.
3. Continuing to make newsletters and promote the group.
4. Training new staff – children’s services induction, Wiltshire College and any other opportunities.
5. Being professional when holding meetings and to develop skills to be effective representatives.
6. Meeting CiCC’s from other counties.
7. Taking part in consultations.
8. Influencing decision makers by sharing experiences and that of others.

During discussion, Members expressed some regret that there was no reference in the report to actions actually taken during the period, the subject of the report. For instance, there was no mention of how many children were in care, how many children had been missing during the year and how many interviews had taken place regarding children who were missing on more than one occasion. The Chairman suggested that key figures and data sets, which were available, be included as an appendix to the report prior to its consideration by Full Council.

The Committee expressed its appreciation that it received the draft report in time for its’ recommendations to be included prior to the report being considered by Full Council.

Cllr Christopher Devine expressed an interest in the work of the Fostering Panel and offered to be a member should a place be available.

Resolved:

To note the DRAFT Annual Report and recommend that:

1. **the improvements required to strengthen Corporate Parenting in Wiltshire are clearly defined in the report when presented to Full Council on 26 November 2019, with proposed actions where relevant (including additional Councillor representative(s) on the Fostering Panel);**
2. **key figures and data sets are included to present a comprehensive overview of the current situation in Wiltshire with regards to children in care (for example the number of children in care, the number of missing, the number of return interviews, etc.), as had been provided in previous**

reports, as an appendix to the report when it is presented to Full Council on 26 November 2019.

87 Higher Education Update

The Committee received an update from the Interim Head of Employment & Skills on the activity and progress of the Swindon & Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SWLEP) higher education strategy since November 2018, when it was first reported to this Committee.

The Committee recalled that in 2017 the SWLEP board agreed to the direction of travel for the development of a higher education strategy for the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) area which would focus on meeting the skills needs of employers, raising aspirations and developing Higher Education (HE) provision. The final HE strategy was agreed in January 2019 and had two main aims, these being to:-

- Increase productivity
- Raise aspirations and increase social mobility

The Council's Business Plan reflected these priorities in its goal to grow the economy through more apprenticeships and improved access to further and higher education.

Since the strategy was agreed, significant activity had taken place which had progressed the implementation of the strategy and moved the area closer to achieving its goal. Regarding HE, a variety of new provision was being delivered or planned for delivery which included the approved Institute of Technology based at Swindon College. This was due to open in September 2021 and would specialise in delivering higher technical education and apprenticeships (at Levels 4 and 5) with a focus on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) subjects. It would provide students with a clear route to technical employment offering programmes in the following sectors:-

- Advanced Engineering and High Value Manufacturing
- Digital and Information and Communications Technology
- Health and Life Sciences

The successful bid was developed in collaboration with the University of Gloucester, Oxford Brookes University and New College, Swindon and eight local employers.

Closer links were being developed with wider services including early years and this collaboration would facilitate the linking of business and employers with the education agenda, which would include a Primary Futures pilot project which was underway. This was helping to raise aspirations by helping younger children to understand the link between learning and their futures. Members

welcomed and fully supported the work that was taking place with primary schools and in particular the action plans that could be developed by each establishment to meet the benchmarks.

However, some concern was expressed at the apparent closure of South Wiltshire UTC in Salisbury. It was explained that the College was no longer financially viable due to lack of student numbers and the future of the site was under consideration.

Resolved:

To note and endorse the update on the activity and progress of the Swindon and Wiltshire LEP higher education strategy since November 2018.

88 School Ofsted Judgements

Consideration was given to a report which included information regarding the most recent Ofsted Inspection reports published from 1 September to 5 November 2019. It provided an ongoing view of the effectiveness of schools as seen by Ofsted Inspectors.

There had been four published school inspections and two monitoring visits since the last report. Of the six inspections, two were in respect of LA maintained schools whilst the remaining four were regarding academies. It was pleasing to note that four of the schools remained judged as Good, one being a maintained school. The other maintained school had not been inspected since 2010 when it was judged as Outstanding. However, since then the guidelines had changed considerably and that school was now judged as Good.

Members requested that in future a glossary explaining the terminology used in the table of judgements be included.

Resolved:

To note the report on School and Academy Ofsted Inspection Outcomes for the period 1 September - 5 November 2019 and to congratulate the schools for achieving good judgements.

89 DfE Changes - Update from Department for Education

The Committee received an update from the Executive Director, Children & Education on developments relating to children's services arising from the Department for Education from September to October 2019 as follows:-

- Spending Round 2019
- National funding formula tables for schools and high needs: 2020 to 2021
- Consultation on changing the dedicated schools grant

- Early years foundation stage reforms
- Schools causing concern
- Academies update
- Online schools accreditation scheme consultation
- SEND review
- Review of statutory guidance on youth work
- Support for victims of domestic abuse in safe accommodation
- Independent review of Prevent
- First state of the nation report
- Inspection of local authority children's services framework: Implementation review

Resolved:

To note the contents of the report.

90 **Task Group and Board Representative Updates**

The Committee received updates on the activities of the following task groups:-

- Traded Services for Schools Task Group
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS) Task Group
- Youth Transport Task Group

Resolved:

To note the updates on the activities on task group activity provided.

91 **Update on Wiltshire Youth Voice Activities**

The Committee received a report offering a summary of activities for the Wiltshire Youth Union (WYU), the Children in Care Council (CiCC), Care Leavers Forum, Members of the Youth Parliament and Youth Consultants Pilot during the period August 2019 to October 2019.

The Chairman introduced and welcomed Scott Kane, Youth Consultant who was attending to provide an update on a pilot work plan. He explained that he had been making contact with representatives from youth clubs, young carers, Barnardo's and SPLASH and was beginning the process of ascertaining the needs of young people. He stated that he would welcome input from members of this Committee on areas they would like the Consultants to work on. Scott Kane was anticipating that a final report on the pilot work plan would be completed by March or April 2020.

Members noted that preparations were taking place for the 2020 UK Youth Parliament Elections. Candidate manifestoes were expected from 18 November with a closing date of 16 December 2019. Voting would be taking place between 3 and 14 February 2020 and the new term of office would commence on 1 March 2020. Three new MYPs would represent Wiltshire East, Wiltshire North and Wiltshire West and the Committee was requested to disseminate information about the application process for these elections.

Members also noted the interest of young people in Climate Change and it was suggested that the Chairman of the Climate Change Task Group and the Scrutiny Lead Officer be consulted on the desirability of co-opting a member of Wiltshire Youth Union on to this Task Group.

Resolved:

To note the update and to agree that members and substitute members of this Committee disseminate information on the application process for the 2020 UK Youth Parliament Elections.

92 **Forward Work Programme**

The Committee received the relevant items from the Overview & Scrutiny Forward Work Programme and the latest version of the strategy list for the Children, Education & Skills directorate.

The Committee also reviewed its forward work programme, taking into account the outcomes of the Chairman's meetings with the Cabinet Member, Portfolio Holders and Directors to review the services' priorities for the year ahead.

Resolved:

To note the current forward work programme and to endorse the topics proposed for further scrutiny following the discussion with the Executive Members and, where relevant, used to populate the forward work plan of the Children's Select Committee, which will be submitted to the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

With the addition of SEND housing needs for the Housing discussion – Housing for young people at transition time (LAC or SEND).

93 **Date of Next Meeting**

Resolved:

To note that the next scheduled meeting was due to take place on Tuesday 21 January 2020 at County Hall, Trowbridge, starting at 10.30am.

94 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 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

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