

Children's Select Committee

MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN'S SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 10 MARCH 2020 AT KENNET COMMITTEE ROOM, COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE.

Present:

Cllr Jon Hubbard (Chairman), Cllr Andrew Davis, Cllr Christopher Devine, Cllr Chris Hurst, Cllr Jo Trigg, Cllr Fred Westmoreland, Cllr Philip Whalley, Cllr Suzanne Wickham, Ms Sarah Busby, John Hawkins, Catriona Williamson and Barnett

Also Present:

Cllr Pauline Church and Cllr Peter Hutton

15 **Membership & Apologies**

The Chairman welcomed the following members to the committee:

- Cllr Jo Trigg, who had been appointed to the committee at the Council meeting on 25 February 2020,
- Nikki Barnett Head of Learning & Skills Development Services, Wiltshire College & University Centre who was replacing Charlotte Corfield as the committee's Further Education Representative.

The Chairman also took the opportunity to congratulate Lucy Townsend on her recent appointment as Director of Children's Services.

Apologies were received from Cllrs Mary Champion (sub Peter Evans), Mary Douglas, Nick Holder and Hayley Illman and from Dr Mike Thompson.

16 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

Minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2020 were approved with the addition of the following attendees: Mr John Hawkins, Ms Sarah Busby, Dr Mike Thompson, Nikki Barnett and Catriona Williamson.

17 **Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Jo Trigg declared her roles as trustee with Trowbridge future, and school governor for John of Gaunt.

18 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman explained that there were no items directly linked to this committee's work at the Cabinet meeting on 4 February, although the School Admission Policies 2021-2022 were approved at that meeting.

A number of items at the 24 March 2020 Cabinet meeting related to the work of this committee:

- SEND Inclusion Strategy 2020-2023 – the chair and the vice-chair would be attending a briefing on this on Friday 13th March and would update the committee accordingly.
- South Central Independent Fostering Agency Framework - On Friday 24 January the chair received a briefing on this. From the briefing received the chair felt this was a logical and positive move as part of a child-centred approach. The chair advised members of the committee to read the Cabinet report if they would like more information on this.
- Virgin Health Care contract – a report requesting to extend the Virgin Health care contract and to also agree the length of the contract extension would be presented to Cabinet. The chair and vice-chair would receive a briefing on this with the chair and vice-chair of the Health Select Committee and would update this committee accordingly.

19 **Public Participation**

Cllr Sue Hughes, Royal Wootton Bassett Town Council, addressed the committee regarding Local Youth Network funding.

20 **Families and Children's Transformation (FACT) Programme: Impact and Outcomes for Young People**

The Director of Children's Services presented the report and took the opportunity to introduce the recently appointed FACT programme lead (a post three-way funded by the council, police and CCG which reflected the partnership working ethos).

The committee was informed that the programme had been reviewed since the update the committee had received in March 2019, and a Community Safety for Young People work stream has been added.

The early support hub was now operating, alongside the MASH, and focusing on holistic support for families who did not meet the criteria for social care intervention.

The governance structure of FACT had been amended to an executive and operational board model, whose membership reflected the whole-life pathway and therefore included the Cabinet member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Public Protection.

The committee was informed of progress for all the workstreams, including the recent acquisition of a “pop-up” residential children’s home. Through the stronger families work reductions had been seen in missing episodes and suicide attempts. The young people service was developing, and recruitment was underway.

As part of Workstream 3 (best start in life), the Five to Thrive attachment, a partnership trauma and resilience training programme was underway.

Early Years needs assessment had also been undertaken and would inform priorities for the service.

The Pause Project had been running and FACT was looking into potential expansion of the project, cost avoidance to date had been estimated at £1M.

Resolved

To note the updates since the last report;

To note that a review of the programme is due to be undertaken to prioritise delivery of workstreams/project that will deliver significant system benefits.

To request an update for March 2021. The Chair and Vice-chair will identify specific areas for update from the report considered today and inform officers accordingly. The update should include more figures for improved outcome for young people and also figures on savings / costs avoided to demonstrate the impact of the FACT programme (for example number of Five to Thrive champions trained, outcome / learning from the Multi-Agency Use of CMS, outcome of performance reviews, etc.)

To organise a briefing for councillors on the Five to Thrive training programme.

To organise two separate briefings for councillors on the MASH / Early support (which could include a tour of the offices) and FACT programme, this would be designed for new members of the committee but would be open to all wishing to attend.

21 **Schools Funding Briefing**

The committee received a comprehensive briefing on the processes for Schools Funding and were informed that some Local Authorities were predicting a £26M Dedicated Schools Grants (DSG) overspend.

The council had been on track to achieve its recovery target but was now predicting a shortfall of £5M due to a Department for Education change in accounting for DSG in the balance sheets, although it was recognised that the change had been put in place for valid reasons. The recovery plan previously circulated would be amended to reflect this change.

The council was concerned for some of the smaller schools but also larger secondary schools in covering the deficit.

It was explained that the council set the formula, but the money is paid directly to academy schools.

Resolved

To note the information in the Schools Funding Briefing and thank officers for the detailed information provided.

To have a pre-meeting briefing on school funding ahead of council's budget setting next year (19 January 2021).

22 **Youth Transport Task Group - Final Report**

The Chairman of the Task Group introduced the final report and took the opportunity to thank Devizes School for providing both a room and supervision to enable Alfie Lowe to attend the task group's meetings as a young people's representative.

The Chairman also thanked officers from the Passenger Transport Unit for their valuable engagement with the task group.

The committee and Cabinet member acknowledged the importance of youth transport and welcomed the recommendations from the task group. Unresolved transport issues for young people in further education and young people leaving care were highlighted.

Resolved

To endorse the findings and recommendations of the task group with the following amendment to Recommendation 3d:

review post-16 education transport to ensure it benefits as many young people as possible and without prejudice to education settings with limited public transport access, such as Lackham College.

To refer the final report to the following Cabinet Members for response at the Committee's next meeting:

- **Highways, Transport and Waste,**
- **IT, Digitalisation and Operational Assets,**
- **Children, Education & Skills.**

To invite the Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Skills to look again into Public transport for Care Leavers.

23 **Traded Services for Schools and Outdoor Education Task Group - Final Reports**

The committee considered the final report of the task group which had been split into two for ease of reading (Outdoor Education and Traded Services for Schools).

The Chairman of the task group introduced the reports and thanked officers who had been involved with the task group for their openness and willingness to engage, as well as the Cabinet Member who had involved the task group at the earliest opportunities throughout the process with regards to Outdoor Education.

Resolved

To thank officers and Executive members, as well as the chair of the task group, for their dedication to and engagement with the work of the task group.

Outdoor Education

To note and endorse the task group's reports presented to Cabinet on 27 March 2018 and 11 December 2018 and the key findings and recommendations within the reports.

To endorse the report of the task group and refer it to the Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Skills for response at the Committee's next meeting.

Traded Services for School

To note and endorse the recommendations made by the TG and already implemented (paragraph 46 of the report refers)

To endorse the report of the task group and refer it to the Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Skills for response at the Committee's next meeting.

24 **School Ofsted Judgements**

Consideration was given to a report which included information regarding the most recent Ofsted Inspection reports published from 1 to 31 January 2020. It provided an ongoing view of the effectiveness of schools as seen by Ofsted Inspectors, with 10 inspections published that month.

It was noted that at the end of August 2019, there were 415 stuck schools; and 1 school in Wiltshire fell into this category. Work was ongoing to ensure that the "stuck" school would not be in this category at its next inspection and the council was confident that this would be achieved.

It was also noted that only 16% of schools who had achieved outstanding for their previous inspection had retained that grading at their most recent inspection. In response to questions on any analysis undertaken to better understand why this was happening, it was agreed that a report would be presented to the committee when available.

Resolved

To note the report.

To consider, at the next available meeting, a brief report on the reasons identified to explain why schools previously rated as outstanding were not retaining that grading at their next inspection.

To receive information at a briefing session and a report at a committee meeting on the Wiltshire-wide vision being developed for collaborative working among schools to drive school improvements.

25 **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, including:

- OFSTED inspection of children's homes, which highlighted the fact that the market is shrinking but the council's Fostering Excellence programme will be part of providing a response;
- Strict controlling of illegal schools;
- Work programme to support the one "stuck" school in Wiltshire;
- Reassurance that no under-16s were placed in unregulated or unregistered care homes, although this still was being checked for care leavers;
- That the issue of 26% of CAMHS referrals not meeting the threshold would be explored by the task group.

Resolved

To note the report.

To receive an update on the troubled families programme at a future meeting.

26 **Task Group and Board Representative Updates**

There were no task group updates as the CAMHS task group had not met since the last committee's meeting and the other two active task groups had presented final reports earlier on this agenda.

27 **Forward Work Programme**

Due to time pressure at the meeting the committee resolved to delegate to its Chairman and Vice-chairman to investigate the feasibility of overview and scrutiny engagement with the following topics and to present to Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee accordingly, to avoid delaying the start of activity by a full meeting cycle.

Resolved:

To delegate to the Chairman and Vice-chairman of the Children's Select Committee to refer any of these topics to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee following consideration of overview and scrutiny's potential to add value:

- 1. outcome for disadvantaged learners**
- 2. Recruitment and retention of in-house foster carers (**
- 3. Youth Grant / Local Youth Network funding**
- 4. Whole life pathway (potentially joint scrutiny task group with Health Select Committee)**

28 **Date of Next Meeting**

Resolved:

To note that the next scheduled meeting was due to take place on Tuesday 5 May 2020 at County Hall, Trowbridge, starting at 10.30am.

29 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 am - 1.45 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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