Wiltshire Council

AGENDA

Meeting: **Children's Select Committee**

Place: **Access the online meeting here**

Date: **Tuesday 2 March 2021**

Time: **2.00 pm**

Please direct any enquiries on this Agenda to Kieran Elliott, of Democratic Services, County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, direct line 01225 718504 or email kieran.elliott@wiltshire.gov.uk

Press enquiries to Communications on direct lines (01225) 713114/713115.

This Agenda and all the documents referred to within it are available on the Council's website at www.wiltshire.gov.uk

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Membership:

Cllr Jon Hubbard (Chairman)
Cllr Jacqui Lay (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr Mary Champion
Cllr Andrew Davis
Cllr Christopher Devine
Cllr Mary Douglas
Cllr Nick Holder
Cllr Chris Hurst
Cllr Hayley Illman
Cllr Jo Trigg
Cllr Fred Westmoreland
Cllr Philip Whalley
Cllr Suzanne Wickham

Substitutes:

Cllr Pat Aves
Cllr Clare Cape
Cllr Trevor Carbin
Cllr Ernie Clark
Cllr Stewart Dobson
Cllr Peter Evans
Cllr Nick Fogg MBE
Cllr Russell Hawker
Cllr Jim Lynch
Cllr James Sheppard

Non-Elected Voting Members:

Dr Mike Thompson	Clifton Diocesan RC Representative

Non-Elected Non-Voting Members:

Ms Sarah Busby	Secondary Head Teacher Representative
John Hawkins	School Teacher Representative
Maisy Humphrey	Children & Young People's Representative

Declan Kiely	Children & Young People's Representative - Substitute
Catriona Williamson	Primary Head Teacher Representative
Nikki Barnett	Further Education Representative

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Pre-meeting information briefing

The meeting will be preceded by a presentation starting at **1.00pm**, on Microsoft Teams.

Topic: Covid-19 update.

All members and substitutes of the Children's Select Committee are welcome to attend.

AGENDA

PART I

Items to be considered while the meeting is open to the public

1 **Apologies**

To receive any apologies or substitutions for the meeting.

2 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting** *(Pages 9 - 22)*

To approve and sign the minutes of the previous meeting held on 19 January 2021.

3 **Declarations of Interest**

To receive any declarations of disclosable interests or dispensations granted by the Standards Committee.

4 **Chairman's Announcements** *(Pages 23 - 26)*

To receive any announcements through the Chairman, including:

- **Covid-19 update**

The latest update provided to Cabinet on 2 February 2021 (and also considered by Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on 26 January 2021) can be accessed here.

The Covid-19 update was the topic of the committee's briefing session, which took place just before this meeting. Furthermore, members of the committee were invited to submit questions in advance to ensure that comprehensive responses could be provided. The questions and responses will be circulated with the minutes for this meeting.

- **Corporate Parenting Panel update**

The attached document provides an update on the activities that have taken place since Corporate Parenting Panel's last full update to Council (October 2020).

5 **Public Participation**

The Council welcomes contributions from members of the public.

Statements
If you would like to make a statement at this meeting on any item on this agenda, please register to do so by 5pm on **26 February 2021**.

Questions
To receive any questions from members of the public or members of the Council received in accordance with the constitution.

Those wishing to ask questions are required to give notice of any such questions in writing to the officer named on the front of this agenda no later than 5pm on **Tuesday 23 February 2021** in order to be guaranteed of a written response**.** In order to receive a verbal response questions must be submitted no later than 5pm on **Thursday 25 February 2021**. Please contact the officer named on the front of this agenda for further advice. Questions may be asked without notice if the Chairman decides that the matter is urgent.

Details of any questions received will be circulated to Committee members prior to the meeting and made available at the meeting and on the Council's website.

6 **FACT (families and children's transformation) programme update**

Following consideration of an update at its meeting on 10 March 2020, the committee had requested a further update on the FACT (families and children's transformation) programme at its March 2021 meeting, to be informed of:

- improved outcome for young people;
- figures on savings / costs avoided to demonstrate the impact of the FACT programme;
- achievements such as number of Five to Thrive champions trained, outcome / learning from the Multi-Agency Use of CMS, outcome of performance reviews, etc.

7 **Youth Voice Update** *(Pages 27 - 30)*

Following the brief update provided at its meeting on 19 January 2021, the committee requested a further update to include:

- impact (both positive and negative) of this current (third) lockdown;
- impact from the implementation of the new Youth Voice team (including team structure and roles);
- the Youth Voice team's action plan;
- evaluation of the impact of the youth consultant role.

8 **Adoption West Joint Scrutiny Panel - Draft annual report (2020-2021)** *(Pages 31 - 54)*

To consider the draft annual report (2020-21) of the Adoption West Joint Scrutiny Panel.

As this is the first annual report produced by the scrutiny panel, it would welcome comments and suggestions on contents and format to ensure that future years reports provide the Children's Select Committee with the information it requires, in an accessible format.

This report, once finalised, will be presented to the Children's Select Committee in May (or nearest meeting to May) to coincide with the committee also considering the Adoption West's six-monthly report and Wiltshire Council's report on its own performance relating to adoption (permanency planning).

9 **Executive response to the Final Report of the Youth Transport Task Group** *(Pages 55 - 60)*

The Youth Transport task group's final report was considered by the committee on 10 March 2020 (can be accessed here). In accordance with the agreed overview and scrutiny arrangements under Covid-19, it was agreed that the executive response would be deferred until this meeting.

10 **Executive Response to the Final Report of the Traded Services for Schools and Outdoor Education task group** *(Pages 61 - 66)*

The Traded Services for Schools and Outdoor Education task group's final reports were considered by the committee on 10 March 2020 (can be accessed here). In accordance with the agreed overview and scrutiny arrangements under Covid-19, it was agreed that the executive response would be deferred until this meeting.

The final report of the task group was split into two for ease of reading, however a single Executive Response is provided (as there was only one remaining recommendation regarding Outdoor Education)

11a **Early Years and Childcare sufficiency** *(Pages 67 - 88)*

To receive information on places available (and demand) in Early Years and Childcare settings across Wiltshire.

12 **Children's Select Committee - review of the committee's work (2017-21)** *(Pages 89 - 110)*

To consider and approve the committee's review of its work (2017-21) before it is presented to Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on 9 March 2021. This includes key activities and achievements as well as recommended ongoing Overview and Scrutiny work under the new Council.

13 **Date of Next Meeting**

To note that the next scheduled meeting is due to be held on Tuesday 8 June 2021 starting at 2.30pm.

14 **Urgent Items**

Any other items of business which the Chairman agrees to consider as a matter

of urgency.

PART II

Items during whose consideration it is recommended that the public should be excluded because of the likelihood that exempt information would be disclosed

None

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Children's Select Committee

MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN'S SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 19 JANUARY 2021 AT ONLINE MEETING.

Present:

Cllr Jon Hubbard (Chairman), Cllr Jacqui Lay (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Mary Champion, Cllr Andrew Davis, Cllr Christopher Devine, Cllr Mary Douglas, Cllr Nick Holder, Cllr Chris Hurst, Cllr Hayley Illman, Cllr Jo Trigg, Cllr Philip Whalley, Cllr Suzanne Wickham, Dr Mike Thompson, John Hawkins, Catriona Williamson and Nikki Barnett

Also Present:

Cllr Laura Mayes

1 **Apologies**

Apologies were provided by the Chief Executive, Terence Herbert.

2 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meetings held on 10 March 2020 and 16 June 2020 were presented for consideration. It was also noted than an informal meeting had been held on 22 September 2020 and 25 November 2020.

It was therefore,

Resolved:

To approve and sign the minutes of the 10 March 2020 and 16 June 2020 as a true and correct record.

3 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations.

4 **Chairman's Announcements**

Through the Chairman details were provided on the Final Report of the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Task Group which was received by the Health Select Committee on 12 January 2021. The contents of the Final Report were endorsed for provision to Cabinet Member and the Clinical Commissioning Group. The Executive Response was received at the same meeting, and the Chairman and Vice-Chairman attended the Health Select Committee meeting. It was also resolved to reconvene the Task Group to

consider the impact of Covid-19 on CAMHS and the link between CAMHS and the private and voluntary sector.

The Chairman stated it was disappointing more work had not previously been done on support outside of the CAMHS network and the private and voluntary network as requested by Children's Select Committee. The matter would be discussed under the Forward Work Programme item, as the Chairman considered there needed to be more leading work by the Committee on the impact on young people.

5 **Public Participation**

There were no questions and statements submitted.

6 **Overview and Scrutiny during COVID-19**

A report was received in the agenda setting out details of Overview and Scrutiny Arrangements during the Covid-19 pandemic, with streamlined arrangements with fewer formal committee meetings and a Wiltshire Covid-19 Response Task Group meeting throughout 2020.

It was,

Resolved:

To note the report.

7 **Safeguarding (performance monitoring)**

A presentation and briefing for Members of the Committee was held before the meeting.

Under the ILACS (Inspecting Local Authority Children's Services) inspection framework Ofsted arrange an annual conversation with every local authority in the country. In Wiltshire the annual conversation was held in November 2020. In preparation for the meeting the latest self-assessment and performance data for children's social care was shared. A report was presented summarising the Ofsted report following the annual conversation.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Councillor Laura Mayes, was in attendance to provide further information along with Martin Davis, Director, Families and Children, Helean Hughes, Director of Education, and Lucy Townsend, Interim Corporate Director for People.

The Committee discussed the report and comments made by Ofsted, including particularly their interest in the new or developing work being undertaken with family led review of child protection processes and work with fathers, with a view to sharing learning on this on a regional basis. The stable nature of the workforce was noted along with other points as detailed in the Agenda Supplement.

It was stated that it was important that the positive work which had taken place within Children's Services in the past 10 years was maintained, and that it was essential robust scrutiny of performance continue to take place to ensure this.

In respect of education it was noted that the meeting took place during a previous lockdown and some of the information would be out of date with the present situation. Details were provided of weekly attendance surveys, complications with Early Years funding, and the impact of a rise in cases among young people and large cohorts self-isolating and creating Covid bubble arrangements. Plans were being drawn up for a predicted baby boom in the next year.

In response to queries details were provided in an increase of referrals for elective home education (EHE), which referred to expressions of interest rather than that every referral led to the parents in question undertaking home education. Such referrals did increase during periods of lockdown, and all those cases were followed up. It was requested and agreed that a more detailed report on EHE would be produced for a future meeting.

There were also questions on definitionsof key workers, suggestion of rating systems for specific topics to assist the Committee in focusing on key areas, and potential task group looking at a roadmap for the Families and Children Transformation (FACT) programme.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was,

Resolved:

1) **That, in future reports to this committee, the table presenting data include an explanation of acronyms used and also a rag-rating system showing whether figures and changes are good or not, showing trends, comparison to statistical neighbours (if possible using the Safeguarding task group's way of presenting the data), as well as comparison to "high performers" (whether they are statistical neighbours or not).**

2) **That the committee includes in its legacy report a recommendation for the new committee to receive a 3 to 5 year plan or roadmap showing the FACT programme's journey to date (including its original objectives), the current aims and objectives of FACT (at the time the committee will receive the report), and how the council is planning to deliver these.**

3) **That the committee also includes in its legacy report a recommendation "to consider the establishment of a task group to scrutinise the impact and effectiveness of the FACT programme" and some of the areas to focus on could be:**
    - **Integrated case management system – including engagement from partners and progress on detail of case recording;**
    - **Effectiveness of early help / early support and also impact of the Wiltshire Early Support Assessment and Early Help Navigator (post**

introduced in June 2020); (* also in the report as their areas for continuing improvement)

- **Investing in our staff – measuring improvements;**
- **Progress (meeting targets) in embedding a Contextual Safeguarding approach across Wiltshire from 2019-22;**

And possibly the areas for continuing improvement that have been highlighted in the report considered at this meeting:

- **Educational outcomes for vulnerable groups including family and community learning**
- **Whole life pathway service delivery including transitional safeguarding**
- **Integrated children's commissioning across health and social care**
- **Voice – having further impact and influence including outcome focused performance framework**

As suggested by the Cabinet Member the task group would also need to ensure that the voice of the child is embedded in the FACT programme.

4) **As offered by officers today, for the committee to receive figures on education at the next meeting, including:**
    - **attendance**
    - **elective home education**

8 **COVID-19 update**

The Chairman introduced the report from the council's Chief Executive providing a summary of activity to mitigate the impact of the coronavirus in Wiltshire, which was received by Cabinet on 5 January 2021. Ad noted at that meeting the imposition of further national restrictions on 4 January 2021 meant that many parts of the update had been overtaken by events and would therefore be out of date.

Members of the Committee had submitted questions in advance of the meeting, with written responses to be attached to these minutes. These included questions in relation to free school meals, accessing learning, pressures on nurseries and schools, mental health, seeking the views of young people during Covid and fostering.

The Select Committee sought details on the monitoring of school attendance and the reasons for non-attendance, as well as the procuring of digital devices for use in schools, mental health provision and other subjects.

In relation to the fostering campaign it was stated the council was looking at approximately 50 additional placements through 35 foster carers following the campaign, above the 12-15 that would be average for previous years.

In relation to free school meals it was stated that vouchers were being prepared for half term as were provided at Christmas. For digital devices schools had been putting in orders using the £1.1m grant to acquire new equipment, and the Department for Education was working with Secondary Schools.

On mental health, some members raised concerns that there had been a greater impact on the mental health of young people during the latest lockdowns. Self-referrals to support services including on substance abuse had increased as other referrals decreased as a result of national lockdown, and there had been an increase in demand for the domestic abuse helpline. Meetings with stakeholders took place regularly to monitor capacity.

Following discussion, it was agreed to include further responses in an attachment to the minutes and it was,

Resolved:

1) **To note the Covid-19 update as presented to Cabinet on 5 January 2021 and the minutes of the Cabinet meeting.**

2) **To thank officers and note the verbal update provided today on the council's ongoing response to the pandemic with regards to Children's Services.**

3) **To include the questions submitted in advance and responses with the minutes of this meeting.**

9 **Youth Voice update**

A report was received on the results of a survey undertaken by the Families and Children's Commissioning team in the Summer 2020 and the outcomes of meetings held with young people in the autumn. Further updates were provided by Gary Binstead, Head of Commissioning, Families and Children, and Sara James, Senior Manager, Quality Outcomes, Children and Families.

A report was presented as detailed in the Agenda Supplement. It was also stated that a new team was being set up to be responsible for engagement with young people in the future, though the existing forums and others.

The Committee discussed the update, recognising the difficulty of surveying the opinions of young people. They noted that the survey had been provided to only 24 young people who were representatives of groups such as the Children in Care Council, Youth Parliament and Wiltshire Youth Union and therefore to an extent might be unrepresentative, though officers stated the findings were similar to those of a wider Oxford University study across several regions.

Members welcomed the update on a new team being set up to lead on engagement, though some noted that similar efforts in the past had not been as successful as hoped, and the Committee requested a more detailed update including an action plan and a review of the impact of the youth consultant role.

At the conclusion of debate, it was,

Resolved:

To note the update provided and ask for a further update for the March 2021 meeting, including:

- **impact (both positive and negative) of this current lockdown;**
- **impact from the implementation of the new Youth Voice team (including team structure and roles);**
- **the Youth Voice team's action plan;**
- **evaluation of the impact of the youth consultant role.**

10 **Forward Work Programme**

The draft Forward Work Programme was presented for consideration.

It was noted that there was one further scheduled meeting ahead of the May 2021 local elections, should they go ahead, and the Committee would be preparing a legacy report for the new Council.

Members were requested to reflect on the work that had taken place in the last 4 years and what had worked well and what hadn't, as well suggestions for future priorities.

11 **Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 2 March 2021.

12 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 am - 12.15 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Kieran Elliott of Democratic Services, direct line 01225 718504, e-mail kieran.elliott@wiltshire.gov.uk

Press enquiries to Communications, direct line (01225) 713114/713115

Free school meals (FSM)

We have this report on the web but it doesn't really cover what is in the free food parcels and how well the schools are delivering this.
Free School Meals - Wiltshire Council Statement - Wiltshire Council

1. What we are doing in Wiltshire with regard to FSM packs for children being educated at home?

As of the 15 January 2020 the FSM arrangements were as follows:

Food parcels	45%
Locally arranged vouchers	25%
Nationally arranged vouchers	15%
Unknown/other	15%

The national voucher scheme has been reintroduced by the government so the number of schools using vouchers is expected to increase.

2. How do families get the packs? (*seen reports elsewhere that they are expected to go daily to collect them*)

Schools are using methods that suit their community.

3. As schools are now deciding how to provide the free school meals, if schools provide meals on site rather than vouchers is this likely to increase attendance or is the danger then that children on FSM are less likely to be fed?

It is possible that this approach could increase attendance or result in families not collecting the meals. Schools have been asked to monitor the uptake of the meals.

Accessing learning

4. Are children able to access learning of some kind and what alternative learning might be? Is the council able to monitor offers from schools as government has put higher expectation on primary schools to deliver "daily learning"?

The council is able to monitor if settings are meeting the remote learning minimum requirements. This information is available via the DfE Portal. 100% of schools in Wiltshire are meeting the minimum requirement.

5. Access to online learning (Wiltshire's £1.1m pledge) – is it possible to have an update on the purchasing and plans to distribute the 2,500 devices? These are meant for vulnerable children who cannot currently join in with online learning, so does the council already have a list of intended recipients for these devices?

Wiltshire Council is allocating £1.1m of government COVID-19 funding to enable schools to buy digital devices for disadvantaged pupils who are currently struggling to

access learning from home. The funding has been allocated based on the number of Ever 6 qualifying children and Free School Meals eligible children attending schools as recorded on the October Census 2020. The number of children qualifying for these payments at each school has been compared to the total number across the County. A fair and equitable percentage of the total available funding has then been allocated to each school for this unique digital investment opportunity.

The purpose of the funding is to enable schools to prioritise the purchase of digital devices for the most in need and digitally deprived children. Schools can decide to gift the devices to the children on a permanent basis or retain ownership of the asset and loan the device to the child on a long-term basis. The most important outcome is that every device purchased as part of this funding, reaches a child to support and improve their learning opportunity.

Schools are asked to consider, in the spirit of this funding, to distribute these locally funded devices to groups that have not benefitted from other initiatives to date. Such as

- Multiple siblings who are currently sharing a device;
- Children using mobile phones to access learning;
- Free School Meal eligible children for all year groups

By funding the digital devices in this way, schools will be able to:

- Buy devices that are the greatest fit for their children that are most in need;
- Use existing suppliers to secure devices that mirror your current digital assets;
- Configure the device with the software the school uses including remote learning platforms;
- Ensure that the safeguarding and security of devices reflects the school's guidelines;
- Manage the ongoing support and maintenance of the device for its useful life;
- Support your children to access on-line learning and all the resources available.

Schools will need to submit a purchase order or invoice dated on or after 14 January 2020, from their preferred or existing supplier that is equal to or in excess of the allocated funding amount. Please submit these orders or invoices digitally to digitaldevices@wiltshire.gov.uk.

6. There have been comments that children should be sharing devices and spending only an hour on them – hence is this enough time and how does this affect families with several children?

The additional funding will help to address this issue. In addition to the £1.1m from the Council, the DfE has increased the number of digital devices that schools can access.

Pupils who do not have access to a digital device or a quiet place to work can now access a school place; they are classed as vulnerable.

7. There seem to be issues with connectivity to the internet in parts of the county and some families may also struggle to purchase enough data

allowance to support online learning for multiple children – are schools and / or the council able to offer any help with this?

As part of the current DfE digital device distribution programme, schools can request increased data allowances on behalf of their families receiving a device. There are a number of mobile phone companies supporting the rollout and they are offering an increase in data to a mobile phone in the household that is already linked to a mobile phone contract. All the major companies are involved and this will help to reduce the financial burden and worry where there is currently no home broadband.

8. Some schools are giving out paper packs for learning so would be good to know how well these are received?

Some schools are providing paper packs as part of their remote offer – this helps some families who have a number of children sharing one digital device, it prevents an overreliance on digital work, it supports access to home-learning where Wi-Fi signal is poor and some parents and children also prefer paper packs. Schools have processes in place to collect and mark this work so pupils still receive feedback.

<u>Pressure on settings</u>

9. How are the nurseries etc. coping?
Some nurseries are taking in older children where they have a younger family member at the nursery. If the parent needs to work, and they have an under 5 at nursery as well as a 6 – 10 years old then they need somewhere for these children to go hence the nursery is taking them in. Not many but it is the only way they can continue to keep the under 5.

Only childminders are able to take school aged children during the day and only if there is no school place available (It is only allowed if the child would currently be eligible for a school place due to being vulnerable or a critical worker). Nurseries and wrap around providers are not able to take school aged children during the school day and this includes vulnerable and keyworker children.

There is sufficient early years childcare provision currently. A hardship fund was created for settings and payments have been made to four providers. The number of children registered for Early Years Entitlement this Spring is very similar to that in 2020. The early years sector has not had any specific national COVID support and yet remain open to support pre-school children and facilitate the needs of working parents. £1million of the COMF containment funding will be used to support this sector. This funding will enable the sector to remain COVID compliant. There are three strands to the funding:

- financial support for settings where they have a loss of fee-paying income when a bubble is burst, and they need to ask all staff and children to self-isolate.
- financial support for a setting with staff who are Clinically Extremely Vulnerable and therefore not able to work due to shielding.
- one-off payment of between £150-£1000 (depending on the size of the setting) to help with PPE and enhanced cleaning.

In the current lockdown all early years settings are being asked to remain open for all children. A daily attendance survey is carried out, this showed that on 13/01/21, 80.20% of those settings responding were open, with an average of 76% open over a week. This is a variable picture, as settings do not always open five days a week and there are a varying number of closures due to positive Covid cases within settings.

The attendance of all Children Looked After (CLA), Child Protection children (CP) and Children in Need (CiN) is followed up to ensure that they are in a setting and if not that the social worker is informed, and the setting stays in regular contact with the family. Most early years settings will be able to access lateral flow tests through the community testing programme. From the 25 January those early years settings which are run by a school will have access to the lateral flow testing in line with the primary schools.

10. Concerns from nursery workers as to them being at risk by coming into contact with children, plus the viability of privately run nurseries - are there dedicated officers who keep in regular contact with the nurseries to help them through this and address their concerns?

The Council is following national guidance which is based on the low risk of transmission in early year settings. The Local Authority is offering £1m of support to early years settings to meet the additional costs of infection prevention and control. Any provider that is concerned about its financial viability should contact EarlyYears@wiltshire.gov.uk or telephone 0300 003 4561 and officers can offer advice.

Primary schools attendance

11. It was stated in the press that schools are finding that many more people are classing themselves as 'key workers' to enable them to send their children to school. This can have implications for the impact of the current lockdown and specifically in the safety of the school environment.

In view of the reported very large increase in the number of parents classing themselves as 'key workers' during this lockdown compared with the previous ones, has the number of children attending school and having to be supervised by TA's while they engage with online learning in school increased substantially? Is this situation a problem in Wiltshire? If it is a problem what can be done to either clarify 'key worker' status or to support the schools with the increase in numbers?

Overall attendance is higher than in lockdown 1 and reflects the increasing number of critical workers accessing a school place. Attendance is higher in primary schools. Nationally, as at 11 January 2021 14% of children on roll were in attendance (20% in primary; 4% secondary; and 29% special schools). In Wiltshire, the overall attendance was inline with national; 22% of pupils on roll were in attendance in primary; 4% in secondary schools; 32% is special schools.

A letter has been written to parents asking that a school place is only taken up where absolutely necessary, this is in-line with DfE guidance.

12. Could we have the number of children attending primary schools at the moment, compared to the last lockdown and (if possible) showing whether they are attending under the "vulnerable" or "key worker" category.

This week in April last year was chosen as a few weeks into lockdown but not during the Easter holiday.

2020	27-Apr	28-Apr	29-Apr	30-Apr	01-May	Average
TOTAL	1372	1456	1524	1424	1307	1417
CW	968	1045	1078	1010	888	998
'vulnerable'	404	411	446	414	419	419

2021	11-Jan	12-Jan	13-Jan	14-Jan	15-Jan	Average
TOTAL	8357	9047	8910	8798	7950	8612
KW	6700	7349	7241	7077	6349	6943
'vulnerable'	1657	1698	1669	1721	1601	1669

Due to overlap of vulnerable categories, e.g. both EHCP & SW, the 'vulnerable' totals above are the difference between the overall total and the total children of key workers and will include those identified as vulnerable by the school.

13. It seems that there is lower attendance of vulnerable children who could still be attending school along with the children of key workers during this new lock-down. How can we try and improve this attendance as school is often a support for these children and their families?
Are schools able to carry on offering support and monitoring situations where required?

Internal attendance monitoring into team around the school process from daily register information is in place again, flowchart below:

Young People Voices

14. The update we have on the agenda was probably written before the lockdown – what is the council able to do at the moment to gather young people voices re their concerns, etc.?

Wiltshire Council Youth Consultants have continued to consult with young people throughout the Covid-19 period including through our Family-led Review of Child Protection.

All of the children consulted with said they have had support during the lockdown period. Some noted the remoteness of on-line contact and the pressure that they felt under as 'vulnerable children' to attend school, with the latter increasing tension within the household.

44.4% said they would prefer to see their social worker face to face. One young person did not like having virtual contact because he did not already have an established relationship with the social worker.

11% said they would prefer to have virtual contact with their social worker. The young people who said they would prefer virtual contact all said it was because they would get more support and see their social worker more.

The remaining 33% said they would prefer to have no contact with the social worker or did not answer the question.

Young people locally and nationally reported levels of fatigue with on-line communication. In Wiltshire we prioritised face to face visiting early in the pandemic and have maintained this approach to date. We have worked in partnership with Public Health colleagues to ensure our guidance to staff on how to protect themselves and the families we work with is kept up to date. Public health colleagues have spoken to families to help address individual concerns, this approach was invaluable in our attempts to maximise the number of vulnerable children attending school.

Individual risk assessments are in place and these include the views of young people and their families. Where appropriate we will amend our visiting approach.

Impact on children and young people

15. Mental Health is a worry and are young people accessing help they need?

Under current circumstances, the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services task group's final report part B was considered by the Health Select Committee, on behalf of Children's Select Committee (joint parent committee) on Tuesday 12 January 2021, where it was agreed that scrutiny would carry on with the task group being reconvened.

Nationally Barnardo's report that restrictions on freedom, decreased feelings of control and power over aspects of life, and not being able to regularly get out of the house is negatively impacting on children's mental health and feelings of wellbeing. Maintaining some kind of daily routine is viewed as helping to keep motivation and energy levels up. But structure and routine can be difficult to maintain when freedom is so restricted. In discussing positive experiences of lockdown, references are made to the absence of complicating factors, such as school or pressure to conform.

Locally during lockdown, we do know that referrals to community CAMHS decreased. However, this trend has now reversed and referrals into the service via the new Single Point of Access are reportedly extremely high. Modelling work has been carried out by Oxford Health which demonstrates an anticipated significant

increase in demand, this is already being seen in relation to children with eating disorders.

Updates on local development, also received by Health Select Committee, include:

Wiltshire Healthy Schools Programme – whole school public health programme to improve the health and wellbeing of children and young people and in doing so raise educational attainment. Provides an evidence-based framework for schools to work towards covering 4 key themes including Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health. Currently 55% of schools are engaged with the programme.
Education Recovery includes aim to increase engagement with the programme focussing particularly on those schools in most deprived areas.
Linking with School Effectiveness Team and School Nursing Service to be ambassadors of HS, actively promoting and supporting schools to engage and achieve HS status

School Nursing Service – preventative work promoting health and wellbeing, positive mental health and resilience. Regular drop-ins for CYP in secondary schools, 1:1 and group-based work in response to requests from schools where need is identified.

Health Improvement Coaches – an 18+ service with a strong focus on promoting positive mental health and wellbeing and building resilience. They are therefore, well placed to support parents whose mental health and wellbeing may be impacting on their ability to parent and be in the best position possible to respond to the needs of their children.

Local Area Co-ordinators – is a whole family approach to support individuals (including disabled people and people with mental ill health), their families and carers to obtain information, make practical and local connections and live the life they would like. Making local social connections is central to emotional wellbeing and mental health.

CCG are preparing an update on Children's Health Services for Health and Well-being Board which will be presented on 28 Jan.

16. Have there been increases in reporting of substance abuse and / or ASB from youngsters who might be struggling with what is happening?

Reported incidents of anti-social behaviour and substance misuse have reduced in the last year. There has been relatively good compliance with social distancing requirements including with lockdown. Support agencies report a decline in some forms of drug taking but a likely increase overall in the misuse of alcohol. Identifying those who are misusing drugs and alcohol is made difficult during lockdown and there is likely to be an increase in referrals to support agencies in the future.

Fostering

17. Fostering – any response to recent ads?
The Fostering Excellence Campaign launched in April ’20. We have set ourselves a target of recruiting an additional 100 carers over a three-year period.

This year we have already approved 25 carers (Apr-Dec) with a further 10 scheduled to attend Foster Panel before the end of March. In the two years prior to this we recruited an average of 12 carers each year.

In addition to this the Fostering Service has assessment and approved 20 new ‘connected person’ carers.

The percentage of children looked after who are placed within ‘in house’ foster care was at 44% in April 2020 by December this had increased to 50%. Our three year target is to have 65% placed in-house.

Wiltshire Council

Children's Select Committee

2 March 2021

Update on Wiltshire's Corporate Parenting Panel (CPP)

This is an update of the activities that have taken place since the full update to Council in October 2020 on the Corporate Parenting Panel (CPP).

1. New CPP Data Scorecard

1.1 Following data presented to the CPP over the last 12 months it was agreed that we would look at ways of condensing and combining the data covering different elements of the CPP agenda into a more simplified format. Prior to this various data sets were being reported across a number of reports. The development of the new data set focused on the main headline measures from these reports with additional indicators added where required to provide CPP with a sufficient overview of performance.

1.2 The new performance report covers:

- Health & Wellbeing
- Safety & Security
- Child's voice
- Stability & Permanence
- Timely & Consistent Support
- Education
- Care leavers
- Fostering

1.3 Importantly the commentary that accompanies performance report avoids jargon and is written in plain English so it is accessible to children and young people who are in attendance at CPP and family members who may choose to read the published report.

1.4 Below is first presentation of the CPP scorecard:

2021-01-11 CPP Performance Report

2. Strategic Priorities

2.1 The CPP Strategic Priorities originally had a councillor for each with support from an officer. Each priority now has a young person associated with each priority and we will now be using a tracker (3.3) to identify actions and progress against each priority. The ongoing development of the priorities and progress is also being overseen by the CPP Officers group.

2.2 Priorities are as follows:

Corporate Parenting Panel – Strategic Priorities 2020-2021

I need:

1. To have links with my local community where I am trusted, respected and accepted. This means I can access the local community and I am not left out. *Cllr Laura Mayes - Support Officer – Iona Payne - Young person lead – (name withheld)*

2. Support for as long as I need it. *Cllr Pat Aves – Support Officer – Neil Adlam – Young person lead – (name withheld)*

3. To feel and be safe. *Cllr Peter Hutton – Support Officer – Sara James - Young people leads - (name withheld)*

4. To be heard – my voice is not the only way I am heard, it may come out as my behaviour. *Cllr James Sheppard – Support Officer – Sara James/Elly Mills – Young person lead - (name withheld)*
5. Support with my mental health especially at school, at a time and a place that suits me and not services. *Cllr Stewart Palmen – Support Officer – Judy Edwards - Young person lead – (name withheld)*

6. Support to be the best I can. *Cllr Jane Davies – Support Officer – Kathryn Davis - Young person lead - (name withheld)*

7. Support to be healthy and this includes opportunities to be involved in new activities.
Cllr George Jeans – Support Officer – Sally Ellis – Young person lead - (name withheld)

8. A loving home where I have good relationships, respect and the opportunity to see my family. *Cllr Mary Champion – Support Officer – Michele Llewellyn - Young person lead - (name withheld)*

2.3 See below a snapshot of the tracker for one of the Strategic Priorities: "*Support for as long as I need it*"

7. Support for as long as I need it.						
Supporting Actions		**Lead**	**Delivery Method**	**By When**	**Progress RAG**	**Evidence of Impact RAG**
7.1	I have regular contact with my family, at times that suit my needs					
7.2	There is good transition planning for when I move from children's services to adult services					
7.3	work with schools and the Virtual School to ensure robust educational support packages are in place for					

	young people who cannot be in formal school settings.					
7.4	Young People's aspirations are central to all direct work undertaken with them					
7.5	The Council and Partner agencies considers local offers in the form of work experience, shadowing, take over days and apprenticeships for young people.					
7.6	Suitable accommodation is available for independent and supported living					
Evidence of Success						
Young People know where they want to be in the future, and they are on a path to achieving their ambitions						
A reduction in the number of young people defined as NEET (not in employment, education and training)						
Children Say:						
I have been supported to stay in school, further or higher education and have accessed training opportunities						
I don't fall off a cliff when moving into adult care						

2.4 Another of the CPP Strategic Priorities is: "*to have links with my local community where I am trusted, respected and accepted. This means I can access the local community and I am not left out.*" Links have since been made with the manager of the Community Engagement Officers (CMOs) who works with the local area boards and a number of youth projects. To enable our children looked after and care experienced young people to begin engaging routinely within these provisions and connect to local community opportunities the manager of the CMOs has agreed to be a representative on the CPP.

2.5 The theme for the March CPP focuses on the priority "*Support with my mental health especially at school, at a time and a place that suits me and not services*". The councillor, officer and young person met to discuss this priority in December which focused on transitions for young people from child mental health services to adult services and work taking place in schools around a "whole school approach" to mental health and working alongside Mental Health Support Teams in Wiltshire.

3. Child and Youth Voice

3.1 Since the last CPP Annual Report we have now appointed two child and youth voice workers who are both care experienced and come with a wide range of experience in youth participation. Ellie Mills has been appointed as the Youth Voice Lead. The ambition of the team will be to increase participation in the Children in Care Council and ensure children and young people have their voices heard.

3.2 Youth Consultants

Community First recruited and trained 8 youth consultants including a project support worker. They completed several consultations and listening projects with young carers, youth clubs, young victims of crime and young people accessing SEND support in schools, children in care and children subject to child protection plans. They listened to and shared the views of over 200 children and young people, as well as representing the views of their peers in local youth forums. The outcome of their work will now be driven by the Child and Youth Voice team to ensure engagement and participation of young people is maximised, they are involved in scrutiny and young people are supported to work directly with leaders and decision-makers to influence change.

3.3 **CICC Ambassadors**

Early in February a flyer went out for volunteers to be Children in Care Council Ambassadors. The Children in Care Council decided what areas they wanted an ambassador for. These will reflect the corporate parenting panel priorities and will aim to raise the profile of CICC across the council and strengthen links with the community. This received a positive response and we now have most of the positions covered including an additional category titled "recognising achievement". Ambassadors can come from across the council including councillors and officers.

4. In conclusion the CPP continues to review all priority areas and continues to work closely with the Children in Care Council including ensuring young people are represented at each meeting and their voices are heard. The CPP have been able to consider key performance indicators relating to children looked after and care experienced young people to ensure they are safe, have placement stability, have a good education, positive relationships, are prepared for adulthood, independent living and support high aspirations. The strategic priorities continue to be reviewed and developed.

Iona Payne
Head of Children in Care and Young People
22 February 2021

Wiltshire Council

Children's Select Committee

3 March 2021

Child and Youth Voice Update

Impact (both positive and negative) of this current lockdown

1. No further update since the report provided to the committee by Gary Binstead in January 2021. The new Child and Youth Voice Team will become fully operational in March and consultation activity with children and young people can start to take place over the spring to provide a fuller evaluation of the impact of the lockdown on children's lives in Wiltshire.

Impact of the implementation' of the new Child and Youth Voice Team

2. The new Child and Youth Voice Team sits within the Conference and Reviewing Service and Quality Outcomes for Children and Families. Elly Mills has been appointed as Operational Lead for Child and Youth Voice (and IRO's) on a secondment basis to oversee the work of the team made up of a Child and Youth Voice Lead and Support Worker; Joe Sutton and Cameron Strawson have been appointed to these posts, Cameron started in his role on 2 February and Joe starts on 3 March.

3. A detailed plan has been approved at the Performance and Outcomes Board in February and aims to achieve the following objectives:

    a) Engagement and participation of young people is maximised in the youth groups and forums such as the Youth Union, Children in Care (CIC) Council and Care Leaver's Forum.

    b) Young people are empowered and enabled to have a strong voice and are supported to research other young peoples lived experiences, perceptions and insights across Wiltshire to shape service development of the Council and its partners.

    c) Young people are involved in scrutinising and inspecting services across Wiltshire and are part of the Quality Assurance Framework.

    d) Young People are supported to work directly with leaders and decision-makers to influence change from senior levels and cascade through the organisation.

e) Wiltshire Council delivers on its commitment to listening to young people and making sure they are at the centre of services for children and young people.

4. Some key actions to achieve these objectives will be:

a) To improve engagement from children, young people and adults in child and youth voice work we are creating the following roles –

- **Champions:** People who work for the council to help us with child and youth voice. They will feedback to their teams what we are doing and how workers can get involved.

- **Consultants:** Children and young people who have services from social care and are supported to give the council advice based on their experience.

- **Ambassadors:** CICC members, council staff, partner agencies and councillors who have a specialist interest in an issue such as mental health, housing, jobs, activities, equal opportunities and tackling discrimination. These will reflect the corporate parenting panel priorities and will aim to raise the profile of CICC across the council and strengthen links with the community.

b) Plan future consultation events and forums; reaching out to children across Wiltshire and from a diverse range of backgrounds to influence positive change withing the organisation and decisions made about services delivered to them.

c) Arrange and organise regular recognition events that celebrate young people. First event for 2021 (when lockdown restrictions are lifted) - A Wiltshire Council Junior Bake Off for children in care.

d) Create and maintain a child and youth voice webpage and online platform.

e) Provide AQA accredited training to young people in research skills to lead research projects across Wiltshire. Agree a topic to be researched in 2021 with the Youth Union/CICC/Corporate Parenting Panel.

f) A plan is put in place for young people to inspect priority services for children and young people. The aim is for 6-10 young people (a minimum of 50% from those that use the service) are recruited.

g) Involve children and young people in internal peer reviews that take place in children's services.

h) Review the format of the Youth Union, CICC and Care Leaver's Forum so that these groups are fun and rewarding for children and young people to be part of.

i) Support the UK Youth Parliament by holding annual elections to the three constituency areas and raising Wiltshire's issues nationally.

j) Feed into the national youth voice conversation by supporting young people to participate in UK wide consultations put on by organisations such as the Office of the Children's Commissioner, National Youth Agency, Children and Young People Now etc.

k) Facilitate regular meetings between young people with the Leader of the Council and Lead Member for Children's Services, CEO, Director for Children's Services, Director for Families and Children, Director for Skills and Education and Director for Commissioning.

l) Work closely with the community area boards and local youth networks to contribute to funding decisions for youth activities, bring this knowledge and understanding back to the Performance and Outcomes Board.

m) Establish a formal method of communication via democratic services colleagues so that young people influence funding decisions for youth activities and events.

n) Promote advocacy for children and young people and the use of the Mind of My Own App.

o) Promote and facilitate requests for young people to be involved interviews, recruitment and training of children's services staff.

p) Regularly measure the success of initiatives and impact of interventions reflecting upon performance and implement improvements.

An evaluation of the impact of the youth consultant role

5. Community First recruited and trained 8 youth consultants including a project support worker. They completed several consultations and listening projects with young carers, youth clubs, young victims of crime and young people accessing SEND support in schools, children in care and children subject to child protection plans. They listened to and shared the views of over 200 children and young people, as well as representing the views of their peers in local youth forums.

6. **Children in Care** were asked about how they found their statutory care reviews so the IRO's could think about how these meetings are held to improve the quality of children's participation. These consultations confirmed that children and young people prefer reports being written **to** them rather than **about** them and underlined the importance of using child-friendly language. As a result of these consultations we are changing the child's review consultation form and children in care will have the option to have a letter from their IRO summarising their review as well as the full report.

7. **Children subject to a CP Plan.** Children were consulted as part of the family-led review of child protection conferences. This consultation underlined the importance of children being prepared for a child protection conference and having access to independent advocacy. Recommendations from this review include working with the social work teams and advocacy service to ensure children are more consistently prepared for these types of meetings and are referred for opt out independent advocacy.

Report author:

Sara James, Service Manager Quality Outcomes for Children and Families

Adoption West Joint Scrutiny Panel

2020-2021

Annual report

"sometimes superheroes
reside in the hearts of
children fighting huge battles"

Foreword from the chair of Adoption West Board

Foreword from the chairman of the scrutiny panel

DRAFT

Purpose of the report

1. This report is written to:

a. publicly present the work undertaken by the Adoption West Joint Scrutiny Panel (thereafter referred to as the "scrutiny panel") from May 2020 to March 2021 to the following committees:
    - Children, Adults, Health & Wellbeing Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel, Bath and North East Somerset Council
    - People Scrutiny Commission, Bristol City Council
    - Children and Family Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Gloucestershire County Council
    - (*to be added*), North Somerset Council
    - (*to be added*), South Gloucestershire Council
    - Children's Select Committee, Wiltshire Council

b. enable the Adoption West (AW) Board to monitor the efficiency of the scrutiny panel.

c. invite suggestions from the scrutiny committees (as listed in a. above) and the AW board on:
    - areas of focus for the scrutiny panel in 2021-22;
    - the contents that should be included in the scrutiny panel's annual report; and
    - formatting / presentation of the information to ensure ease of reading.

Background

2. Adoption West (AW) started operating on 1 March 2019, as a Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) created by Bath and North East Somerset Council, Bristol City Council, Gloucestershire County Council, North Somerset Council, South Gloucestershire Council and Wiltshire Council as a response to the government's plans, published in June 2015, to regionalise adoption services across England and Wales.

3. Adoption West is a local authority trading company which is owned by the six local authorities and commissioned by them to provide adoption services. Adoption West is registered with Ofsted as a Voluntary Adoption Agency. Further information can be found on its website.

4. The primary aim of this regionalisation was to deliver an adoption service which offer improved outcomes for both children and those who want to adopt.

5. The scrutiny panel (Adoption West Joint Scrutiny Panel) has been created to act as a critical friend, providing independent scrutiny of the work of AW and making constructive recommendations to ensure that AW meets its performance targets and expectations. The terms of reference for the scrutiny panel are included as Appendix 1.

6. The scrutiny panel is an essential element of assuring democratic accountability for the use of public funds; although it does not fall under the banner of 'Overview and Scrutiny' as defined by the Local Government Act 2000 in that it is not a body jointly formed by the six participating councils.

7. The scrutiny panel reports directly to the AW Board. The AW board will monitor the efficiency of the scrutiny panel, including through this annual report.

Membership

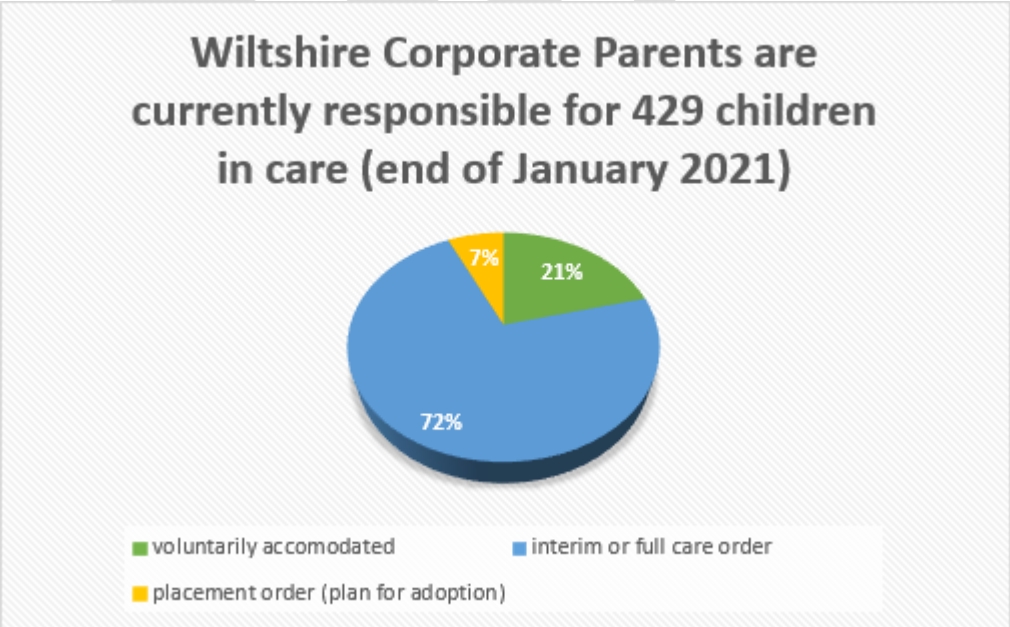
Elected Voting Member

Cllr Michelle O'Doherty, Bath and North East Somerset Council
Cllr Carole Johnson, Bristol City Council
Cllr Dr Andrew Miller (Vice Chairman), Gloucestershire County Council
Cllr Wendy Griggs, North Somerset Council
Cllr Nic Labuschagne, South Gloucestershire Council
Cllr Jon Hubbard (Chairman), Wiltshire Council
Cllr Suzanne Wickham, Wiltshire Council

Advisor (non-voting)

Alana Buckingham, Chair of Adoption West Adopter Advisory Board, Adoption UK

Snapshot *(further data to be added to represent all local authorities within Adoption West)*



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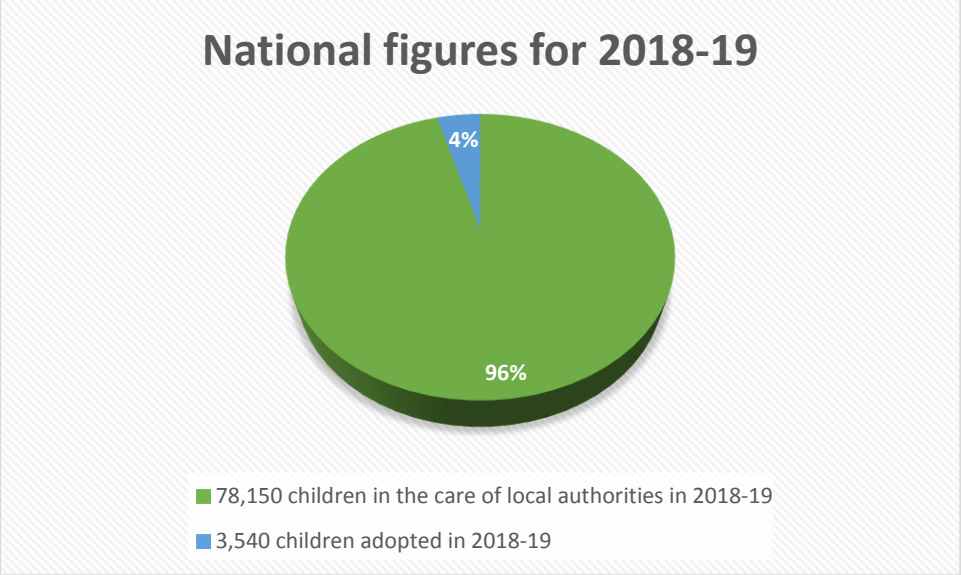

154 Children with a "should be placed for adoption" decision for Adoption West in 2018-19

Work undertaken

8. Between May 2020 and January 2021, the scrutiny panel held four meetings (virtual meetings to comply with Covid-19 regulations).

9. From the time the scrutiny panel was created, it was accepted that its first year would be a steep learning curve for its members as the world of adoption is often shrouded in mystery or media and movie-led misconceptions for anyone but those either working in that field or personally touched by adoption.

10. It was therefore also accepted that a significant portion of its work, in the first year, would be gathering knowledge and developing an understanding of both adoption and the implementation of the RAAs (regional adoption agencies).

May 2020 meeting - Understanding "Adoption West"

11. At its first meeting the scrutiny panel reviewed the process that led to the establishment of AW, AW's purpose, structure and current governance.

12. The scrutiny panel also established which elements of the adoption process were within its remit, as each Local Authority retains responsibility for the permanence planning for looked after children and continues to report to Government on performance in that area. Appendix 2 illustrates the split of responsibility between AW and the local authorities.

13. Finally, the scrutiny panel focused on performance monitoring by considering the October 2019 to March 2020 6-months performance report for AW, as well as the Scorecard data for 2015-2018.

14. The scrutiny panel resolved that some of the priorities identified by AW would also be areas of focus for its work:

- Adopter sufficiency (also a national focus) – having the right number of adopters, but also adopters matching the children awaiting adoption (e.g., sibling groups, older children, BAMES (black, Asian, and minority ethnic), etc.);
- Adoption support - developing clearer adoption support that engages with families as early as possible (rather than at crisis point) and with a focus on preventative actions.

July 2020 – performance monitoring

15. The scrutiny panel considered both the AW annual report (2019-20) and development plan (January-March 2020).

16. The scrutiny panel suggested a number of additions to the AW annual report to enable easier and more robust comparison of data (either against national figures, with statistical neighbours or for "year on year" comparison).

November 2020 – performance monitoring and reporting

17. The scrutiny panel focused its third meeting on understanding the performance monitoring process followed by AW. This included finding out what data is collected, how it is collected, who it is reported to, and how AW compares nationally (RAA scorecards).

18. The scrutiny panel also reviewed performance monitoring reports previously taken to each of the local authorities forming AW, to consider how this can best be undertaken to develop consistency across AW members.

19. The scrutiny panel resolved to consult with officers in each of the local authority to develop a common "core" report template, which each authority could then expand upon to include information that may be specific to that authority, for processes within adoption that remain the responsibility of the local authorities (Appendix 2 refers).

20. Developing a common template as described in the above paragraph remains an area of work for the scrutiny panel; it is also hoped that the pattern / timing of reporting to each authority could be aligned to ensure that all information on adoption is presented in / around May to all local authorities forming AW, including:
    - Local authority's performance report with regards to adoption;
    - AW's annual report;
    - This scrutiny panel's annual report.

21. This would ensure consistency across AW members, which in turn would enable robust year on year performance monitoring and more robust scrutiny of adoption performance by having all relevant information available at the same time (enabling triangulation of evidence).

27 January 2021

22. At its January 2021 meeting, the scrutiny panel considered the April to September 2020 AW's report and made recommendations on content to be included to ensure that effective scrutiny could be carried out (e.g., identifying trends, including comparator data, etc.); although it was recognised, and appreciated, that earlier recommendations made by the scrutiny panel on the format and contents of the AW's reports had been integrated in this report.

23. The scrutiny panel also considered the Adoption UK Adoption Barometer (2020) which offered an insight into the issues faced by adoptive families and how they were feeling with regards to processes and support offered to them.

24. The scrutiny panel noted that adoptive families reported increasing difficulties in adolescence and early adulthood and resolved to focus some of its work on this area (support for adolescent and young adults) in 2021-22. Adoption UK would focus some of its 2021 Adoption Barometer survey on the same topic.

25. The panel then considered this annual report and funding arrangements and resolved to develop its working relationship with AW Board in 2021-22.

Covid-19 impact

26. At each meeting throughout the year the scrutiny panel monitored the measures put in place to comply with government's guidelines with regards to Covid-19, whilst enabling delivery of services.

27. The scrutiny panel would like to express its recognition of the work undertaken by AW officers to ensure that after an initial (and understandable) short period of delays (March to May 2020), services have carried on being delivered at a high standard and with minimum delays.

28. It was also noted that AW had made the decision to maintain its quoracy for its adoption panels, wherever possible, which the scrutiny panel felt demonstrated a commitment to quality, and AW quickly implemented and supported online meetings to avoid delays in the adoption panels work.

Ambitions for 2021-2022

29. There were a number of membership changes before the third meeting of the scrutiny panel, and with three of the local authorities within AW holding elections in May 2021, there could be a further significant change in membership.

30. This reinforces the scrutiny panel's commitment to developing its membership to include up to five stakeholders within the "adoption triangle", such as (but not limited to) adoptive parent, adopted young person, adopted adult, birth family member. This would have the dual benefit of deepening the scrutiny panel's understanding of adoption and, hopefully, enable continuity of work through continuity of membership.

31. Having developed an understanding of both adoption and Adoption West over its first year, the scrutiny panel has set its work for 2021-2022 (Appendix 3 – forward work programme). Significant changes of membership could make it difficult for the scrutiny panel to complete its forward work programme (as new members would likely need time to develop their understanding of adoption and Adoption West).

32. A key area of work for the panel in 2021-22 will be to work with all six local authorities to develop a process to ensure that reporting on adoption is co-ordinated as best as possible to enable robust scrutiny (paragraphs 21 to 25 refer).

Conclusion

33. The establishment of the joint scrutiny panel itself is an achievement for 2020-21 and reflects the commitment from the AW Board and from each local authority within AW to independent, and democratically led, scrutiny of the use of public funds.

Proposal

For the scrutiny committees (as listed in paragraph 1.a. above) and the AW board to:

34. Note the annual report 2020-21 of the scrutiny panel and make suggestion on contents to be included for future annual reports and formatting / presentation of the annual report to ensure ease of reading;

35. Note the forward work programme for the scrutiny panel for 2021-22 (Appendix 3) and suggest any amendments or additional areas of focus for the scrutiny panel in 2021-22;

For the scrutiny committees (as listed in paragraph 1.a. above) to note that:

36. The scrutiny panel would like to invite all councillors to read the Adoption Barometer 2020 to gain some understanding of the difficulties and issues faced by adoptive families, as this is likely to inform the support offered, and financed, by adoption agencies (including AW). The Adoption Barometer 2020 can be accessed here, alongside information on the 2019 and 2021 surveys: Adoption Barometer.

Cllr Jon Hubbard, Wiltshire Council, Chairman of the Adoption West Joint Scrutiny Committee

Date of report: 09 February 2021
Report author: Marie Gondlach, Senior Scrutiny Officer, Wiltshire Council

Appendices

Appendix 1 – terms of reference of the Adoption West Joint Scrutiny Panel

Appendix 2 – Split of responsibilities between Regional Adoption Agency and Local Authority
Appendix 3 – forward work programme

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Adoption West
– Joint Scrutiny Panel

Terms of Reference

General

1. These terms of reference set out the membership, remit, responsibilities and reporting arrangements of the Adoption West (AW) Joint Scrutiny Panel (also referred to as the panel in this document).

Background

2. Following the general election in May 2015 and the publication of 'Regionalising Adoption' (July 2015), in which the government set out their proposals to move to Regional Adoption Agencies (RAA) by the end of the Parliament in 2020, AW was formed and started operating on 1 March 2019.

3. AW is a RAA commissioned to deliver adoption services by six local authorities:
    a. Bath and North East Somerset Council
    b. Bristol City Council
    c. Gloucestershire County Council
    d. North Somerset Council
    e. South Gloucestershire Council
    f. Wiltshire Council

4. AW is a company limited by guarantee and is registered with Ofsted as a Voluntary Adoption Agency (VAA).

5. The respective Directors of Children Services for the six local authorities are the registered owners of the company with ultimate responsibility for organisational performance and appointment / dismissal of directors, which they discharge to the AW Board (see Appendix 1 - AW governance structure).

6. There are a number of documents underpinning the operating of AW, including:
    a. A Members' Agreement, which clearly sets out the purpose of the collaboration, assigns roles and responsibilities to each of the participating authorities and deals with governance and issues such as dispute resolution;
    b. Commissioning agreement.

7. Service delivery is defined by a contract that sets out specific performance measures and the reporting requirements of the RAA.

8. The service operates from three hub premises, each comprising a multidisciplinary team of recruitment, assessment, matching and support staff. There is one Adoption / Permanence Panel (see Appendix 2 - AW structure chart).

Effective scrutiny

9. The Centre for Public Scrutiny has previously identified four Effective Scrutiny Principles, in that it:
    a. Provides critical friend challenge to decision-makers;
    b. Enables the voice and concerns of the public and its communities;
    c. Is carried out by independent minded governors who lead and own the scrutiny process; and
    d. Drives improvement in public services.

10. Some key concepts for the panel to consider are that scrutiny should:

    a. Be independent of the AW Board;
    b. Be inclusive, structured, non-adversarial and cross-party;
    c. Offer constructive challenge to prompt AW Board reflection;
    d. Make recommendations which are evidence based;
    e. Be part of a wider web of accountability, which may include partners and the public;
    f. Not unnecessarily duplicate other assurance activity;
    g. Be appropriately challenging and use effective questioning techniques;
    h. Ensure value for money; and
    i. Provide high levels of assurance.

Purpose of the AW Joint Scrutiny Panel

11. It should be noted that the AW Joint Scrutiny Panel does not fall under the banner of 'Overview and Scrutiny' as defined by the Local Government Act 2000 in that it will not be a body jointly formed by the six participating councils. Although it will not have the power to call in a decision or summon officers to attend, the panel will still provide a scrutiny function led predominantly by democratically elected councillors.

12. It should also be noted that as part of the division of roles between AW and the local authorities, each local authority has retained case management responsibility for the child until the making of the Adoption Order. The local authorities remain responsible for all statutory functions including but not limited to: Statutory Visits, Management and supervision of contact between child and family members, Supervision, administration and finance of foster placements and communication with foster carers (including Fostering for Adoption placements).
    These responsibilities will be monitored by each local authority through its chosen scrutiny mechanism, although the panel will make every effort to notify a local authority if issues within the local authority's responsibility are identified by the panel.

13. The panel will act as a critical friend, providing independent scrutiny of the work of AW. It is an essential element of assuring democratic accountability for the use of public funds.

14. The objective of the panel is to make constructive recommendations to ensure that AW meets its performance targets and expectations. The focus of the panel will be on the Region (not each individual local authority – *paragraph 11 refers*) and members of the panel will work in partnership to focus on performance for the Region overall.

15. The role of the panel is to enhance good decision-making process and it will be able to make recommendations for improvement and make its conclusions public but will not have the power to delay decision-making by AW.

16. Through the panel, and its annual report, each local authority will have an opportunity to demonstrate its commitment to democratically-led scrutiny of AW, without duplicating the workload for either officers or elected members for the six local authorities. It is therefore expected that each local authority would commit to engaging with the work of the panel, either as elected councillor(s) on the panel or as witnesses attending meeting of the panel to provide requested information and answer questions.

Responsibilities

17. The panel will foster and encourage an inclusive, structured, non-partisan and non-adversarial approach which is reliant on evidence rather than anecdote, to perform all scrutiny function on behalf of the Region in respect of AW.

18. The panel will produce an annual report for the AW Board, which will also be presented to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee, or any other Committee the local authority has chosen to review the work of the panel, for each of the authorities by its councillor representative on the panel and, if required, its officer representative on the AW Board.

AW Joint Scrutiny Panel membership

19. Membership: The panel will have a membership of a maximum of 14, made up of:
    a. 7 non-executive councillors: 1 from each local authority + 1 chair;
    b. Up to 6 stakeholders within the “adoption triangle”, such as (but not limited to) adoptive parent, adopted young person, adopted adults, birth family member, etc.
    Consideration will have to be given to a balance between the different roles, as well as geographical representation of the Region;
    c. The chair of the Adoption Advisory Board (AAB) will be appointed as advisor to the panel, to regularly inform the committee of the work undertaken by the AAB, as well as share relevant feedback from adopters collected through AAB’s engagement activities.

    No substitutions are permitted for the panel. Members of the panel will gain an in-depth understanding over a series of meetings before reaching conclusions and it would therefore be difficult (and potentially disruptive) for a new member to enter the arena partway through the process.

20. Appointment: the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee (or any other committee the local authority has chosen to review the work of the panel) for each authority will appoint its respective non-executive councillor(s).
The panel will invite applications from stakeholders and appointments will be made by the Chair of the Panel in consultation with the AW Service Director.

21. Term of office: each non-executive councillor will be appointed for 2 years, and consideration should be given to local election patterns where appropriate. Stakeholders will also be appointed for an initial period of 2 years from the date of joining the panel.

22. Chair: the chair will be a non-executive councillor elected by the panel on a 2-year rotating basis, at the panel's discretion.
Once a chair has been elected by the panel, the local authority the chair of the panel belongs to will be invited to appoint a further non-executive councillor to the panel. The Chair of the panel will act solely in the interest of the Region and focus on the role of chair, whereas the second non-executive councillor will represent his or her local authority and undertake associated reporting duties.

    The panel will appoint a chair from its first meeting until May 2021. After May 2021 the chair will be appointed for a 2-year period. This is designed to avoid conflicts with local election patterns and to allow some continuity for membership of the panel.

23. The Chair has the following duties:
    a) To have a holistic view of performance for the whole Region and to act on behalf of the Region;
    b) To work with the AW Service Director to develop an Annual Work Programme for the panel, having regard to the advice of support officers
    c) To set the Agendas for meetings, having regard to the advice of the AW Service Director and of support officers;
    d) To ensure that the panel's annual report is presented to each relevant committee for each local authority, or delegate representation to another member of the panel where required;
    e) To facilitate the smooth running of each meeting;
    f) To ensure that Members of the Panel have an equal voice and an opportunity to discuss and debate items of interest;
    g) To ascertain the sense of the meeting and ensure realistic recommendations are developed;
    h) To resolve any dispute in meetings through the exercise of his/her powers;
    i) To lead the panel in its role as critical friend; and
    j) To be a champion for the scrutiny role.

24. Quorum: the meeting will require three members, at least two being non-executive councillors, to be attending the meeting, either physically or remotely (online or by phone), to be quorate.

25. Attendance: non-executive councillors are expected to attend, either physically or remotely, all meetings of the panel. Issues with attendance will be reported to the AW Board and the relevant Committee.

26. Voting rights: only non-executive councillors will have voting rights; however, it will be at the chairman's discretion to invite all members of the panel to express their views and opinions on a decision or recommendation being put to a vote.

Meetings of the AW Joint Scrutiny Panel

27. The Joint Scrutiny Panel will meet no less than four times a year and no more than six times a year, unless an additional meeting is either requested by the AW Board to undertake a specific scrutiny exercise or under exceptional circumstances as requested by at least three members (two of which must be elected councillors) of the Joint Scrutiny Panel.

28. Meetings will be set on a pattern taking into accounts the meetings of AW Board and at a day and time to suit members of the panel and will be reviewed on a yearly basis; or following significant membership changes.

29. Meetings format: Members of the panel would be expected to attend pre-meeting briefings (usually 30minutes to 1 hour – just before the meeting), meetings (usually 1.5 to 2 hours) then "wash-up" sessions (usually 30 minutes – straight after the meeting).

30. Meetings can be attended either in person or remotely (online / telephone) to take into account the geographical distances between members of the panel. However, one meeting a year will be set to be attended in person by all members of the panel.

Witnesses

31. The panel will identify the areas it wishes to scrutinise and will request the Service Director (or any officer the Service Director delegates this role to) to identify relevant witnesses and arrange their attendance.

32. The panel can operate flexibly, taking any approach it considers necessary to inform its deliberations, including:
    a. Meeting with members and officers
    b. Meeting with external agencies, interest groups and service users
    c. Considering existing evidence e.g. performance reports
    d. Gathering new evidence e.g. through surveys, site visits or research ***
    e. Undertaking or commissioning analysis ***
    f. Visiting relevant sites or organisations ***
    g. Learning from other local authorities and areas

    *** It should be noted that financial agreement may have to be sought from the local authorities prior to undertaking d, e or f listed above.

Agendas and minutes for the AW Joint Scrutiny Panel

33. Agendas and minutes for the AW Joint Scrutiny Panel will be supported by Wiltshire Council's Overview and Scrutiny team and accessible to all members of the Joint Scrutiny Panel.

34. Agendas and minutes will also be circulated directly to the members of the panel and any witness presenting evidence at the meeting.

Closed meeting and confidentiality

35. To ensure a full and frank discussion of the issues and evidence, the meetings of the panel will not be public meetings. On occasion, the panel may have a specific reason for holding an open meeting, for example to enable wider consultation with interested members of the public. This would have to be a decision made by the panel.

36. Members of the Panel are required to respect confidentiality of specific topics discussed at the meeting as well as the confidentiality of the agendas and minutes for the meetings of the panel.

37. However, the Annual report from the panel will be a public document and considered in public forums.

Reporting and Monitoring

38. The Joint Scrutiny Panel reports directly to the AW Board. The AW board will monitor the efficiency of the Joint Scrutiny Panel, including through its annual report.

39. The panel's annual report will also be presented to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee (or any other Committee the local authority has chosen to review the work of the panel) for the six local authorities by its elected councillor representative on the Joint Scrutiny Panel and, if required, its officer representative on the AW Board.

Review of the Joint Scrutiny Panel

40. At a minimum the terms of reference will be reviewed annually to ensure that they remain aligned with government policy around accountability and transparency and OFSTED guidance.

41. These may be reviewed sooner, either at the AW Board or Panel's request, should there be significant changes to government policy, recommendations from an OFTESD inspection or if the Terms of References set are preventing the Joint Scrutiny Panel from fulfilling its purpose.

42. Any proposed changes to the Terms of Reference will also be presented to the six local authorities' relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee, or any

other Committee the local authority has chosen to review the work of the panel, for consideration.

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Appendix 2 - Split of responsibilities between the Regional Adoption Agency and a Local Authority

Function	Regional Adoption Agency	Local Authority
RECRUITMENT AND ASSESSMENT		
Marketing and Recruitment Strategy	✓	
Adopter Recruitment and Enquiries	✓	
Assessment of Prospective Adopters – all Stage One and Stage Two functions	✓	
Completion of Prospective Adopter Report	✓	
Agency Decision Maker for approval of adopters		✓
Post approval training	✓	
Matching	✓	
Post Placement training for Prospective Adopters	✓	
PERMANANCE PLANNING		
Early identification of a child possibly requiring adoption		✓
Tracking and monitoring the child possibly requiring adoption	✓	✓
Support and advice to childcare social worker on the adoption process	✓	✓
Sibling or other specialist assessments		✓
Direct work to prepare child prior to placement	✓	
Preparation of the Child Permanence Report		✓
Agency Decision Maker for "Should be placed for Adoption" decisions		✓
Case management for the child		✓
MATCHING AND PLACEMENT		
Family finding	✓	
Looked After Child reviews	✓	✓
Shortlist and visit potential families	✓	
Organising child information meeting	✓	
Ongoing direct work to prepare child prior to placement		✓

Adoption Panel administration and management	✓	
Agency adviser role	✓	
Agency Decision Maker for Matching prospective adopters and child		✓
Placement Planning meeting administration and management of introductions	✓	
Support to family post placement and planning and delivery of adoption support	✓	
Ongoing life story work and preparation of Life story book		✓
Statutory visits pre adoption order and Early Permanence		✓
Independent Review Officer monitoring of quality of child's care and care plan		✓
Support prospective adopters in preparation and submission of application for Adoption Order – including attending at court	✓	
Preparation of later life letter		✓
NON-AGENCY ADOPTIONS		
Partner adoption (Step Parent) assessments	✓	
Intercountry adoption assessments and post approval and post order support	✓	
ADOPTION SUPPORT SERVICES		
Assessment for adoption or special support	✓	
Developing and delivering adoption and support plans	✓	
Management and administration of all aspects of the Adoption Support Fund	✓	
Adoption support delivery including: • Support groups • Social events • Post adoption training • Independent Birth Relative services • Management and support of ongoing birth relative contact (letterbox and direct) • Specialist Life Story practitioners • Adoption counselling and training	✓	

Appendix 3 - Adoption West Joint Scrutiny Panel FWP (2021-22)

2020-21	Topic	Witnesses / presenter
Wednesday 4 November	**BRIEFING** – Adoption UK's Adopter Advisory Board (AAB) What / who is AAB and its relationship with Adoption West (conduit for communication, monitoring of services from a "customer" perspective, etc.).	AAB's chair (who attends AW Board Meetings to feedback)
	Key Performance Indicators - Review reports that have been received by each LAs in the past 2 to 3 years and the KPIs in these (this should also identify statistical neighbours); - Review what can be provided by CHARMS (software); - DfE scorecards; - How are other RAAs reporting performance;	
Wednesday 20 January	**BRIEFING**: AUK adoption Barometer (personal / emotional – case studies and quotes) AUK – Covid emergency scheme report	
	Funding arrangements – outcome of review as undertaken for the Board	
	Adoption West – 6 months report (April to September)	
	Amended Terms of Reference (membership to include chair of the AAB as non-voting member of the panel)	
	Annual report for the AW Joint Scrutiny Panel	
Wednesday 17 March	**BRIEFING** – internal. Animation – adoption from a young person's experience (AW website)	
	Develop knowledge of the AW adoption panels (e.g. approval of adopters, matching, etc.) - Membership of the panels - Adoption Panel Six Monthly Report (including quality assurance)	an adviser to explain the work of the panel, and

		a panel member to talk about experience.
	Recruitment of adopters / adopter sufficiency (Q3 data) - feedback and "lessons learnt" from national campaign (currently planned for September 2020); - current number of adopters for AW and "anticipated demand" - how AW does recruit and assess potential adopting families, and how the "supply" matches "demand".	
	Review the work of the joint scrutiny panel – lessons learnt and legacy (pre 2021 elections) Finalise annual report	n/a
2021-22		
Wednesday 14 July	**BRIEFING** – adoption from an adopter's perspective – focusing on the process to become an adopter.	Adopters
	Meet the chairman of the Adoption West board	
	Adoption process The adoption process for the child (from a child being identified as "at risk", being removed, being in care, etc. all the way to the adoption order). If possible, a diagram showing the process and the different decision-making stages (and decision makers). - AW's animation "I am Tia" The adoption process for adopters – expanding on something like this https://www.first4adoption.org.uk/the-adoption-process/	Adoption social worker / Legal Services
	Adoption West - 6 months report (October to March)	
	Update / progress on the AW development plan [NB may be superseded by update on chosen KPIs]	
Wednesday 13 October	**BRIEFING** – Adoption from an adopter's perspective - focusing on adoption support	Adopters (and can also use some podcasts, etc.).
	Adoption support - delving deeper into what is meant by "Adoption Support"	

	update on the development of “early support” (priority mentioned at the May 2020 meeting) + develop understanding of the ASF (and any update from government following the AUK report on the covid emergency scheme) NB focus on support for adolescent and young adults (key issue from Adoption Barometer 2020 as identified at January 2021 meeting)	
	Adoption UK Barometer 2021 (should be published in September)	Adoption UK representative
Wednesday 12 January	Evaluation of RAAs – should come out September / November 2021	
	Annual review of terms of reference (last reviewed 20 January 2021)	
	Update on arrangements / work to date with all 6 local authorities to “co-ordinate” reporting on adoption	
	Review the scrutiny panel’s annual report (DRAFT)	
	Adoption West – 6 months report (April to September)	
Wednesday 13 April	Finalise scrutiny panel’s annual report	

Briefing items:

Adoption UK

Repeat items:

January / February: annual review of terms of reference

February / March / April: produce the panel’s annual report (to be presented in / around May in conjunction with AW’s annual report and LAs performance reports)

June / July: Adoption West – 6 months report (October to March), produced in May

December / January: Adoption West – 6 months report (April to September), produced in November

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Wiltshire Council

Children's Select Committee

19 January 2021

Executive Response to the Final Report of the Youth Transport Task Group

Purpose of the report

1. To present the response of the Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Waste, the Cabinet Member for IT, Digitalisation and Operational Assets and the Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Skills to the Final Report of the Youth Transport Task Group.

Background

2. The committee received the task group's final report on 10 March 2020. Due to the overview and scrutiny arrangements under Covid-19, this is the first meeting of the committee when the executive response could be considered.

Executive response to the Task Group's recommendations

Recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Waste

Recommendation No.1	Ensure that some capacity is retained in the Passenger Transport Unit to deliver effective advertising and promoting of the services on offer and travel options available to young people in Wiltshire, including Connecting Wiltshire.		
Reason for recommendation	This would ensure that young people are better aware of the options available to them for traveling in and around the county.		
Cabinet member	Cllr Bridget Wayman	**Lead Officer**	Jason Salter
Executive response 08/02/21 ACCEPTED	The Government's National Bus Strategy is expected to be published at the end of this month, and we expect the main focus of this will be partnership working between local authorities and bus operators. We see publicity and promotion as a vital part of any partnership and will use the combined resources of Wiltshire Council's Communication Team and the marketing departments of the commercial bus operators. The promotion of the entire network, irrespective of bus company, will be a major part of this, as will advertising targeted at specific market segments. The Task Group has identified areas where young people lack knowledge of		

	services available to them, which will allow us to prioritise promotion in this area and to the younger age group. A Corporate decision was taken in 2020 to hold all vacancies across the Council to support meeting the budget targets set. The budget set for 2021/22 takes a proportion of these vacancies as savings. This has resulted in the Passenger Transport Unit not having been allocated budget for a marketing role.

Action	**Success criteria**
To report back to Children's Select once the contents of the National Bus Strategy have been fully understood.	N/A

Recommendation No.2	Ensure that all bus services contracted by the council have contactless pay facilities by April 2021.		
Reason for recommendation	This would ensure that young people using contactless (which seems to be a preferred choice for parents and carers) can use buses across the county.		
Cabinet member	Cllr Bridget Wayman	**Lead Officer**	Jason Salter
Executive response 08/02/21 ACCEPTED	All commercial bus services in Wiltshire now offer contactless payments, meaning that about 84% of all buses in Wiltshire now offer the facility. Because the commercial bus services carry more passengers per journey, we estimate that 95% of bus passengers in Wiltshire make their journey on a bus which offers contactless payments. There are, however, still buses running in Wiltshire which do not offer contactless payments. Unfortunately, both the on-bus machines and the back-office processing bring additional costs to the operation and, as passenger numbers are low on these routes, this becomes a significant extra cost per passenger, and ultimately a cost Wiltshire Council has to find from its budget. At the same time, with successive lockdowns and low demand in the periods between, bus companies are only surviving because of the Covid Bus Service Support Grant paid by government, which has, understandably, no provision for investment in new equipment. It will be a requirement of future tender rounds that contractors offer contactless payments, in line with our Procurement timetable.		

Action	**Success criteria**
All supported bus services will be contactless when re tendered	N/A

Target date	**Implementation date**
01/04/2023	01/04/2023

Recommendation No.3	Consider, as part of the Wiltshire Local Transport Plan update, developing a "Bus Strategy" outlining the blue print for future bus provision across the county, which could include: a. specific reference to provision for young people (linking to the unmet needs identified); b. a consultation of all key stakeholders; c. any developments linked to the Open Data Scheme. This could also offer an opportunity to: a. review post-16 education transport to ensure it benefits as many young people as possible; b. explore developing (or supporting the development of) schemes like Seed 4 Success, should funding be available.		
Reason for recommendation	This would ensure that the Wiltshire Local Transport Plan and "Bus Strategy" reflects that consideration is given to the needs of young people.		
Cabinet member	Cllr Bridget Wayman	**Lead Officer**	Jason Salter
Executive response 08/02/21 ACCEPTED	Buses and Public Transport are already considered in each Wiltshire Local Transport Plan, and the unmet needs identified by the Task Group will feed into that. We are anticipating that the Government's much awaited National Bus Strategy, published at the end of this month, will heavily influence our future direction in the coming years. Whilst we don't know yet what form the National Bus Strategy will take, we will consider the needs of young people when implementing the Strategy. The Covid pandemic has seen a significant drop in passenger numbers, not only during the lockdowns (when ridership was a low as 10% of normal on some routes) but also in the less constrained times between lockdowns. Bus companies are only surviving because of the Covid Bus Service Support Grant paid by Government to make up for the lost fares. At the moment it is very difficult for anyone to forecast the demand for bus services, and the shape of that demand, when things get back to near normality. In turn that defines which bus services can run commercially and which will need financial support to continue running. These considerations will influence what we can set out to achieve in the Local Transport Plan, or any wider partnership agreement. The Post-16 Scheme is regularly analysed. That analysis has found that whilst up-take has declined considerably over recent years, largely because the commercial bus operators are now aware of the potential of the post-16 travel market and have introduced their own initiatives to attract these passengers. The commercial bus companies can choose to extend their offer to include travel at other times of day, at weekends or during school/college holidays or over their wider network, all offers which the Council's present Post-16		

	Scheme has no remit to cover. The Post-16 Scheme budget is spent on providing access to the scheme for low income families at a considerably reduced rate. Post 16 transport is however discretionary and will at some point need to be reviewed to determine its continuation. Community initiatives such as Seeds 4 Success will always be supported where funding permits and Wiltshire Council will work with Community First, who have oversite of Community Transport in Wiltshire, to determine areas where similar schemes might be introduced.

Action	**Success criteria**
To report back to Children's Select once the contents of the National Bus Strategy have been fully understood.	N/A
Target date - May 2020	

Recommendation No.4	Ensure that the following information is provided to the Environment Select Committee in a timely fashion: a. Developments to the partnership options available under the Bus Services Act 2017; b. The outcome of the "young person test" on the bids submitted for central government funding; c. The outcome of the bids submitted for central government funding; d. Update on demand-responsive transport initiatives nationally and potential application in Wiltshire.		
Reason for recommendation	For scrutiny's focus to remain on developments to public transport in Wiltshire.		
Cabinet member	Cllr Bridget Wayman	**Lead Officer**	Jason Salter
Executive response 08/02/21 ACCEPTED	We expect that the National Bus Strategy will build on the provisions of the Bus Services Act 2017, especially the various forms of partnership which have so far seen little uptake. Until the Strategy is published, we cannot make any comment on how (or if) Partnerships may be applicable to Wiltshire. Once the content of the Strategy is known we will work towards an outline plan for Wiltshire, which will be communicated to the relevant Committees for comment and suggestion. We anticipate that we will also have to go through the same process with the commercial bus operators. Our response to the Strategy will include a "young person test" before we implement any outcomes. Wiltshire's application to the Rural Mobility Fund to enhance, on an experimental basis, the bus services in the Vale of Pewsey, passed the initial tests and has proceeded to the second phase. We have just completed the secondary data submission phase (8th February) and await the outcome of this, as do all the schemes selected nationally. If the bid is		

	successful, the design of the enhanced service will be strongly influenced by a Demand Responsive Transport Board. Youth representation on that Board will be essential, and we welcome suggestions as to how we can best meet that aim. The various experimental schemes enabled by the Rural Mobility Fund will better inform future options for Demand Responsive Transport. However, this funding is allocated for four years and any outcome will not be known for, probably, five years.

Action	**Success criteria**
• As specified in the Executive response above • To report back to Children's Select once the contents of the National Bus Strategy have been fully understood	N/A
Target date - May 2020	

Recommendation to the Cabinet Member for ICT, Digitalisation, Operational Assets, Leisure and Libraries

Recommendation No.5	Consider exploring the development of a single "Wiltshire Youth Card" (as described in paragraph 51 of the report).		
Reason for recommendation	This could simplify access to services for young people.		
Cabinet member	Cllr Ian Blair-Pilling	**Lead Officer**	Ian Robinson
Executive response 08/02/21 ACCEPTED	Any "Wiltshire Youth Card" would need to be a corporate project and funded accordingly. The Passenger Transport Unit would support its implementation, but if used purely as a proof-of-age card, a simple "flash card" so long as the holder's ID and the expiry date can be easily seen, would work perfectly well without the complications of being electronically read across multiple bus ticket machine types.		

Action	**Success criteria**
As specified in Executive response above	N/A
Target date	
As required by Cllr Blair-Pilling	

Recommendation to the Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Skills

Recommendation No.6	Note this report and recommendations within it.		
Cabinet member	Cllr Laura Mayes	**Lead Officer**	Jason Salter
Executive response 08/02/2021 ACCEPTED	To agree that the reports and its recommendations are noted and that any implications arising from the National Bus Strategy that are relevant are report back to the Children's Select Committee at the appropriate time		
Action			**Success criteria**
N/A			N/A
Target date			
May 2021			

Proposal

3. To note the executive response to the Final Report of the **Youth Transport Task Group.**

Cllr Bridget Wayman, Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Waste
Cllr Ian Blair-Pilling, Cabinet Member for ICT, Digitalisation, Operational Assets, Leisure and Libraries
Cllr Laura Mayes, Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Skills

Officer contact: Marie Gondlach, Senior Scrutiny Officer, 01225 713 597, mariegondlach@wiltshire.gov.uk

Wiltshire Council

Children's Select Committee

19 January 2021

Executive Response to the Final Report of the Traded Services for Schools and Outdoor Education Task Group

Purpose of the report

1. To present the response of the Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Skills to the Final Report of the Traded Services for Schools and Outdoor Education Task Group.

Background

2. The committee received the task group's final reports on 10 March 2020. Due to the overview and scrutiny arrangements under Covid-19, this is the first meeting of the committee when the executive response could be considered.

3. The findings of the task group were presented in two reports for ease of reading (one on outdoor education and one on traded services for schools); however, it seemed more logical to present the executive response in a single document. This is because there was a single recommendation regarding outdoor education, as previous recommendations from the task group had already been presented to Cabinet.

Executive response to the Task Group's recommendations

Recommendation linked to Outdoor Education

Recommendation No.1	Ensure that all councillors are aware of the offer at Braeside and Oxenwood (councillors briefing note, elected wire – scrutiny story of the week, etc.) (*paragraph 30 of the report*)			
Reason for recommendation	To raise awareness of the centres having remained operational.			
Cabinet member	Cllr Laura Mayes		**Lead Officer**	Paul Redford
Executive response	12/01/21	ACCEPTED	Completed	
Action				**Success criteria**
Presence maintained on Right Choice platform to promote and encourage education enquiries				Currently furloughed
Target date			**Implementation date**	
01/22			Ongoing from 02/20	

Recommendations linked to Traded Services for Schools

Recommendation No.1	Note the recommendations made by the TG and already implemented (paragraph 46).			
Cabinet member	Cllr Laura Mayes		**Lead Officer**	Paul Redford
Executive response	12/01/21	ACCEPTED	Tasks completed, with one exception - business planning	

Action	**Success criteria**
Business plans and 5-year financial forecasts have been delayed and impacted due to onset of coronavirus outbreak. These will be resolved once COVID impact has ceased. All other actions completed.	Traded offer continues to be delivered during COVID era.

Target date	**Implementation date**
For business planning and forecasts March 2022	March 2022

Recommendation No.2	Ensure that the Traded Services for School's team is resourced in such a way to enable it to: a. develop a more sophisticated pricing approach, including discounts / packages / bundles offers *to maximise customer retention*; b. deliver the traded services for schools' project plan *to ensure Traded Services for School can become commercially viable;* c. develop the traded services' offer "beyond" schools and outside of the county, including "back office support" for charities and community groups (such as building management, DBS checks, etc.), *to maximise potential customer base;* d. develop a process to record and share information from customers *to enable pre-empting of needs and tailoring of approach to enhance customers' experience (and satisfaction);* e. develop with the relevant service(s) the automation of financial reporting (between SAP and Right Choice) *to maximise accuracy and release officer's time.*			
Reason for recommendation	As shown in *italics* in the above			
Cabinet member	Cllr Laura Mayes		**Lead Officer**	Paul Redford
Executive response	12/01/21	ACCEPTED	Resourcing now part of annual funding	

Action	**Success criteria**
Procurement of new ERP will delay any merge of accounting procedures between platforms.	Portability and accessibility of data without officer involvement

Target date	**Implementation date**
March 2022	**March 2020**

Recommendation No.3	Considers the establishment of a project / governance board made up of relevant director(s), head(s) of service, executive member(s) and representative(s) from overview and scrutiny to support the development and embedding of Traded Services for Schools by providing encouragement and oversight, with an initial focus on the following areas: a. Implementation of the recommendations from the SWAP audit report *to ensure robustness of Traded Services for School*; b. Development of key performance indicators for traded services for schools, including Right Choice (usability of the system and quality of the services themselves) *to enable monitoring of performance*; c. Development of a business plan by each service area *to support the embedding of a commercial approach*; d. Financial reporting *to enable monitoring of performance*.			
Reason for recommendation	As shown in *italics* in the above			
Cabinet member	Cllr Laura Mayes		**Lead Officer**	Paul Redford
Executive response	12/01/21	ACCEPTED	Not yet progressed due to COVID	

Action	**Success criteria**
Recommendations still to be formally implemented	To be confirmed
Target date	
March 2022	

Recommendation No.4	Provide an update to the Children's Select Committee within a year on recommendations 3 and 4 as well as any other development for Traded Services for School.			
Reason for recommendation	The task group concluded its work when Traded Services for School was still relatively newly established.			
Cabinet member	Cllr Laura Mayes		**Lead Officer**	Paul Redford
Executive response	12/01/21	ACCEPTED	Recommendations not completed due to COVID	

Action	**Success criteria**
All recommendations to be completed after COVID	To be confirmed
Target date	
March 2022	

Recommendation No.5	Ensure the council takes available opportunities to work with service areas to help them develop in a way that enables them to deliver more efficiently as traded services (i.e. better meet customers' demand) as well as present opportunities for staff (i.e. continuous professional development, revised team structure, etc.).			
Reason for recommendation	To support commercialism opportunities			
Cabinet member	Cllr Laura Mayes		**Lead Officer**	Paul Redford
Executive response	12/01/21	ACCEPTED	Traded Services Collective to bring all the teams together.	

Action	**Success criteria**
Ongoing work to ensure teams working together to provide services collaboratively.	To be confirmed
Target date	
Ongoing – March 2022	

Recommendation No.6	Ensure that Cabinet identifies a member to have responsibility for commercialism. This member should be made fully aware of the expertise developed by the Traded Services for School team and how this could be used by other service areas developing a commercialism approach.			
Reason for recommendation	To support commercialism opportunities			
Cabinet member	Cllr Laura Mayes		**Lead Officer**	Paul Redford
Executive response	12/01/21	AMENDED		

Action	**Success criteria**
To forward this recommendation, and final report linked to it, for consideration by the Commercialism Task Group (which was set up after this task group completed its work).	tbc
Target date	
When the Commercialism Task Group resumes it work. *The Commercialism Task Group suspended its activity during the Covid-19 pandemic.*	

Recommendation No.7	Consider developing with Human Resources a recruitment process specific to Traded Services with Schools.			
Reason for recommendation	To ensure that traded services for schools can be developed to flexibly meet customers' demand.			
Cabinet member	Cllr Laura Mayes		**Lead Officer**	Paul Redford
Executive response	12/01/21	ACCEPTED	HR packages revised for 2021	

Action			**Success criteria**
Wrap-around Recruitment package not yet designed. Demand will be assessed after COVID			tbc
Target date			
March 2022			

Recommendation No.8	Raise councillors' awareness of both Right Choice and Traded Services for Schools through communication.			
Reason for recommendation	To enable councillors to advise or signpost schools and other groups.			
Cabinet member	Cllr Laura Mayes		**Lead Officer**	Paul Redford
Executive response	12/01/21	ACCEPTED	Ongoing work	
Action				**Success criteria**
Information provided to Children's Select Committee annually.				tbc
Target date				
March 2022				

4. Traded Services continues to work with settings and trade services with buy-backs in February/March (Local Authority-Maintained Schools) and August/September (Academies/Multi-Academies Trusts).

5. Whilst maintaining service delivery and trading levels with education sites, the focus for the team has moved to support education sites through the COVID period and has prioritised delivery of:
    - One-stop communication platform to all sites and enquiry resolution
    - Online repository of all COVID-related information, notices and updates
    - Rollout of DfE (Department for Education) and Local Authority Digital Device programmes
    - Rollout of Free School Meals funding and co-ordination of advice and enquiry resolution for parents and schools
    - Co-ordination of PPE (personal protection equipment) supplies to all Schools throughout outbreak.

Proposal

6. To note the executive response to the Final Report of the **Traded Services for Schools and Outdoor Education Task Group.**

Cllr Laura Mayes, Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Skills

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Wiltshire Council

Children's Select Committee

2 March 2021

Childcare Sufficiency Report

Executive Summary

Childcare is key to preparing children for school and supporting the economy. The economic value of childcare is evidenced not only in the employment opportunities this sector provides but also in enabling people to work. EPPE Project Research 2004[1] shows that disadvantaged children who have attended childcare settings achieve better outcomes than those who do not. A good quality preschool education can support a child to reach a Good Level of Development by the end of the Foundation Stage, so that they are ready for school and able to participate in a learning environment.

Purpose of Report

1. This report outlines the work being taken forward to meet the requirement to make available sufficient childcare in the local area[2], which is a statutory duty placed on the Local Authority.

Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

2. This report is relevant to the following priorities and objectives laid down within the Council's Business Plan:

   a. Good school results - *Promote high educational standards for all children, working closely with education providers, schools, colleges and academies*
   b. Early Intervention (Prevention): Proactive Early Help and Children's Centres' services - *Re-shape the way we deliver services, with more focus on providing help early in a child's life and on supporting families where parents have difficulties which affect their ability to parent effectively through strong ongoing relationships with families and within communities*
   c. Military and civilian communities are well integrated **-** *Ensure military personnel, their dependents and veterans suffer no disadvantage in access to services compared to the local population.*
   d. Working with schools to support children who are vulnerable to underachievement – *including children from low-income families, those in care and those with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND).*

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[1] Sylva K, et al (2004) *The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) Project.* London: Institute of Education, University of London.

[2] https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/596460/early_education_and_childcare_statutory_guidance_2017.pdf

Background

3. Wiltshire Council has a statutory duty to secure sufficient childcare places[3], so far as is reasonably practicable, for working parents, or parents who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0-14 (or up to 18 for children with disabilities). This is also relevant for children who are entitled to Two-Year-Old Funding, Three and Four-Year-Old Funding (universal entitlement and the extended 30 hours entitlement).

4. The entitlement above should be available all year round, meaning there is an expectation that families will be able to access childcare through holiday periods, and also outside school times, between 8am and 6pm if they wish. This makes for a very complicated pattern of support that needs to be delivered by the childcare market.

5. Officers use three levels of information to establish commissioning priorities and actions in order to create sufficient childcare across Wiltshire:

    a. Population data enables an understanding of how many additional childcare places may be needed across Wiltshire due to migration and additional housing.

    b. This information is then overlaid with the current percentage take up of places in each locality, town or village to understand the specific demand in each area. The forecast for uptake of available early years childcare places across the county in January 2021 is 62%. This compares to 68% in January 2020. The third lockdown has had an impact on the sector.

    c. Local knowledge allows for an appreciation of how a local community operates e.g. there may be places in a village which are not accessible to people from a nearby town, or extra demand may be put on a town by people who work but do not live there. This data also plays an important role in the success of funding applications to the Department for Education, and requests for funding in relation to Section 106 contributions for capital projects. This helps the Council to support areas in Wiltshire where there is a need for additional provision and allows for contributions towards building or expansion projects.

Current Sufficiency

6. The January 2021 lockdown has led to a decrease in the number of children accessing an early years' place. On average 76% of settings are open on any one day, with 83% being the greatest number of settings open. This is 20% higher than in July 2020. However, in November 2020 as the confidence in early years grew there were up to 90% of settings reporting that they were open. Not every setting opens every day, so this is very close to a general expectation in a normal year. The funding for 2,3, & 4-year olds Early Years Entitlement children was only 4% lower than in 2019. This reflected the trend in the south west and some settings had a considerable increase in hours accessed.

[3] Early Education & Childcare Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities (March 2017)

7. The table below shows the number of childcare providers across the county by type and the range of available provision for families of children under 12 to choose from.

Ofsted registered providers in Wiltshire at 31st December 2020:

Type of childcare provider	**Number registered as of 31st December 2020**
Childminders	400
Childcare in non-domestic premises	364
Childcare in domestic premises	2
Home Childcare (nannies)	82

8. The percentage of children aged two benefiting from some early education entitlement (Data from the Local Governments Interactive Tool - LAIT) is below:

Local Authority	**2016**	**2017**	2018	2019	2020
Wiltshire	77%	78%	87%	71%	80%
England	68%	71%	72%	68%	69%

9. Wiltshire has recovered from the dip in 2019 with funded provision in Spring 2020 offered to 80% of two year olds who are entitled to it. This is 11% above the national average. During 2019 work was undertaken with health visitors and children's centres to increase the take up of funded places by two year olds. Wiltshire had 72% take up in the Autumn Term and we expect this to continue to increase in the Spring Term.

10. The percentage of children aged three or four benefiting from some early education entitlement (Data from the Local Governments Interactive Tool - LAIT)

Local authority	**2016**	**2017**	2018	2019	**2020**
Wiltshire	96%	95%	94%	93%	93%
England	95%	94%	94%	94%	93%

11. Wiltshire continues to offer funded provision to the same number of children as the national average. As part of the Best Start in Life FACT Programme there is a project group of multi agency professional working to find ways to increase the uptake.

Occupancy of early years settings across Wiltshire

12. There were moderate occupancy levels across Wiltshire in October 2020, a month after the opening of all settings in September following the lifting of lockdown restrictions. Demand for places quickly recovered and was reflective of Autumn 2019. Funding for settings was made at broadly the same level as they would have received in Autumn 2019, enabling settings to remain sustainable. It demonstrates that there are sufficient childcare places available across the county as a whole at this time.

13. The table below shows occupancy of early years settings by community area, comparing March 2020 pre COVID with October 2020 post COVID. Although figures were slightly down that is to be expected for the time of year and shows the recovery that the early years sector made after the first lockdown.

	March 2020 (pre COVID)				October 2020			
Community Area	**Occupancy percentage across the week**							
Age range	0-1 year olds	2 year olds	3-4 year olds	Overall	0-1 year olds	2 year olds	3-4 year olds	Overall
Amesbury	62%	74%	77%	71%	59%	55%	65%	62%
BOA	86%	72%	83%	80%	74%	70%	57%	63%
Calne	49%	59%	67%	58%	49%	57%	51%	50%
Chippenham	51%	48%	72%	57%	50%	50%	51%	49%
Corsham	49%	66%	59%	58%	49%	40%	56%	52%
Devizes	50%	50%	69%	56%	60%	43%	57%	52%
Malmesbury	42%	54%	73%	56%	42%	51%	50%	51%
Marlborough	56%	53%	69%	59%	57%	34%	56%	50%
Melksham	82%	69%	77%	76%	57%	70%	62%	63%
Pewsey	22%	46%	73%	47%	81%	42%	53%	51%
RWB and Cricklade	66%	61%	68%	65%	33%	45%	55%	51%
Salisbury	54%	56%	69%	60%	51%	51%	56%	54%
Southern Salisbury	76%	53%	74%	68%	64%	47%	60%	53%
SW Salisbury	49%	51%	67%	56%	45%	41%	51%	49%
Tidworth	68%	76%	91%	78%	56%	56%	68%	62%
Trowbridge	73%	68%	73%	71%	54%	69%	53%	53%
Warminster	69%	59%	77%	68%	69%	56%	63%	60%
Westbury	66%	68%	77%	70%	58%	70%	64%	66%
Total	**59%**	**60%**	**73%**	**64%**	**56%**	**53%**	**57%**	**55%**

14. In January, as market confidence grew, an increase in occupancy was expected as early years funding returned to being place based. However, the current lockdown has resulted in fewer children attending, this is illustrated in the table in 15.

15. The reduction in occupancy in Tidworth is due to the development of new childcare places to meet new demand in relation to the movement of military families from Germany to the area in 2020. However, the number of families was not as great as expected and we now have some spare capacity in that area.

Community Area	October 2020 occupancy	January 2021 occupancy	Difference	January 2020 occupancy	Difference
Amesbury	62%	69%	7%	73%	-4%
Bradford on Avon	63%	72%	9%	79%	-7%
Calne	50%	52%	2%	60%	-8%
Chippenham	49%	57%	8%	65%	-8%
Corsham	49%	59%	10%	61%	-2%
Devizes	52%	56%	4%	63%	-7%
Malmesbury	51%	61%	10%	68%	-7%
Marlborough	50%	55%	5%	61%	-6%
Melksham	63%	69%	6%	75%	-6%
Pewsey	51%	58%	7%	65%	-7%
RWB/Cricklade	50%	61%	11%	64%	-3%
Salisbury	54%	63%	9%	65%	-2%
South West	49%	55%	6%	60%	-5%
Southern Wilts	53%	62%	9%	67%	-5%
Tidworth	62%	66%	4%	86%	-20%
Trowbridge	53%	63%	10%	71%	-8%
Warminster	60%	64%	4%	72%	-8%
Westbury	66%	75%	9%	76%	-1%
Total	55%	62%	7%	68%	-6%

16. Currently there is not a shortage of childcare across Wiltshire. However, COVID19 has had an impact on the sector and specifically on Out of School Care. Some providers are finding the current market extremely challenging. This is because they need to stay open for low numbers of children, which affects their margin of profitability and sustainability. During February half term many of them chose not to open as it was not financially viable.

17. Although there is sufficient early years childcare in the county, the sustainability of the sector has been affected by the COVID pandemic, with lower numbers of parent paid hours being provided. This is due to furloughing, the impact of COVID on some sectors and more parents working from home which have reduced the need for childcare.

School Nurseries Capital Fund awarded by Department of Education

18. The table below shows the two new provisions that have been funded by the DfE to create school-based quality nursery in deprived areas with a low Good Level of Development (GLD) score. These opened in January 2021.

Name of school	Use of funding	Amount awarded
Princecroft Primary School, Warminster	The new provision has created new nursery places for 30 children	**Up to £470,000**

	during term-time, wrap-around care and holiday care	
Southbroom infants School, Devizes	This refurbishment project created a dedicated all-through nursery provision to support vulnerable families. The provision offers nursery term-time and wrap-around care for 56 children, and holiday care for up to 48 children	**Up to £187,163.40** **School are providing own financial contribution of £20,796 as project total is £207,959.40**

Southbroom Nursery

Princecroft Nursery – near completion

Princecroft School

(near completion)

Housing Developments

19. Continuous monitoring of available childcare provision ensures that the future demand for early years places can be met. Commissioners are involved in spatial planning to influence appropriate sites for future development up to 2036, and requests for capital funding under the section 106 policy will continue to be made as necessary to meet new demand. Contributions for new early years places are sought where there are more than 10 housing units proposed.

20. The table below shows the amount of section 106 capital funding that has been received in 2019 / 20, to support childcare provision in the county and ensure that families have access to good quality provision as the demand for places increases.

Section 106 Capital Funding Applications 2019-2020			
Area	Source of funding	Amount of contribution	Amount committed to date
BOA Early Years provision	S106 contribution for Early Years and Childcare provision	£90,743 (This is the first payment; a further payment of £70,787 was due. This is currently being followed up with developers)	No funding has been committed at this time
Corsham/Rudloe Project	S106 contributions for Early Years and Childcare provision	£178,336	£20,000 of this funding has been allocated to the Springfield Hub Early Years project
Trowbridge (Bradley Road development)	S106 contribution for Early Years and Childcare provision	£ 153,645	No funding has been committed at this time

21. A new nursery is registered and ready to open in the Springfield Hub in Corsham but the reduction in the need for childcare has delayed its opening until at least Summer 2021.

22. Trinity School in Devizes has appointed a nursery provider to offer onsite provision to meet the need of the increase in housing in the Devizes area.

23. A national chain provider has chosen to build an 81-place nursery at Longhedge in Salisbury which should be open for Summer 2021. This will meet much of the early years' childcare need for the area along with the available capacity in other nearby settings.

Sufficiency Concerns

24. Even with the outbreak of COVID-19 there are currently only three areas of concern in Wiltshire. However, officers are closely monitoring the sufficiency and sustainability of childcare providers and will be responding to any changes in capacity and availability.

Community area	Gap	Action
Bradford on Avon	Shortage of provision for children aged 0-4	S106 funding has been agreed for the development of new places
Melksham	Shortage of care for 0-1-year olds	A bid has been put in for S106 funding to develop new places
Marlborough	Lack of provision in the town which is open from 8am- 6pm, specifically for babies	Discussions with providers to increase the provision

Military Population

25. Over the last year Wiltshire Council has managed a major programme arising from the British Army's Basing Project (ABP). Wiltshire received the largest net addition of troops to be relocated from Germany under the Ministry of Defence (MoD) programme. The military presence in Wiltshire is significant with more than 20 per cent of the Regular British Army now accommodated in the county. The net addition is 4,000 personnel plus 3,200 spouses and children, leading to expected additional demand on childcare places. This resulted in the development of new early years provision, alongside new schools in the army basing areas of Tidworth, Ludgershall, Larkhill, Bulford and Lyneham.

26. £1,496,070 of funding was provided by the MoD to ensure that there is sufficient childcare for families across the county. Additional provision was developed, and the demand is currently being met for these additional families. Any subsequent additional demand will be discussed with the military as and when they expand their Army Basing Project.

Main considerations for the council

Early years entitlement and the cost of childcare

27. A continuing challenge for our early years providers is the ongoing concern whether the funding rate is sufficient to ensure sustainability (please see the finance section). This is a national issue and has been widely discussed for a number of years. Officers continue to provide business health checks to support providers to maintain their sustainability, and national Early Years groups continue to lobby central government for a review of funding levels.

28. When looking at the cost of childcare it can be difficult to compare like with like as costs vary from one childcare setting to another. Some settings provide nappies, wipes, snacks and meals as part of their fees and others charge extra for these, at a range of costs in line with government guidelines. In addition, some settings

offer discounts to siblings and staff. Costs are kept under regular review by Wiltshire Council officers.

Early Years Workforce

29. Providers continue to report that their greatest challenge is the recruitment of staff which reflects the national position. Historically, the sufficiency team has attended recruitment events to support providers and most settings are trying to address recruitment challenges through growing their own staff, apprenticeships and encouraging more people to work in childcare. Consideration is being given nationally on how to promote childcare as a credible option choice for young people as well as those returning to work or thinking of a career change.

30. A campaign to promote childcare as an attractive offer to those who are looking for an alternative career has been developed by Wiltshire Council, and will launch in April.

31. Wiltshire Council has worked with Jobcentre Plus and Family and Community Learning, to develop a Sector-based Work Academy Programme (SWAP) course which can be mandated by the Jobcentre. This programme involves pre-employment training, work experience and a guaranteed job interview. One of our local chain providers is currently offering the work and interview element of this and if successful we hope to increase the number of providers involved. 20 participants accessed this programme in January.

COVID-19

32. During COVID-19 there has been significant pressure on the Early Years market to ensure that childcare is available for as many families as possible. The sector has been open for children since the start of the initial lockdown and has remained open in line with government guidance ever since, enabling over 7000 children per week to receive childcare in December 2020.

33. During the pandemic all settings have been offered support from the finance and early years teams in the Local Authority if their business is at risk of financial hardship, and four settings accessed this funding.

34. The early years sector has not had any specific national COVID support and yet remain open to support pre-school children and facilitate the needs of working parents. Wiltshire Council has allocated £1million of the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) to be used to support this sector. This funding will enable the sector to remain COVID compliant and help to reduce transmission, and keep settings open for children and families. There are three strands to the funding:
    - financial support for settings where they have a loss of fee-paying income when a bubble is burst, and they need to ask all staff and children to self-isolate

- financial support for a setting with staff who are Clinically Extremely Vulnerable and therefore not able to work due to shielding
- one-off payment of between £150-£1000 (depending on the size of the setting) to help with PPE and enhanced cleaning.

In the first week in February there were 48 applications received from settings, in relation to a burst bubble in their provision since November 2020. These have all been offered the additional funding.

Commissioning Considerations

35. Officers will continue to develop the quality and scope of early years and childcare provision and work closely with providers to ensure that there are sufficient high-quality places available across the county where needed. Work will also continue to develop relationships with existing nurseries and childminders across the county, working with all childcare providers to respond to any increase in demand. This includes looking at ways to bring new providers into the market in Wiltshire to ensure that all families are able to access a choice of appropriate, and high-quality childcare.

36. Wiltshire Council has a statutory duty to secure information, advice and training to all providers registered on the Ofsted early years register who are judged less than 'good' at their most recent inspection and to any new providers. In addition, Wiltshire Council must offer information advice and training to any provider that requests this to ensure the provision meets the statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

37. The Early Years Teachers employed by the Council offer support around learning and the Quality Assurance Officers support settings with safeguarding and welfare requirements. Regular training events are held throughout the year by these teams. The commissioning team also offer support around sustainability and sufficiency.

38. The table below shows the actions that Officers will be taking in the coming year in relation to childcare sufficiency, working with colleagues and providers across the sector to ensure that enough provision is available to meet the local demand in each area.

Action	Outcome	Responsible	Timescale
Secure sufficient childcare in key areas of need detailed in paragraph 19 (Bradford-On-Avon, Melksham and Marlborough)	Local families will have sufficient childcare to meet demand for all types of provision	Programme Lead-Families & Children's Commissioning	June 2021
Ensure that capital grants from central government and section 106 funding is used to	Additional capacity in the market to meet growing demand for childcare places, in response to local	Programme Lead-Families & Children's Commissioning	March 2021

deliver additional early years provision places	housing development and migration		
Produce a full review of childcare provision across the county once the COVID-19 pandemic has ended, and lockdown restrictions are removed, to identify any new pressure for places. This could be as a result of closures, or other local factors	To identify any gaps in the market, and understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on demand for places	Programme Lead-Families & Children's Commissioning	June 2021 (dependant on lifting of lockdown measures)
Promote Childminding as a career to support gaps in areas of need e.g. villages	Sufficient childcare provision in villages and areas where required	Programme Lead-Families & Children's Commissioning	April 2021 & Ongoing
Promote childcare as a serious career option	To ensure enough staff available to meet the demand for childcare places across the county	Programme Lead-Families & Children's Commissioning	April 2021 & Ongoing
Identify new ways to promote early years funding to more families	More families and children will access good quality childcare	Programme Lead-Families & Children's Commissioning	May 2021
Increase uptake of Early Years Entitlement Funding for 2,3 and 4-year olds	The most disadvantaged children have access to good quality childcare which will help to improve their outcomes	Programme Lead-Families & Children's Commissioning	July 2021

Safeguarding Considerations

39. The Local Authority has a statutory duty to ensure that there is 'effective safeguarding and promotion of welfare of the children for whom the early education is provided'. The School Effectiveness team within Wiltshire Council monitor the quality of provision and respond to any safeguarding risks, with support from the Safeguarding teams as necessary. These can be identified from a range of sources, including employees in a setting, parents or carers, and Ofsted in the main. The Quality and Assurance team who are part of School Effectiveness respond to any queries that are raised and participate in Designated Officer for Allegations (DoFA) meetings.

40. There have been 13 safeguarding concerns in 2020 /21. Six were referred to the DoFA, five are resolved and one is ongoing. The other seven have been resolved and closed through additional support from the School Effectiveness Team, enabling the setting to reach the required standard.

Public Health Implications

41. The provision of sufficient childcare is part of the Local Authority's overall commitment to support the health and wellbeing of Wiltshire's communities. Wiltshire Council recognises the importance of the early years as part of the Family and Children's Transformation (FACT) Programme which includes a workstream focusing on the Best Start in Life. As part of this there is a focus on Speech and Language and the Home Learning Environment with associated campaigns being developed.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

42. There are no specific environmental and climate change issues because of developing childcare sufficiency.

Financial Considerations

43. The Department for Education (DfE) funding is allocated from the early years funding block of the dedicated schools grant (DSG) which is calculated on a per pupil basis and allocated on part time equivalents (PTE) i.e. children attending settings on an annual basis.

44. The hourly rates for 2021/22 are in the table below. The funding is based on the January 2020 census data of 9,068 part time equivalent (PTE) pupils whilst the current take up is lower than January 2020 census data representing the children who are not attending provision during the pandemic. 88% of the children are attending a setting compared with November 2020, higher levels are anticipated to return during 2021 as lockdown eases and parental confidence increases.

45. The early years funding block of the dedicated schools grant (DSG) is set by the local authority and, following consultation, noted by Schools Forum at their January meeting. The total 'initial' or provisional allocation for 2021-22 from the DfE is £28.217 million. Wiltshire has been able to fully passport the 8p per hour increase to entitled 2-year olds and passport 5p of the 6p per hour increase for 21-22. The detailed budget for Wiltshire is shown in the table below.

	PTE	**Hourly Rate**	**21/22 Allocation agreed by Schools Forum £M**
3 and 4-Year-Old Funding - universal 15 hours including contingency for increased take up	6,982	£4.25 (5p increase)	16.994
3 and 4-Year-Old Funding – extended for working parents 15 hours including contingency for increased take up	2,087	£4.25 (5p increase)	7.478
Deprivation & Rurality			0.230

2-Year-Old Funding	774	£5.48 (8p increase)	2.417
Early Years Disability Access Grant	214 children	£615 /child	0.132
Early Years Pupil Premium (max £302.10/570 hours pa)		£0.53/hour	0.187
Early Years Inclusion Funding			0.357
Central Early Years Functions			0.422
TOTAL of INDICATIVE Allocation 21-22			**28,217**

A funding adjustment will take place in the summer following the January 2021 census data. There is a risk of reduced funding due to children not attending provision during the pandemic. This is offset by setting the budget at funded rates rather than take up rates which allows for potential future funding changes.

Commercial considerations

46. Creating and meeting the childcare sufficiency expectations across the county has a direct impact on the capacity of communities to enable as many parents who are seeking employment or training as possible to have the opportunity to realise their ambitions. Early years and childcare provision also benefit from the range of Government funding designed to promote a good level of development for all children, which helps to support the viability of the sector.

Equalities Impact

47. Childcare sufficiency seeks to promote equality and inclusion, particularly for disadvantaged families, looked after children, children in need and children with special educational needs and disability. As a Local Authority, there are duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice 0-25 to consider when securing free places, so that all families can access the provision they require in the right place. Officers continue to work with providers, and social care and education colleagues, to remove barriers of access to free places, and work with parents to give each child support to fulfil their potential. As detailed in paragraphs 8 and 10 Wiltshire provided childcare for 80% of 2-year olds, above the national average and 93% of 3- and 4-year olds across the county, in line with national figures.

Risk Management

48. There are risks related to insufficient early years and childcare provision. Without sufficient early years and childcare provision:
    - Wiltshire Council would not meet the statutory duty to ensure, where reasonable, that there is sufficient provision.
    - Parents would not be able to access Government funding to pay for childcare, or have a choice of provision

- Children may not have access to an early years' setting and as a consequence may not have the experiences they require to ensure that they are ready for school, and achieve a good level of development
- Local businesses may find recruitment more difficult if parents have to stay at home to provide childcare

Legal Implications

49. It is a legal requirement that Wiltshire Council ensure sufficient childcare is available across Wiltshire to all parents who wish to access this provision. Commissioners will continue to work with the providers to ensure there is sufficient high-quality Early Years provision across the county.

Conclusions

50. Wiltshire continues to have sufficient high-quality provision which is keeping up with local demand in most areas. The three main challenges are:
    - recovery after COVID-19
    - the expansion of housing
    - the recruitment of early years staff.

    Officers will continue to monitor the needs of all community areas, encouraging expansion or the development of new provision, including childminders, in areas of need. Intelligence is gathered by both local knowledge and the use of surveys. Officers will continue to work with the early years and childcare sector, colleagues within the council, communities and others to ensure there is sufficient provision. Occupancy of settings will be reviewed twice a year to inform the amount of available provision required.

51. The county wide action plan in paragraph 38 will focus development work in the coming year. There will also be more work with schools to address the ongoing wrap around care for school age children as identified in the government's manifesto pledge.

52. Work is already in progress to update the Wiltshire Council website to provide clearer information for those interested in setting up new childcare provision in the county. Officers will continue to work with colleagues in school effectiveness to promote the online childcare directory, and ways of paying for childcare.

Report author:
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Nicola Harris, Assistant Commissioner

Appendix 1 - Schemes and Benefits

Appendix 2 - Occupancy maps for Wiltshire: (a) Under 2s, (b) 2-Year-old children, and (c) 3 & 4-Year-old children

Appendix 1. Schemes and benefits

Tax-free childcare

- For working families, including the self-employed, in the UK
- Earning under £100k and at least £131 per week (equal to 16 hours at the National Minimum or Living Wage) each
- Who aren't receiving Tax Credits, Universal Credit or childcare vouchers
- With children aged 0-11 (or 0-16 if disabled)
- For every £8 you pay into an online account, the government will add an extra £2, up to £2,000 per child per year

15 hours free childcare – 2-year olds

- For families in England, receiving some form of support
- With 2-year-old children
- 15 hours of free childcare or early education for 38 weeks
- To be able to take up 15 hours of free childcare for your two-year-old you or your child must meet the eligibility criteria
- A total of 570 hours per year, that you can use flexibly with one or more childcare provider
- Some providers will allow you to ‘stretch’ the hours over 52 weeks, using fewer hours per week

15 hours free childcare – 3- and 4-year olds

- For all families in England
- With 3 and 4-year-old children
- 15 hours of free childcare or early education for 38 weeks
- A total of 570 hours per year, that you can use flexibly with one or more childcare provider
- Some providers will allow you to ‘stretch’ the hours over 52 weeks, using fewer hours per week

30 hours free childcare – 3- and 4-year olds

- For working families in England
- With 3 and 4-year-old children
- 30 hours of free childcare or early education for 38 weeks
- A total of 1,140 hours per year, that you can use flexibly with one or more
- childcare provider
- Some providers will allow you to ‘stretch’ the hours over 52 weeks, using fewer hours per week

Tax credits for childcare

- For working families, in the UK
- With children under 16 (or under 17 if disabled)
- 70% of childcare costs, up to a cap
- If you cannot make a new claim for Tax Credits, you may be able to apply for Universal Credit instead.

Universal credit for childcare

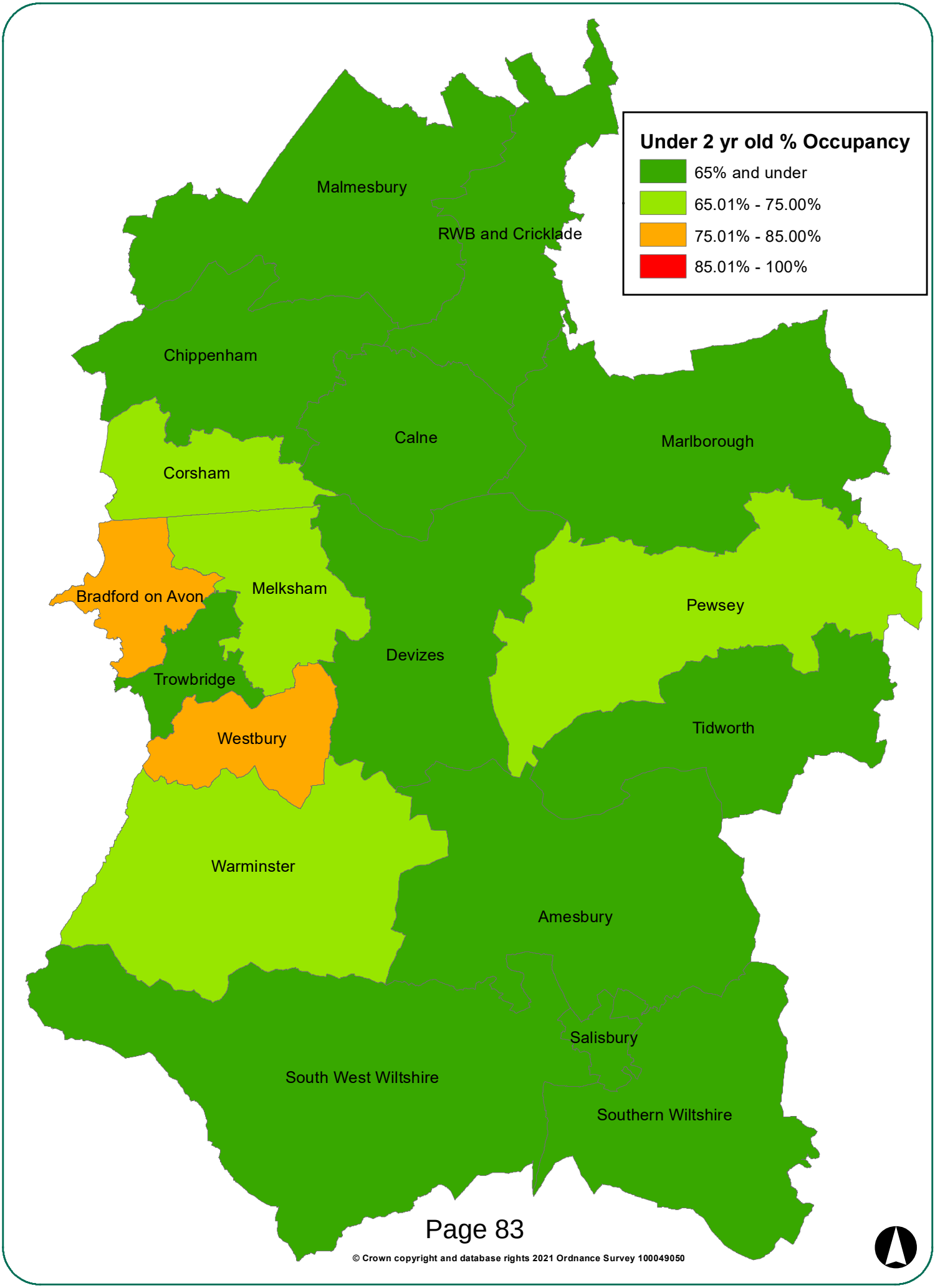
- For working families claiming Universal Credit, in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales
- With children under 17
- 85% of eligible childcare costs, up to a cap

Support while you study

- Weekly payments from Care to Learn if you’re at school or sixth-form college
- Help through your college if you’re in further education
- A weekly grant if you’re in full-time higher education

Wiltshire Council

Wiltshire Childcare Places - Jan 2021
Under 2 yr old occupancy



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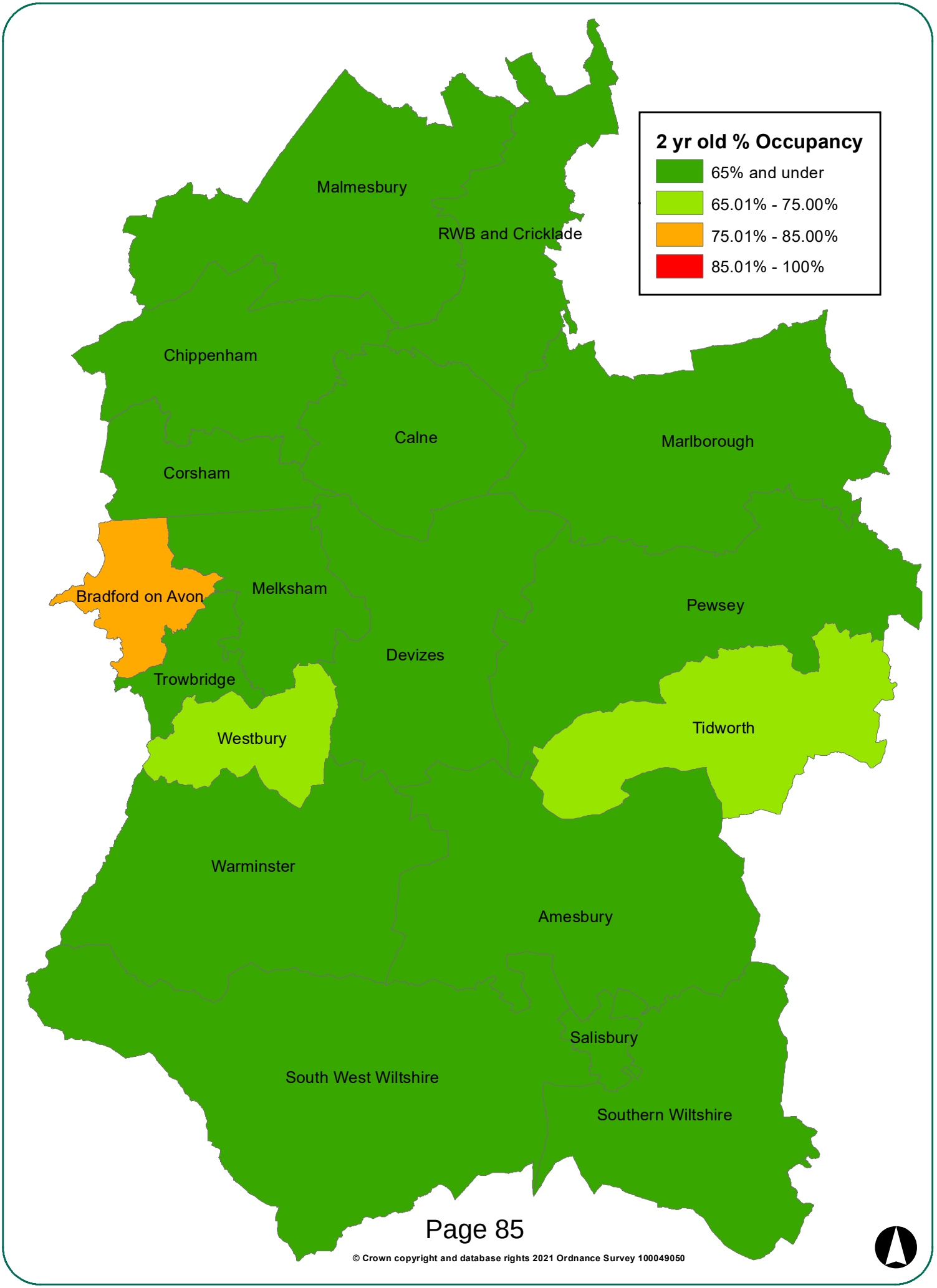
Wiltshire Council

Wiltshire Childcare Places - Jan 2021
2 yr old occupancy



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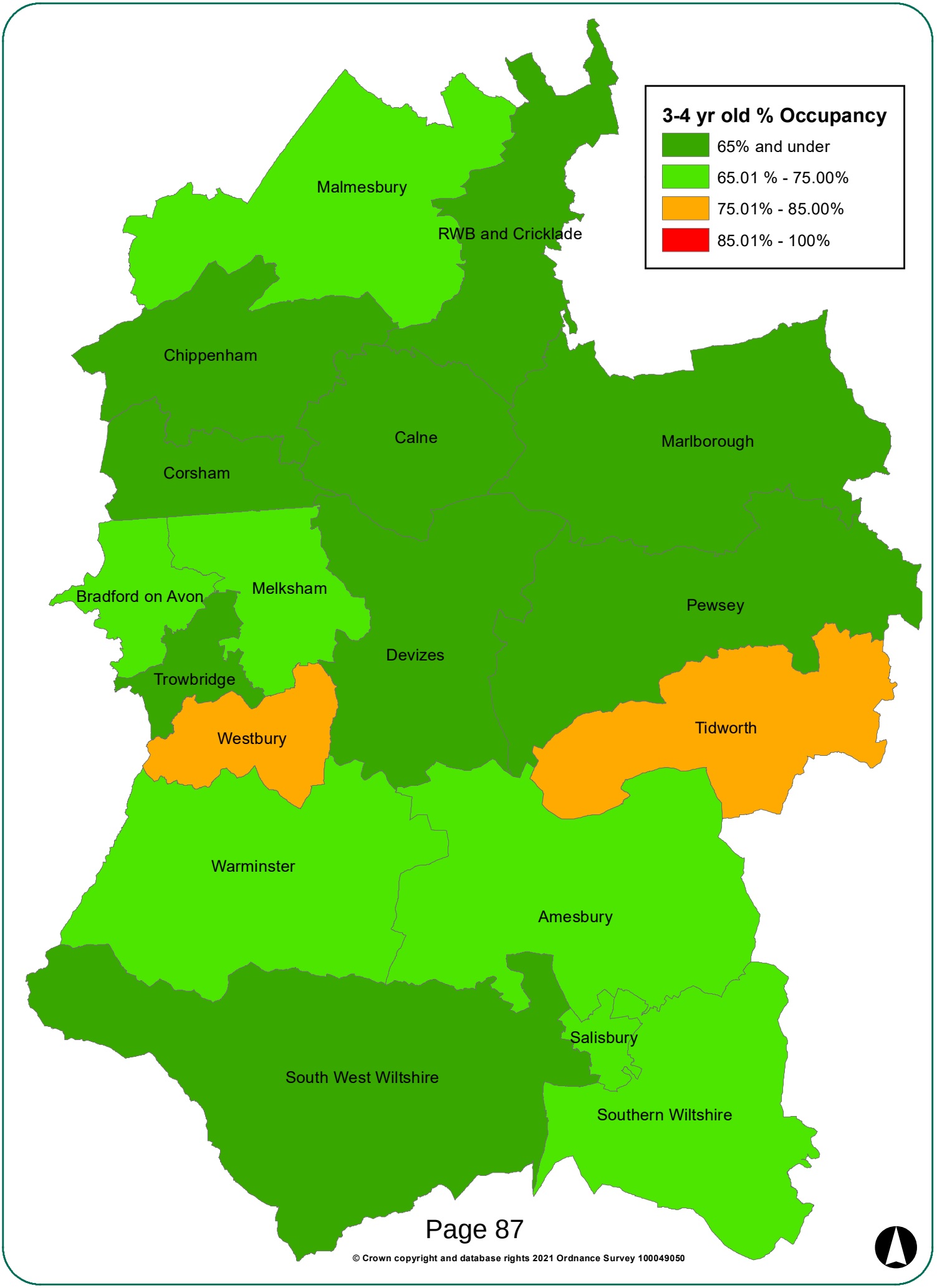
Wiltshire Council

Wiltshire Childcare Places - Jan 2021
3-4 yr old occupancy



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Wiltshire Council

Children's Select Committee

2 March 2021

Review of the work of the Children's Select Committee 2017-2021

Purpose

1. To highlight key aspects of the work undertaken by the Select Committee during 2017-2021 and recommend topics as legacy items to the Management Committee for possible inclusion in a new overview and scrutiny work programme after the elections in May 2021.

Background

2. An opportunity for Overview and Scrutiny (OS) to look back on its activity during the outgoing council is an important part of its learning and improvement journey. It allows councillors to:
    a) Review the key pieces of OS work undertaken over the past four years;
    b) Agree recommendations to OS under the next council in terms of work priorities;
    c) Agree recommendations to OS under the next council in terms of its approach (identifying strengths to retain and improvements to implement).

3. The legacy process allows members to consider OS's successes and challenges during the past four years, including the key scrutiny reviews and their impact on the council's agreed priorities. With the benefit of this experience it can then submit suggestions for OS under the 2021-2025 council to consider maximising the impact of the work it will undertake.

Key Activities and Achievements

4. Appendix 1 is a list of some of the Children's Select Committee's key activities and achievements during 2017-21 which demonstrates the contribution it has made to decision-making, policy development and good governance of the Council.

5. It should be noted that the public, formal activity of the Select Committee was suspended between March 2020 and January 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic

Ongoing work

6. Appendix 2 is a list of activities and reviews which the Select Committee considers important to include as ongoing pieces of work in any new overview and scrutiny work programme. Every effort has been made to bring reviews to a conclusion in time for the end of the current Council but clearly some things remain ongoing due to the significance or long-term nature of the topic.

7. In considering which areas to recommend for future work, the Committee is asked to be mindful that the Management Committee will need to leave space and capacity for those leading the function after the election to develop their own work programme based on issues resulting from public views expressed during the election period and following early engagement with any new Executive. However, the suspension of most OS work between March 2020 and the time of writing this report, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, does mean that the list in Appendix 2 is longer than usual.

Good practice

8. The Committee would like to recognise the value of the pre-meeting briefing sessions (usually held in the hour before a committee meeting), to provide useful information members but for which no formal resolutions are needed (therefore would not be appropriate as agenda items). The pre-meeting briefings enable members to develop their knowledge and understanding of Children's Services, which underpins the work of the committee. The Committee would recommend that pre-meeting briefings carry on being provided.

9. These briefings have been limited to six a year to take place immediately before the Committee meetings, this was to avoid additional travelling for committee members. The availability of virtual meetings, which all committee members have successfully accessed during the Covid-19 pandemic, offer potential opportunities, including:
    - holding more than 6 information briefings a year;
    - holding the information briefings on different days to committee meetings;
    - opening the information briefings to all councillors.

10. To ensure that a balance is achieved between providing information that is useful for councillors, and underpins the work of the committee, and the

demands on officers' time it is proposed that the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Children's Select Committee meet with the Cabinet Member and Director to review the list of proposed information briefings (Appendix 2) and determine the number of briefings to be held and when, and topics to prioritise.

11. The Committee would encourage further developing joined up working with other committees, boards or panels of the council to ensure that no issues, or areas for improvement, are missed, this could include:
    - Corporate Parenting Panel;
    - Schools Forum;
    - Health Select Committee;
    - Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership (SVPP);
    - FACT programme boards;
    - SEND Local Area Board,
    - Wiltshire Council's Health and Wellbeing Board.

12. Suggestions on ways to develop joined-up working by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Children's Select Committee could include:
    - Communication between the respective chairs when an agenda for Children's Select Committee is being prepared;
    - Annual meetings with the respective chairs when the Children's Select Committee is setting its priorities for the year ahead (meetings should also be held with Wiltshire Council's Directors and Executive members at the same time);
    - Communication with the Chair and Vice-Chair of Schools Forum ahead of the committee considering the budget (usually January / February).

13. The Chair and Vice-Chair should also continue to ensure that the voices of children and young people in Wiltshire are embedded in the work of the committee. This can be done through regular updates from the Youth Voice team and from direct engagement (may be facilitated by the Youth Voice team) with the young people who form the Wiltshire Youth Union (including Children in Care Council (CiCC), Members of the Youth Parliament (MYP's), and the Care Leavers Forum) to ensure that the committee is aware of WYU's priorities and areas of focus. Direct engagement may take place at the time the committee is setting its work priorities for the year ahead.

14. Paragraphs 8 to 13 above have been reflected in Appendix 2 where appropriate.

15. It could also be beneficial to consider joint training and information sessions between the committee and the bodies listed in paragraph 11 when appropriate, to maximise the use of officers' time as well as strengthening working relationships.

Next Steps

16. The Management Committee meets on 9 March 2021 and will receive the reports from the three select committees. It will also consider a similar report based on its activities primarily in the corporate arena. The members of the Management Committee will give their views on what should be included in a final legacy report which will be written by Scrutiny officers in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair. Following the elections this will then be made available to the new Management Committee, appointed by Council.

Recommendations

17. To approve Appendix 1 as a list of the Children's Select Committee's key activities and achievements during 2017-21.

18. To approve Appendix 2 to recommend to the Management Committee as topics requiring further work in the new Council, including reasons.

19. To approve the following good practice (paragraphs 8 to 15 refer):
    - Information briefings;
    - strengthening joined-up working;
    - embedding the voice of young people in the work of the committee;
    - shared training.

20. To note the next steps described in paragraph 17.

Cllr Jon Hubbard, Chair of the Children's Select Committee
Cllr Jacqui Lay, Vice-Chair of the Children's Select Committee

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Report date: 22 February 2021
Report author: Marie Gondlach, Senior Scrutiny Officer
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Appendix 1 – Key activities and achievements for the Children's Select Committee (2017-21)
Appendix 2 - Recommended ongoing Overview and Scrutiny (OS) work under the new Council (and suggested format)

Appendix 1 - Key activities and achievements for the Children's Select Committee (2017-21)

It should be noted that the public, formal activity of the Select Committee, and most scrutiny activities, were suspended between March 2020 and January 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Key activities and achievements for the Children's Select Committee (2017-21)			
Activity	**Date**	**Brief Explanation**	**Outcome**
Task Groups:			
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) task group (joint with Health Select Committee)	November 2017 – ongoing	Highlighted lessons learned from the previous primary and specialist CAMHS model and quality assured the new governance arrangements. It is planned for the task group to carry on its work in the new council.	12 recommendations focusing on enhancing the experience for children and young people, including "early intervention", continuity of care, and clarifying the self-referral process.
SEND School Provision task group	September 2018 - ongoing	The task group was originally established to look at the plans for the future provision of SEND schools and school places in Wiltshire, then evolved to consider the future provision of SEND education for Wiltshire's children and young people, for which it undertook a detailed review of evidence and visited all 6 special schools across the region, working with SEND schools and the Wiltshire Parent Carer Council.	11 recommendations relating to the potential future provision of SEND education in Wiltshire 16 recommendations on the proposed restructuring of the Wiltshire's special schools
Traded Services for Schools and Outdoor Education task group	February 2018 – March 2020	Established, following two rapid scrutiny exercises, to review the proposed developments for traded services to schools and to review and comment on the Cabinet report regarding the proposals for the future of outdoor education in Wiltshire. The task group then evolved to include scrutiny of the Council's advertising of the two outdoor education sites as well subsequent decision-making process regarding expressions of interest (bids).	5 recommendations were implemented as the task group carried out its work on Traded Services. The task group made a further 7 recommendations to ensure that traded services for school was successful and flexibly met customers' needs. The task group's key findings and recommendations were presented

Key activities and achievements for the Children's Select Committee (2017-21)			
Activity	**Date**	**Brief Explanation**	**Outcome**
		Examined the potential impacts of closing the Braeside and Oxenwood educational centres, with both facilities now continuing to provide valuable outdoor learning opportunities for young people.	to two Cabinet meetings with regards to Outdoor Education and formed part of the decision-making process.
Youth Transport task group	May 2019 – March 2020	Established to investigate the current range of public transportation options available to young people in Wiltshire, and to identify any unmet needs, gaps in service provision, and potential areas of improvement.	Produced recommendations with a focus on the improvement of Wiltshire's public transport services for young people.
Rapid Scrutiny Exercises:			
Care leavers Local Offer	23 January and 27 April 2018	Helped to define the priorities in the council's new Local Offer for care leavers.	5 recommendations including prioritisation of funding, increase in grant (to align with surrounding areas) and reallocation of funding.
Youth democracy	June 2018 - ongoing	Appointed two new young Wiltshire residents as Youth Representatives on the committee to provide young people's voice in its debates.	To embed the voice of Young People in the work of the committee.
Children's Centre Consultation Rapid Scrutiny Exercise	15 April 2019	Established to consider the results of the consultation, the proposed closures and the plans for alternative venues for Children's Centres. Scrutinised proposals to transfer services from dedicated buildings to community settings. Made successful recommendations for improvement, including clarifying the rationale for the proposals and the alternative provision in place, to ensure current service levels are maintained and vulnerable groups continue to access support services.	The 6 recommendations from the rapid scrutiny exercise were presented to Cabinet ahead of a decision being made and later all accepted by the relevant Cabinet Member.

Key activities and achievements for the Children's Select Committee (2017-21)			
Activity	**Date**	**Brief Explanation**	**Outcome**
Select Committee agenda items			
Corporate Parenting Panel	Annual reports	To consistently review the annual reports to ensure that the information presented can be scrutinised and adequately reflects the work undertaken by the panel.	Ensured that key figures and data sets are included to present a comprehensive overview of the current situation in Wiltshire with regards to children in care.
Childcare Sufficiency	Annual report	Continuously monitoring the council's work to meet the requirement to make available sufficient childcare in the local area, which is a statutory duty placed on the Local Authority.	Helped to ensure sufficient childcare is available in Wiltshire for working parents and parents who were studying or training for employment.
Safeguarding (performance monitoring)	19 January 2021	Considered how the council assesses the robustness and efficiency of its safeguarding processes.	Recommended two further scrutiny exercises; one to develop data sets and one to review the effectiveness of the FACT (Families and Children Transformation) programme.
Looked After Children (LAC)	2019-20	Recommended that improvements to supporting children in care were more clearly defined and were supported by appropriate metrics.	

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Appendix 2 – Recommended ongoing Overview and Scrutiny (OS) work under the new Council (and suggested format)

Children's Select Committee (CSC) - overview and scrutiny work programme **Suggested format: Meeting for the Chair and Vice-Chair** (meetings / communication with Chair and Vice-Chair of other committees or bodies, relevant officers and Executive members)			
Topic / activity	**Date**	**Brief Explanation**	**Reason for Inclusion**
Young Carers in Wiltshire	tbc	That the Chair and Vice-Chair meet with relevant officers to review the scope of a potential task group or rapid scrutiny – to consider how to best promote the service and ensure that Young Carers and their families access the support on offer.	Agreed - 21 January 2020 CSC meeting (but did not take place due to Covid-19)
Forward work planning - engage with respective Chair and Vice-Chair	Annual	• Corporate Parenting Panel; • Schools Forum; • Health Select Committee; • Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership (SVPP); • FACT programme boards; • SEND Local Area Board; • Wiltshire Council's Health and Wellbeing Board.	To strengthen joined-up working.
Embedding the voice of children and young people	Annual	Meet with the young people who form the Wiltshire Youth Union (WYU), which includes Children in Care Council (CiCC), Members of the Youth Parliament (MYP's), and the Care Leavers Forum – this may be arranged by the Youth Voice team – to understand their priorities and key concerns for the year ahead. This would also be an opportunity to review ways of working to ensure that there is a good level of communication between CSC and WYU.	To strengthen joined-up working.
Budget	January / February	Meet / communicate with the Chair and Vice-Chair of Schools Forum (alternatively attend Schools Forum meeting) to discuss the budget.	To strengthen joined-up working.

Children's Select Committee (CSC) - overview and scrutiny work programme **Suggested format: Information Briefings** (Information briefings held prior to meetings where the information is of use to members, but no formal resolutions are needed, to provide members with useful information to develop their knowledge and understanding of Children's Services, underpinning the work of the committee. Some briefings may be set in the hour before a committee meeting)			
Topic / activity	**Date**	**Brief Explanation**	**Reason for Inclusion**
School Funding	January	To have a pre-meeting briefing on school funding ahead of council's budget setting (typically February).	Agreed - 10 March 2020 CSC meeting
FACT (Families and Children Transformation Programme) – the journey so far		To receive information on the FACT programme including: • a 3 to 5 years plan or roadmap showing the FACT programme's journey to date (including its original objectives), • the current aims and objectives of FACT (at the time the committee will receive the briefing), • and how the council is planning to deliver these. **NB** This briefing would underpin the work of the proposed task group.	To develop the committee's understanding of services
MASH and early support		To organise a briefing for members on the MASH / early support (may include tour of the MASH)	Agreed - 10 March 2020 CSC meeting (FACT update)
School Improvement Programme		To organise a briefing for members on the school improvement programme. **NB** – linked to agenda item	Agreed - 10 March 2020 CSC meeting (Schools Ofsted judgments)
SEND provision		To understand SEND and provision by the council (including awareness of funding). **NB** This briefing would underpin future scrutiny work (rapid scrutiny) on SEND provision and High Needs block funding.	To develop the committee's understanding of services

Children's Select Committee (CSC) - overview and scrutiny work programme **Suggested format: Information Briefings** (Information briefings held prior to meetings where the information is of use to members, but no formal resolutions are needed, to provide members with useful information to develop their knowledge and understanding of Children's Services, underpinning the work of the committee. Some briefings may be set in the hour before a committee meeting)			
Topic / activity	**Date**	**Brief Explanation**	**Reason for Inclusion**
Demand modelling for Children in Care		To understand the process followed for demand modelling for Children in Care. Could also include information on the different options for accommodation for children in care.	Briefing to Chair and Vice-Chair on CPP report, Monday 5 October 2020.
Local Authority's (LA) statutory responsibilities linked to schools		To establish the activities and areas linked to schools which are still statutory responsibilities of the LA and determine the best format the LA's performance in these areas should be reported to the CSC. This could include: • Safeguarding (support and responsibilities) • SEND (support and responsibilities) • Specialist Schools and Specialist Units overseen by the LA (i.e. Rowderford School, developments in Salisbury & Exeter House, Hearing Impaired Unit Salisbury, ARK Resource Base Amesbury and others etc), and SEND provision contracted out • Traded services for schools • School building programme Virtual school, etc.	To ensure that the committee receives information that enables it to monitor the council's performance, where appropriate
Employment and apprenticeship		To receive information on: • NEET (not in education, employment or training) numbers in Wiltshire – including national figures for comparison (ons)	To develop the committee's understanding of demand / needs / provision in the county

Children's Select Committee (CSC) - overview and scrutiny work programme **Suggested format: Information Briefings** (Information briefings held prior to meetings where the information is of use to members, but no formal resolutions are needed, to provide members with useful information to develop their knowledge and understanding of Children's Services, underpinning the work of the committee. Some briefings may be set in the hour before a committee meeting)			
Topic / activity	**Date**	**Brief Explanation**	**Reason for Inclusion**
		• Take up / outcome of the NEET government scheme in Wiltshire and nationally • Current number of apprentices in Wiltshire and schemes in place, including Wiltshire Council Services in place / support available in Wiltshire to help young people move towards work, education or training e.g. Wiltshire Council's Employment and Skills (Work Wiltshire), programmes such as Building Bridges, etc.	
Alternative Educational Provision		To receive information on processes followed and options available in Wiltshire, including information on the Service Level Agreement for funding delegated to secondary schools to support learners at risk of exclusion. **NB** – timely to link with agenda item - annual data set on Children Missing out on Education	Agreed - 5 March 2019 CSC meeting
Five to Thrive (training programme)		To better understand the programme, including an update on "take-up" and outcomes (Public Health).	Agreed - 10 March 2020 CSC meeting (FACT update)
Virtual schools		Virtual Schools update following change of leadership and ways of working (and budget reduction) – information about the service and its work.	To develop the committee's understanding of services

Children's Select Committee - overview and scrutiny work programme **Suggested format: Rapid Scrutiny** (rapid scrutiny exercises involve small groups of non-executive members (a minimum of 3) reviewing a single issue and usually meeting only once)			
Topic / activity	**Date**	**Brief Explanation**	**Reason for Inclusion**
Housing - provision of accommodation for young people at transition time		To consider how effective the council is at meeting housing needs (including availability of choice and location) for young people at transition time (e.g. Care Leavers or SEND "aging out" of existing provision).	Agreed - 12 November 2019 CSC meeting (OS / Executive meeting 2019-20).
SEND provision		To develop Data sets for future reporting to the committee on SEND provision / performance.	As discussed by the CSC on numerous occasions.
High needs block funding		To review the current processes and explore whether there would be value added in establishing a task group to consider options to manage pressures on high needs block budget whilst providing the most appropriate support at the earliest opportunity.	Budget briefing for the Chair and Vice-Chair
Health Outcomes and meeting health needs		To explore how the council can best scrutinise what partners (and providers) are doing to provide health outcomes for Wiltshire children, this would include establishing what the current scrutiny by the council is (including information on the current and planned work on this topic of the Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership).Please see further information in the report (Agenda item 92, paragraphs 25 to 28 refer) This could also include reviewing the promotion and support offered for healthy eating, which could potentially help to address both childhood and adult obesity. To ensure that families have access to help or support to be able to produce healthy, nutritious food for their families within a limited budget (explore options such as lottery funded six-weeks cookery programmes, etc. which could be developed further).	Agreed - 12 November 2019 CSC meeting (OS / Executive meeting 2019-20). To enable children to have a heathy balanced diet could have enormous benefits for their future.

Children's Select Committee - overview and scrutiny work programme **Suggested format: Task Groups** (small working groups of non-executive members, established by overview and scrutiny committees to review specific issues and service areas and submit recommendations to the executive on how they could be improved.)			
Topic / activity	**Date**	**Brief Explanation**	**Reason for Inclusion**
Disadvantaged / vulnerable Learners		Whilst Wiltshire has a relatively low number of disadvantaged learners, they are largely underperforming compared to regional and national levels. To be informed of the council's current work and aspirations. To identify the reason(s) for the higher underperforming than regional and national levels To explore solutions to raise performance levels, based on best practice across the country.	Approved by Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee (OSMC) 17 March 2020 (did not start due to Covid-19)
Whole Life pathway – joint task group with the Health Select Committee (HSC)		The whole life pathway is a workstream under the FACT (Families and Children's Transformation) programme to transform support and services for people with a range of complex needs across Wiltshire, which has led to substantial changes. The aim of the workstream is to co-produce **whole life** services for a range of needs, building resilience with individuals, families and communities and reaching stability Aim: To review the impact of the whole-life pathway for the primary individual (child) - CSC lead To review the holistic impact of this change for the whole family (as both the primary individual and family members age and have changing needs) – HSC lead To assess the implications for all services involved in the whole-life pathway (cultural changes, reassessment of criteria / thresholds, finance / budget, etc.)	Approved by OSMC 17 March 2020 (did not start due to Covid-19)

Children's Select Committee - overview and scrutiny work programme **Suggested format: Task Groups** (small working groups of non-executive members, established by overview and scrutiny committees to review specific issues and service areas and submit recommendations to the executive on how they could be improved.)			
Topic / activity	**Date**	**Brief Explanation**	**Reason for Inclusion**
In-house foster carers		To review how the Fostering Excellence project is / will be addressing the issues identified in report to CSC on 10 March; To identify: • how the effectiveness of the Fostering Excellence project will be measured and reported; • how the benefits to children in care being placed with in-house carers (receiving enhanced training / support as part of Fostering Excellence) will be measured and reported; • best practice across the country for recruitment and retention of in-house foster carers, as well for anticipating demand (needs / demand modelling)	Approved by OSMC 17 March 2020 (did not start due to Covid-19)
Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Task Group		To reconvene the task group to consider the impact of Covid-19 on CAMHS and the link between CAMHS and the private and voluntary sector. **Consider adding to the terms of reference:** Adequacy of Mental Health provision available in Wiltshire including support offered / service delivered by CAMHS (demand / waiting time / threshold, etc.) and development to the service (including single point of contact), the launch of the Wiltshire Early Mental Health Service run by Barnardo's (on your mind), and plans to co-ordinate training for schools based on the DfE programme. Demand / need modelling – could pressure on demand lead to very high threshold to access services?	Health Select Committee - 12 January 2021 (reported to CSC on 19 January 2021) Informal CSC meetings September and November 2020

Children's Select Committee - overview and scrutiny work programme **Suggested format: Task Groups** (small working groups of non-executive members, established by overview and scrutiny committees to review specific issues and service areas and submit recommendations to the executive on how they could be improved.)			
Topic / activity	**Date**	**Brief Explanation**	**Reason for Inclusion**
Families and Children's Transformation (FACT)		To scrutinise the impact and effectiveness of the FACT programme, whilst ensuring that the voice of the child is embedded in the FACT programme. Areas to focus on (based on the debate and areas for continuing improvement that were highlighted in the report) are detailed in the minutes of the CSC meeting on 19 January 2021. **NB** – a briefing for the committee on the "journey so far" for FACT to take place first.	Agreed – 19 January 2021 CSC
Youth provision and youth service funding		**Area Board youth service funding** To understand what the differences are (and why) in allocating youth funding and to determine whether the eligibility criteria and assessment / approval process are still relevant (where possible compare with other local authorities) and ensure clear "best practice" / guidelines. **Youth Provision – gap analysis** To consider the outcome of the Youth provision gap analysis undertaken (referred to in the Covid-19 update to Cabinet, 1 December 2020) and establish whether further scrutiny (e.g. task group) would be beneficial to ensure that demand / needs are met where possible and also that people are aware of the provision (effective promotion).	To develop consistency across the 18 area boards in terms of allocating youth funding and eligibility criteria. Agreed by OSMC 17 March 2020 Informal meeting 25 November 2020

Children's Select Committee - overview and scrutiny work programme **Suggested format: Task Groups** (small working groups of non-executive members, established by overview and scrutiny committees to review specific issues and service areas and submit recommendations to the executive on how they could be improved.)			
Topic / activity	**Date**	**Brief Explanation**	**Reason for Inclusion**
Access to Post-16 education		To establish a clear picture of post-16 education provision available to young people in Wiltshire and availability of / options for transport to access that provision. **NB** – may link to follow up work from the Youth Transport Task Group's final report	

Children's Select Committee - overview and scrutiny work programme **Suggested format: Select Committee items** (agenda item)			
Topic / activity	**Date**	**Brief Explanation**	**Reason for Inclusion**
DfE Changes - Update from Department for Education	Standing Item	A report presenting an update on developments relating to children's services arising from the Department for Education. **NB** Increasing concerns from pupils expecting to take exams (with access to education having been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic) – keep an eye on guidance issued.	To keep the committee informed of national changes and their potential impact for the council.
School Ofsted Judgements	Standing Item	A report which includes information regarding the most recent Ofsted Inspection reports. It will provide an ongoing view of the effectiveness of schools as seen by Ofsted Inspection.	To keep the committee informed of "trends".
Update from Wiltshire Youth Voice	Standing Item	Regular update reports (written or verbal), including update on the implementation of the action plan (see below). **NB** – to present the action plan for the Youth Voice Team at one meeting, including: - which young people are being reached (and how, e.g. via schools); - what is the target we would like to reach (which young people and "how many"); - the "vision" for the relationship between the council and young people.	To continue closer working with Wiltshire's young people.
Covid-19 response / recovery	Standing item (whilst relevant)	To receive update on the council's demand modelling, and capacity to meet that demand with regards to Children's Services, including Support for schools, throughout the Covid-19 pandemic	To ensure that there

Children's Select Committee - overview and scrutiny work programme **Suggested format: Select Committee items** (agenda item)			
Topic / activity	**Date**	**Brief Explanation**	**Reason for Inclusion**
		and lockdowns, and support for recovery provision and a review of that support (e.g. take up and impact).	
Corporate Parenting Panel	Annual item (twice)	To continue receiving annual reports from the panel: - March (brief update) - October / November (annual report)	Committee requirement to receive these reports.
Performance monitoring report	January and June	To receive performance monitoring reports on the overall service, likely to be June (to consider the year-end data from the previous year) then January meetings.	As approved at CSC on 12 November 2019 (OS/executive meeting outcome)
Early Years and Childcare Standards Report	Annual item	To receive a report detailing local authority standards for early years and pre-school provision including sufficiency (which is a statutory duty), pupil outcomes and Ofsted grades.	Monitoring of statutory duty of the council.
Elective Home Education (including SEND)	Annual item	To receive dataset and policy on Elective Home Education (EHE), including children with SEND including: • (if possible) data from previous year(s) to highlight any trends as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic; • Information on the council's responsibilities and how the council can monitor effectiveness of EHE.	As agreed 5 March 2019 CSC (delayed due to Covid-19) Annual dataset as agreed 4 September 2018 CSC
Children Missing Out on Education / Children Missing Education	Annual item	To receive dataset and policy on Children Missing Out on Education / Children Missing Education **NB** – may be timely to link to information briefing on Alternative Educational Provision	Annual dataset as agreed 4 September 2018 CSC
Pupil Performance in Public Tests and Examinations	Annual item	Provides an annual overview of pupil performance at the end of each key stage and compares Wiltshire's attainment with national, south west and statistical neighbours.	Committee requirement to receive this.

Children's Select Committee - overview and scrutiny work programme **Suggested format: Select Committee items** (agenda item)			
Topic / activity	**Date**	**Brief Explanation**	**Reason for Inclusion**
Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership	Annual Item	To receive annual report from the partnership presenting work in the past year and priorities / objectives for the year ahead	To ensure joined-up working and awareness of respective priorities
Adoption	Annual (May)	To receive information on adoption from the following sources: • Local authority's performance report with regards to adoption (statutory requirement that regular assurance reports are provided regarding the Council's responsibility for the adoption of children); • Adoption West's annual report; • Adoption West joint scrutiny panel's annual report.	To review the work of the joint scrutiny panel as well as scrutinise performance for the areas within adoption which remain the responsibility of the council
Getting to outstanding (Ofsted)	June 2021	To review the council's plan to achieve outstanding (Ofsted), including its self-assessment processes and ensuring that the voice of the child is embedded in Children's Services' work, including best practice from Outstanding authorities.	To support the council in continually improving services and achieving outstanding.
Child Poverty		To receive a report presenting figures / data for child poverty in Wiltshire (compared to national figures) and the services / provision in place to address this in Wiltshire, either delivered / supported by the council or third sector (that the council is aware of).	
Wiltshire School Improvement Programme - update		To receive a report on implementation / progress of the school improvement programme, including specific measurable evidence of impact on pupil outcomes of the new way of working (as part of the School Performance report), where applicable including direct feedback (on receiving the support) from schools. If possible, to include a diagram showing the new way of working / system. **NB** – linked to a pre-meeting briefing	As agreed at the 21 January 2020 and 10 March 2020 CSC meeting (schools Ofsted judgments)

Children's Select Committee - overview and scrutiny work programme **Suggested format: Select Committee items** (agenda item)			
Topic / activity	**Date**	**Brief Explanation**	**Reason for Inclusion**
Youth Transport (including SEND)	March 2022	Update following task group's work and executive response. To include input from the council's review of transport services for children and young people with SEND (commissioning team). **NB** – may link to the proposed Access to Post-16 education task group	To determine whether further scrutiny would be beneficial.
Outdoor education	March 2022	Update following task group's work and executive response	To ensure that provision remains.
Traded Services	March 2022	Update following task group's work and executive response	To determine whether further scrutiny would be beneficial.
Troubled families programme - update		As agreed at the meeting on 10 March 2020 (DfE changes) to receive an update on the troubled families programme	
Well-being for Education Resilience		Ensuring the effectiveness of the 'Well-being for Education Resilience' (formally 'Return') programme being delivered to all education establishments in Wiltshire.	
Update on the implementation of FACT (Families and Children's Transformation)		As approved at CSC on 12 November 2019 (OS/executive meeting outcome). To received regular updates on the implementation of FACT (Families and Children's Transformation). **NB** – these would need to be timed around the work of the proposed task group, and probably "suspended" whilst the task group is active. There will also be a briefing for members on the "journey so far" for the FACT programme.	To inform the committee of progress on a major transformation programme.

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