

AGENDA

Meeting: Children's Select Committee
Place: Council Chamber - Council Offices, Monkton Park, Chippenham, SN15 1ER
Date: Tuesday 15 March 2022
Time: 10.30 am

Please direct any enquiries on this Agenda to Matt Hitch
matthew.hitch@wiltshire.gov.uk, of Democratic Services, County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, direct line 01225 718059 or email matthew.hitch@wiltshire.gov.uk

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

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Membership:

| | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| Cllr Jon Hubbard (Chairman) | Cllr Antonio Piazza |
| Cllr Jacqui Lay (Vice-Chairman) | Cllr Mike Sankey |
| Cllr Helen Belcher | Cllr James Sheppard |
| Cllr Mary Champion | Cllr Caroline Thomas |
| Cllr Carole King | Cllr Jo Trigg |
| Cllr Kathryn MacDermid | Cllr Mark Verbinnen |
| Cllr Kelvin Nash | |

Substitutes:

| | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Cllr Trevor Carbin | Cllr Jack Oatley |
| Cllr Daniel Cave | Cllr Sam Pearce-Kearney |
| Cllr Adrian Foster | Cllr Martin Smith |
| Cllr Johnny Kidney | Cllr Iain Wallis |

Non-Elected Voting Members:

| | |
|------------------|------------------------------------|
| Dr Mike Thompson | Clifton Diocesan RC Representative |
|------------------|------------------------------------|

Non-Elected Non-Voting Members:

| | |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|
| Nikki Barnett | Further Education Representative |
| Ms Sarah Busby | Secondary Head Teacher Representative |
| John Hawkins | School Teacher Representative |

Maisy Humphrey
Declan Kiely

Children & Young People's Representative
Children & Young People's Representative -
Substitute
Primary Head Teacher Representative

Catriona Williamson

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Please see the agenda list on following pages for details of deadlines for submission of questions and statements for this meeting.

For extended details on meeting procedure, submission and scope of questions and other matters, please consult [Part 4 of the council's constitution](#).

The full constitution can be found at [this link](#).

For assistance on these and other matters please contact the officer named above for details

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 - 18*)

To approve and sign the minutes of the previous meeting held on 19 January 2022.

3 **Declarations of Interest**

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

4 **Chairman's Announcements**

To receive any announcements through the Chairman.

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 at least 10 minutes prior to the meeting. Up to 3 speakers are permitted to speak for up to 3 minutes each on any agenda item. Please contact the officer named on the front of the agenda for any further clarification.

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 8 March 2022** 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 10 March 2022**. 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 **Covid-19 update**

To receive a verbal update from Directors on the Council's current situation for

services within the remit of the committee with regards to the impact of, and recovery from, the Covid-19 pandemic.

7 **Regular updates**

Updates on information valuable for the committee, but unlikely to require a decision.

Members of the committee are therefore invited to indicate in advance of the meeting if they would like further information or have questions on these regular updates, so that relevant officers can be invited to attend the meeting.

7a **Update from Wiltshire Youth Voice Representative**

An update including a summary of recent activities of the Wiltshire Youth Union (WYU) and Children in Care Council (CiCC).

7b **School Ofsted Judgements** *(Pages 19 - 24)*

An update including information regarding the most recent Ofsted Inspection reports, presenting an ongoing view of the effectiveness of schools as seen by Ofsted Inspection.

7c **DfE Changes - Update from Department for Education** *(Pages 25 - 30)*

An update on developments relating to children's services arising from the Department for Education.

8 **Corporate Parenting Panel Bi-annual report**

The Children's Select Committee receives two reports a year from the Corporate Parenting Panel: the draft Annual Report and a 6-month update.

The 6-month update report, providing information on the progress made against each of the strategic priorities of the Corporate Parenting Panel, will be reviewed at this meeting.

The committee is asked to note the report from the Corporate Parenting Panel and include the draft full annual report in its forward work programme for September 2022.

9 **Executive response to the Rapid Scrutiny on Provision of Accommodation for Young People at Transition Time - Gap Analysis** *(Pages 31 - 34)*

The final report of the Rapid Scrutiny on Provision of Accommodation for Young People at Transition Time – Gap Analysis was considered by the committee at its last meeting (can be accessed [here](#)).

The committee is asked to consider and note the executive responses provided.

10 **Executive response to the Standing Task Group report on Traded Services** *(Pages 35 - 40)*

The findings of the Standing Task Group on Traded Services were considered by the committee at its last meeting (can be accessed [here](#)).

The committee is asked to consider and note the executive responses provided.

11 **Overview and Scrutiny Activities Updates** (Pages 41 - 44)

The committee will receive updates from active Task Groups, Rapid Scrutiny exercises and the committee's board representatives.

A report by the Senior Scrutiny Officers providing an update on Task Group activity since the last meeting is attached.

12 **Forward Work Programme** (Pages 45 - 58)

The Committee is asked to note the attached documents showing the relevant items from the overview and scrutiny forward work programme and the latest version of the strategy list for the Children, Education and Skills directorate.

13 **Urgent Items**

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

The next item on the agenda will be considered at 12.00noon. There may be a short comfort break, depending on time available.

14 **Getting to Outstanding** (Pages 59 - 62)

The committee received a verbal update on the council's strategy to achieve an Ofsted's Outstanding rating at its meeting on 7 September 2022. The full minutes can be accessed [here](#).

This was followed, at the committee's meeting on 4 November, by a report on plans and progress to date, including the four strands of work detailed at the previous meeting:

- Self-assessment.
- Service development.
- Roadmap to excellence.
- Line-of-sight.

At its November meeting the committee resolved to receive an update on the progress made, which is presented at this meeting, and to consider how Overview and Scrutiny can best add value to the process and the four strands of work focused on.

An Ofsted focused visit took place on 24 and 25 January 2022 looking at the council's arrangements for care leavers. A letter summarising the findings of the focused visit is included with this agenda.

15 **Date of Next Meeting**

To note that the next scheduled meeting is due to be held on Wednesday 8 June 2022 at County Hall, Trowbridge, starting at 10.30am.

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

Children's Select Committee

MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN'S SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 19 JANUARY 2022 AT COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNTY HALL, BYTHESEA ROAD, TROWBRIDGE, BA14 8JN.

Present:

Cllr Jon Hubbard (Chairman), Cllr Helen Belcher, Cllr Mary Champion, Cllr Carole King, Cllr Kathryn Macdermid, Cllr Kelvin Nash, Cllr Antonio Piazza, Cllr Mike Sankey, Cllr James Sheppard, Cllr Caroline Thomas, Cllr Jo Trigg, Cllr Mark Verbinnen and John Hawkins

Also Present:

Cllr Peter Hutton, Cllr Laura Mayes, Cllr Dominic Muns and Cllr Suzanne Wickham

1 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from the following Committee Members:

- Cllr Jacqui Lay
- Catriona Williamson
- Dr Mike Thompson

Apologies were also received from:

- Lesley Lowe – Head of School Effectiveness
- Tamsin Stone – Head Performance Outcomes and Quality Assurance, Children and Adult Services

2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Chairman noted that on page 12 of the agenda pack, in minute 49, the Committee had asked how the Council could assure itself that the rates of Children in Need, Child Protection and Children in Care were appropriate. He reported that officers had offered to deliver an information briefing to provide this information to the Committee. Members would then have to opportunity to review how information was provided going forward.

Resolved

The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 4 November 2021, were approved as a true and correct record.

Once approved, a copy of the minutes was signed by the Chairman.

3 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interests.

4 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman took the opportunity to pass on the best wishes of the Committee to the Vice-Chairman, who was unwell at the time of the meeting. He then made the following announcements:

1. An Ofsted inspection, focusing on the experience of care leavers, was taking place in January and the results were due to be published on the 28th.
2. The Traded Services briefing, received on 16 December 2021, was available on the Councillor's Hub.
3. Councillors would be welcome to attend the Five-to-Thrive Programme training session at 10am on 4 February 2022.
4. Members could contact him if they had any comments on the School Capital Programme ahead of its consideration Cabinet in February, as he was due to attend a briefing on the subject on 20 January 2022.

5 **Public Participation**

No questions were submitted by the public.

6 **Regular updates**

The Chairman reminded the Committee that they had been invited to indicate in advance of the meeting if they would like further information on, or had questions about, the regular updates.

In addition to their questions relating to the reports, Members asked for further information about the impact of Covid-19 on schools and Wiltshire Council.

Helean Hughes, Director of Education and Skills, reported that Covid-19 cases in schools, unlike infection rates in the wider community, were not declining. She explained that primary schools were the worst impacted, with lower vaccination rates within the younger age groups. Overall, there were around 2,000 reported cases in schools with roughly 300 staff impacted, so she praised schools for staying open and minimising the impact on education. The Director explained that schools faced supply shortages so were using the work force more flexibly, such as headteachers spending more time in classrooms. She confirmed that CO2 monitors had been rolled out to schools and ventilation guidelines were being followed.

Lucy Townsend, Corporate Director People, reported that there had been an increase in the number of staff absences at the Council due to the increased transmissibility of the Omicron Covid-19 variant. She reassured the Committee

that contingency planning was in place. Support measures were also in place to support staff wellbeing, with individual managers being given the autonomy to arrange activities that they felt would be most appropriate for their teams. Furthermore, a principal social worker had provided feedback from staff to senior leaders to ensure that different avenues of communication were available.

In response to a question about what technology was in place to deliver online learning in special schools, the Director of Education and Skills reported that laptops had been rolled out by the Department for Education (DfE). She explained that it was also a statutory requirement for individual schools to assist families to ensure that they had appropriate access to online learning, so she encouraged individuals to contact schools directly if they had concerns.

6a Update from Wiltshire Youth Voice Representative

The Chairman praised the Youth Council elections as an exciting initiative and was pleased to report that over 90 candidates had been nominated. He passed the congratulations of the Committee to the Youth Voice team for their work and said that they would welcome a strong Youth Voice being represented at the Committee. Cllr Laura Mayes, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills, was pleased to report that almost every school in the county participated in the scheme. She explained that there would be an induction session in March and that a shadow cabinet would be elected, ensuring that a variety of views would be represented.

Members thanked officers for the report included in the agenda pack and asked about the geographic reach of the Young Carers Consultation and specifically whether it had covered both urban and rural areas.

6b School Ofsted Judgements

The Chairman reported that the 10 published reports showed either a similar score to previous results, or an improvement, commenting that this was a solid achievement given the impact of Covid-19 on the provision of education.

Members sought clarification about figures in the report, and it was confirmed that there were 29 secondary schools in the county.

6c DfE Changes - Update from Department for Education

Members thanked officers for including Wiltshire's position in the updates listed between pages 27 and 29 of the agenda pack. They then asked whether there were plans to establish a teaching hub in Wiltshire. The Director of Education and Skills explained that Glenmoor Teaching School Hub in Swindon was selected by the Regional Schools Commissioner at the DfE, as the site supporting Wiltshire. As both the Council and Glenmoor were represented on the Wiltshire Learning Alliance, they were working together to make sure that Wiltshire's schools benefitted from their facilities.

Changes in central government rules about the procurement of school jumpers were praised by Members. The Director reported that the policy would be enforced in academies by their governing bodies and that the Council would ensure that the policy was being adhered to by maintained schools. The Council would also distribute further information via governor briefings.

7 **Business Plan 2022-32 Update**

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills updated the Committee on the progress made towards the Business Plan, explaining that it would be considered by Cabinet on 1 February. The plan was written thematically, rather than having an individual chapter for each service, in order to reflect the Council's collaborative way of working. The Cabinet Member highlighted that there were a number of key performance indicators included in the plan and stated that she would welcome the input of the Committee to ensure that the targets outlined were the most appropriate.

During the discussion points included:

1. Members thanked the Cabinet Member for the update and welcomed the aspirations set out in the report, particularly the emphasis on early intervention.
2. When asked about the implementation of the plan through to 2032, the Cabinet Member reassured the Committee that the document would continue to evolve to reflect trends and future developments, such as schools becoming academies.
3. In response to questions about how the goals set out in the Business Plan would be achieved, the Cabinet Member reassured Members that the plan outlined objectives in a concise manner but that detailed service plans and metrics would also be provided.
4. Members welcomed further information about the service plans, as they felt that they would give them a better understanding of the targets set out in the Business Plan and to decide whether additional goals would be appropriate. Members offered to identify the metrics they felt would be the most productive, as well as to monitor the service plans on an ongoing basis. The Cabinet Member welcomed the input of the Committee.
5. Requests were made for a more detailed overview of what the Council saw, beyond its statutory obligations, as its responsibility to work with local partners and the DfE. The Cabinet Member explained that the Business Plan would consider these relationships. She noted that contracts for Children's Centres were due for renewal and explained that this would provide the opportunity to evaluate the early help given to children.
6. In response to a question about youth services, the Cabinet Member stated that these would continue to be run at a local level but stressed that a review was being undertaken of the provision within the county.

Resolved

1. To establish a Task Group to review the metrics of the Business Plan.
2. For the findings of the Task Group to be brought to the June meeting of the Committee.
3. To establish a second Task Group to review the service plans once the metrics have been confirmed.

8 **Wiltshire Council's Financial Plan Update 2022-2023 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022-2027**

The Chairman invited the Committee to consider the areas of the proposed budget that related to Children's Services. He explained that he would pass the Committee's comments on to the relevant meetings, including the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on 25 January and Cabinet on 1 February 2022.

Laura Mayes, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills, stated that, despite a challenging financial environment, investment was increasing by £3.9 million in the Education and Skills and Families and Children's budgets. The Cabinet Member was pleased to announce that spending of £23 million on Education and Skills and £62 million on Families and Children were proposed in 2022/23.

The Cabinet Member then went on to highlight specific areas of investment such as Fostering Excellence and Traded Services. She explained that, given the need to make savings in the Council's overall budget, it was important to review areas, such as commissioning, in order to make the most of the available resources and to maintain services. The Cabinet Member then offered to answer questions from the Committee.

During the discussion points included:

1. Members thanked the Cabinet Member for the update and welcomed the investment in Children's Services, especially given the challenging financial situation.
2. The replacement of mobile classrooms was praised by Members and they asked how many schools were expecting to have temporary units replaced. Helean Hughes, Director of Education and Skills, explained that £3 million had been allocated to replace six mobile units. There were a total of 53 units identified in maintained schools as requiring replacement but these would be reviewed as part of the School's Place Planning Strategy.
3. In response to questions about the impact of staffing savings, Lucy Townsend, Corporate Director People, explained that the focus for savings in 2022/23 would be pausing recruitment to longstanding vacant positions, where possible, to avoid redundancies in front line roles. The situation for 2023/24 would be reviewed after Council had approved the budget.
4. When asked about the possibility of redundancies to administrative staff, the Director confirmed that the Council greatly valued staff supporting frontline practitioners. She was unable to guarantee that there would be

no redundancies across the Council but reassured Members that they were not currently looking at redundancies within Children's Services.

5. Members noted that they would be interested in receiving information about changes in the number of full-time equivalent positions to achieve the planned savings.
6. Jen Salter, Head of Service for Children's Support and Safeguarding, confirmed that most of the savings identified within Children's Services had come from her department. She explained that pay had been reviewed to better reflect the level of experience of staff. As they had a good understanding of the relative balance of experienced and newly qualified staff, they were able to realign the budget without a reduction in staff numbers.
7. When questions were raised about the long-term viability of the savings as the workforce gained experience, the Corporate Director of People explained that historic recruitment patterns had been analysed and taken into consideration when modelling costs for future years; it was anticipated that the balance of experienced and newly-qualified staff would remain.
8. The Director confirmed that Wiltshire had its lowest number of agency staff and fewer than comparable Local Authorities (LAs). She clarified that only experienced agency workers were recruited and that they helped to support newly qualified staff.
9. In response to a question about £525,000 in savings in the Fostering budget, the Director confirmed that the Fostering Excellence budget would be receiving investment. She explained that the savings had been identified from the External Placement budget and that they planned to increase the percentage of internal placements. She confirmed that the total placement budget for the financial year was just over £21 million and that in the region of £13 million went towards external providers.

The Chairman then invited Members to contact him in advance of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee should they wish him to ask further questions at that meeting.

9 Safeguarding Exception Dataset Report - Q2 - October 2021

The Head of Service for Children's Support and Safeguarding explained that the report contained a data set from the second quarter of 2021-22 for Families and Children's Services. A traffic light system (red, amber, green) was in place to help identify areas of concern. Overall, the directorate was performing very strongly, comparing favourably to most LAs on the majority of benchmarking indicators, with relatively few red cases.

The Head of Service then went on to contextualise the reasons behind some of the red indicators, highlighting the logistical difficulties created by the pandemic for example, to the number of single assessments taking place within 45 days of referral. She explained that lots of the red indicators identified in the report related to referral rates, which were lower than many LAs. However, she reassured the Committee that a comprehensive study had concluded that low

rates were an outcome of the Council's extensive work on early intervention. She then offered to share the findings of the study with the Committee.

During the discussion the following points were made:

1. Members thanked the Head of Service for the update and praised the honesty of the report. They asked if future reports could indicate whether a rise or fall in figures was a positive sign in cases where that was possible.
2. The Head of Service explained that a higher number of older children were coming into care, but this was being closely monitored.
3. In response to a question about the timescale in which a Section 47 enquiry was expected to be authorised, the Head of Service confirmed that there was no national standard, but they did have an ambitious local target of five working days. She explained that it was not always possible to meet this target due to the complexity of some cases, as well as police involvement. A joint audit had been undertaken with the police to investigate how the process could be carried out more efficiently and training was being provided to police staff to make the process better joined up.

Resolved

To note the report and thank officers for the report's level of detail, clear presentation and informative narrative on red, amber and other exceptions.

10 **Adoption**

The Chairman announced that the meeting was the first opportunity for the Committee to consider, at the same meeting, the performance for both Adoption West (as reflected in the Joint Scrutiny Panel's annual report) and the Council (as reflected in the Cabinet report) with regards to adoption.

11 **Adoption West Joint Scrutiny Panel - Annual Report - March to October 2021**

Cllr Carole King, the Wiltshire representative on the Joint Scrutiny Panel, introduced the report. She explained that they had looked at key priorities for Adoption West and were awaiting the findings of a review of the Adoption Support Fund. They had also received an overview of the adoption process and the UK Adoption Barometer. Cllr King highlighted that three of the six recommendations made in the Adoption Barometer, on page 48 of the agenda pack, were linked to issues already identified by the Scrutiny Panel. She then read out a summary of the proposals as listed on pages 49 and 50 of the pack.

During the discussion, Members thanked Cllr King for the report. Councillors that had served previously on the Joint Scrutiny Panel also discussed how valuable an experience it had been.

Resolved

1. To note the Annual Report March to October 2021 of the Scrutiny Panel.
2. To note the Forward Work Programme for the Scrutiny Panel for 2021-2022.
3. To endorse the amendments made to the Panel's Terms of Reference to promote continuity of membership.
4. To invite all Councillors to read the Adoption Barometer 2021.

12 Wiltshire Council Adoption Service: 2020-2021 Year End Report

Jen Salter, Head of Service for Children's Support and Safeguarding, introduced the Wiltshire Council Adoption Service report. The Head of Service explained that on the three score card measures, on page 91 of the agenda pack, Wiltshire compared favourably against both the national average and neighbouring LAs. However, she did note that the number of days taken to meet the score card measures had recently increased. It was explained that more children were subject to Special Guardianship orders. There had also been an increase in the number of older children seeking adoption and it was often more challenging to find suitable places for them than for younger children. She reassured the Committee that a study of individual cases had been undertaken which concluded that the delays were all due to external factors, so nothing further could have been done by social workers to progress children to adoption in a shorter period.

During the discussion points included:

1. Members thanked the Head of Service for the update and praised the rigorous nature of the Council's safeguarding procedures.
2. Members welcomed the emphasis in the report on keeping siblings together during the adoption process and sought further information about how decisions would be taken to adopt a child. The Head of Service explained that there would be a Care Proceedings Managed Decision and that a Together or Apart assessment would be carried out by a social worker. She explained that a detailed analysis of relationships would be undertaken, and any decision would go through court.
3. In response to a question about whether birth parents were asked to make a financial contribution towards the care of their adopted children, officers noted that many parents would not be in a position to make a financial contribution and that there would also be administrative costs to the council in pursuing payment.
4. Members requested further information on child protection, including a flowchart on the journey of the child and the adoption process. It was discussed whether a training session could be developed jointly with the Corporate Parenting Panel.

Cllr Sankey declared a non-pecuniary interest that he was in the process of obtaining a Special Guardianship order.

13 **Final report from the Rapid Scrutiny exercise on Provision of Accommodation for Young People at Transition Time - Gap Analysis**

Following on from the verbal update that she provided to the Committee, on 4 November 2021, Cllr Carole King introduced the final report. Overall, Members of the Rapid Scrutiny Exercise were reassured the Council had support mechanisms in place to allow people to have a successful transition and that there was a range of accommodation available. However, there was a recognition that there should be a greater variety of accommodation available for those with SEND needs.

Members thanked Cllr King for the report and endorsed the findings outlined on page 99 of the agenda pack. In addition to the recommendations outlined, Members also discussed whether further recommendations could be made to the Executive as the accommodation strategy was developed. It was suggested that work could be undertaken to identify the gaps in provision and to outline a series of metrics to assess how well targets were being met.

Resolved

For the Committee to note the report and endorse the three recommendations within it (on page 99 of the agenda pack) and to receive a response from the Cabinet Member at the next meeting, with the addition of the following recommendations made by the committee:

Recommendation 4 - An exercise should be undertaken to identify the gaps / needs of Wiltshire care leavers so that any strategy developed can be targeted and include metrics to allow measurement of performance.

Recommendation 5 - The Accommodation Strategy in development should reflect the challenges identified through undertaking Recommendation 4 and identify how these challenges will be addressed.

14 **Findings of the Standing Task Group on Traded Services**

The Chairman invited the Committee to consider the finding of its Standing Task Group on Traded Services, as detailed in the attached notes of the meeting held on 4 January 2022. He noted that Officers had already indicated their intention to integrate the changes proposed in the third recommendation for future reports. The first two recommendations would be referred to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills.

Resolved

For the Committee to note the report and endorse the recommendations within it (on page 104 of the agenda pack) and to receive a response from the Cabinet Member at the next meeting.

15 **Task Group and Board Representative Updates**

The Chairman reported that the Fostering Excellence Task Group had its scoping meeting on 18 January and would meet formally on 3 February. An update and the Task Group's terms of reference would be provided to the Committee at its next meeting on 15 March.

Cllr Jo Trigg provided a quick update on the Disadvantaged Learners Task Group, stating that they had had their first meeting just prior to Christmas and were due to meet the lead officer supporting Vulnerable Learners on 20 January to discuss their terms of reference.

Cllr Belcher left the meeting at 12:38pm.

Resolved

To note the updates provided at the meeting.

16 **Forward Work Programme**

The Chairman referred the committee to the Forward Work Programme outlined in the agenda pack and invited Members to speak if they had any additional items that they wanted to be included.

Resolved

To note the Forward Work Programme.

17 **Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next ordinary meeting was confirmed as Tuesday 15 March 2022 at 10:30am.

18 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 am - 12.45 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Matt Hitch
matthew.hitch@wiltshire.gov.uk of Democratic Services, direct line 01225 718059, e-mail matthew.hitch@wiltshire.gov.uk

Press enquiries to Communications, direct line ((01225) 713114 or email communications@wiltshire.gov.uk

Wiltshire Council

Children's Select Committee

15 March 2022

School Ofsted Judgements

Executive summary

1. This report is a regular update for the committee focused upon Ofsted inspections in Wiltshire schools. It shows all schools inspected since September 2021 and provides updates on inspection judgements based on the inspection framework introduced in September 2019 using the categories below:
 - Overall effectiveness
 - Quality of education
 - Behaviour and attitudes
 - Personal development
 - Effectiveness of leadership and management
 - Early years provision
 - Sixth form provision

Update

2. Since September 2021 there have been 28 inspections - 1 of which was deferred twice and has not yet been inspected. Another school had a single deferral and has since been inspected. 23 reports have been published to date. 12 academies and 16 maintained schools have been inspected.

Section 8 and Section 5 inspections explanation

3. When OFSTED has judged a school to be good, they will then return to the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.
4. A section 5 inspection will take place 1-2 years after a section 8 inspection if OFSTED feel that the school might be "outstanding" or within 5 years of the previous section 5 inspection if they feel it might be "requires improvement". If they have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour, or the quality of education, they will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.
5. 23 reports have now been published (links below), schools inspected since the previous report are identified by "NEW".
6. Previous OFSTED grades are in brackets

| School name (Web address to access Ofsted report below) | Status | Date of inspection | OE (previous) | Quality of education | Behaviour & attitudes | Personal development | Leadership & management | Early years provision | Sixth form provision |
|--|------------|-------------------------|---------------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Studley Green Primary School Ofsted Studley Green Primary School | Maintained | 14/09/21 SECTION 5 | G (RI) ↑ | G | G | G | G | G | n/a |
| St Thomas A Beckett Ofsted St Thomas à Becket Church of England Aided Primary School | Maintained | 22/09/2021 SECTION 8 | G (G) | | | | | | |
| Alderbury and West Grimstead Ofsted Alderbury and West Grimstead Church of England Primary School | Maintained | 28/09/2021 SECTION 5 | RI (RI) | RI | G | G | RI | G | |
| St John's C of E Primary, Warminster Ofsted St John's CofE School | Academy | 05/10/2021 SECTION 5 | G | G | G | G | G | G | |
| Christ the King Catholic Primary, Amesbury Ofsted Christ The King Catholic School, Amesbury | Maintained | 06/10/2021 SECTION 5 | RI (I) ↑ | RI | RI | RI | RI | RI | |
| Nursted Community Primary Ofsted Nursted Community Primary School | Maintained | 02/11/2021 SECTION 8 | G (G) | | | | | | |
| Holy Trinity C of E Primary, Calne Ofsted Holy Trinity Church of England Academy | Academy | 03/22/2021 SECTION 8 | G (G) | | | | | | |
| Kings Lodge Community (maintained) Ofsted Kings Lodge Primary School | Maintained | 03/11/2021 SECTION 8 | G (G) | | | | | | |
| St Sampson's Primary Ofsted St Sampson's Church of England Primary School | Maintained | 09/11/2021 SECTION 8 | G (G) | | | | | | |
| Harnham Junior School Ofsted Harnham Church of England Controlled Junior School | Maintained | 09/11/2021 SECTION 8 | G (G) | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|------------|-------------------------|----------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| NEW St Augustine's Catholic and Technology College Ofsted St Augustine's Catholic College | Academy | 10/11/2021 SECTION 5 | RI (O) ↓ | RI | RI | RI | RI | RI | RI |
| NEW Bradon Forest Ofsted Bradon Forest School | Academy | 10/11/2021 SECTION 8 | G (G) | | | | | | |
| NEW Wansdyke Community school Ofsted Wansdyke School | Academy | 17/11/2021 SECTION 8 | G (G) | | | | | | |
| NEW Burbage Primary Ofsted Burbage Primary School | Academy | 17/11/2021 SECTION 5 | G (RI) ↑ | G | G | G | G | G | |
| NEW Lyneham Primary School Ofsted Lyneham Primary School | Maintained | 23/11/2021 SECTION 5 | G (RI) ↑ | G | G | G | G | G | |
| NEW Horningsham Primary Ofsted Horningsham Primary School | Maintained | 25/11/2021 SECTION 8 | G (G) | | | | | | |
| NEW Christian Malford Primary Ofsted Christian Malford CofE Primary School | Academy | 25/11/2021 SECTION 8 | G (G) | | | | | | |
| NEW Lacock Primary School Ofsted Lacock Church of England Primary School | Maintained | 01/12/2021 SECTION 5 | RI (G) ↓ | RI | RI | RI | RI | RI | |
| NEW Frogwell Primary Ofsted Frogwell Primary School | Maintained | 01/12/2021 SECTION 5 | RI (G) ↓ | RI | G | G | RI | G | |
| NEW Whitesheet CofE Primary Ofsted Whitesheet Church of England Primary Academy | Academy | 02/12/2021 SECTION 8 | G (G) | | | | | | |
| NEW St Katherine's CofE Primary Ofsted St Katharine's CofE Primary School | Academy | 07/12/2021 SECTION 8 | G (na) | | | | | | |
| NEW North Bradley CofE Primary Ofsted North Bradley CofE Primary School | Maintained | 08/12/2021 SECTION 8 | G (G) | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---------|-------------------------|-----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| NEW Ivy lane Primary Ofsted Ivy Lane Primary School | Academy | 12/01/2022 SECTION 8 | G (na) | | | | | | |
|---|---------|-------------------------|-----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|

7. **Lyneham Primary School** received a positive report, with all areas being judged as good. The report identifies the leadership at all levels, including governance, with a particular focus on wellbeing and safeguarding

'Leaders are tenacious in their pursuit of support for the school's most vulnerable pupils. They are not afraid to escalate concerns should they be unhappy with the response from an external service.'

Next steps are for the school to continue to develop its curriculum. The school has received extensive support through the school improvement framework.

8. **Lacock Primary School** was identified as requiring intensive support during the last academic year. An interim head teacher has been in place since June 2021. The report recognises the recent 'turbulence' within the leadership team. The interim headteacher has had a clear focus on safeguarding effectiveness and wellbeing – both of which are positively reflected in the report. This was an area of weakness identified and supported by the school effectiveness team.

'Leaders have created a culture of vigilance. They have increased staff knowledge of how to keep pupils safe. Recent training and new procedures have enabled staff to know how to report and record their concerns relating to pupils' safety.'

There was also a positive response from the parental body and staff reported that they feel well supported by the interim head teacher and governing body.

9. **Frogwell Primary School** Although the school received a judgement of requires improvement, the report rightly identifies many positives. The school is judged to be good for behaviour and attitudes, personal development, and early years provision. OFSTED identified development needs in leadership and management, specifically in governance and curriculum leadership. This is being rapidly addressed and monitored, and rapidly improved through support from their school improvement advisor and regional excellence and improvement lead. Again, safeguarding was identified as an area for development which was supported by the school effectiveness team.

10. **St Augustine's Catholic College** was previously judged to be outstanding before it converted to an Academy. It had been exempt from inspection until November 2020. It is a standalone academy.

11. **Burbage Primary** school moved from requires improvement to good which is positive. It is part of the Excalibur Academies Trust

12. **All other schools have remained the same.**

School graded as Good or Outstanding

13. Table 1: Published Ofsted outcomes for Wiltshire schools, by school type. Tracked since August 2020

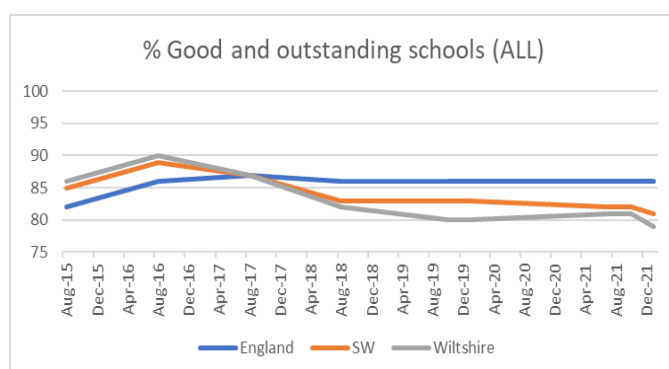
| | Primary | | Secondary | | Special | | ALL Schools | |
|-------------------------------|---------|-------|-----------|-------|---------|-------|-------------|-------|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Outstanding | 18 | 8.9 | 4 | 13.3 | 0 | 0.0 | 22 | 9.3 |
| Good | 143 | 70.8 | 20 | 66.7 | 2 | 50.0 | 165 | 69.9 |
| Requires Improvement | 30 | 14.9 | 6 | 20.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 36 | 15.3 |
| Inadequate | 7 | 3.5 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 7 | 3.0 |
| Not yet inspected (U) | 4 | 2.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 2 | 50.0 | 6 | 2.5 |
| All | 202 | 100.0 | 30 | 100.0 | 4 | 100.0 | 236 | 100.0 |
| Outstanding or Good (current) | 161 | 79.7 | 24 | 80.0 | 2 | 50.0* | 187 | 79.2 |
| Outstanding or Good 31 Aug 21 | 160 | 79.2 | 25 | 83.3 | 2 | 50.0* | 187 | 79.2 |
| Outstanding or Good 31 Aug 20 | 159 | 78.7 | 25 | 80.6 | 4 | 66.7 | 188 | 78.7 |

Special school data is reflected by the amalgamation of schools into Silverwood school. Two special schools have not been inspected. The two that have been inspected are good.

14. Table 2: Ofsted Inspection Outcomes October 2019 to January 2022 – National, Southwest Region and Wiltshire

Source: External data - Ofsted Management [State funded school inspections and outcomes: management information - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/state-funded-school-inspections-and-outcomes-management-information)

| Good and outstanding schools (ALL) (%) | England | SW | Wiltshire |
|--|---------|----|-----------|
| Jan-22 | 86 | 81 | 79 |
| Oct-21 | 86 | 82 | 81 |
| Jul-21 | 86 | 82 | 81 |
| Jan-20 | 86 | 83 | 80 |
| Oct-19 | 86 | 83 | 80 |



Wiltshire's recent inspection reports have led to a 2% decline in Good and Outstanding schools. Data overall for National remains static, the Southwest has declined by 1%.

15. Recent inspections of maintained schools have shown that schools identified for targeted or intensive support have been accurate. These schools have

been supported by the school effectiveness team. Unfortunately, Covid continued to limit the schools' ability to make rapid progress against their school improvement priorities. Staff absence was a huge issue during terms 2 and 3 slowing the ability of school leaders to prioritise improvements.

16. The 2 maintained schools moving from Good to requires improvement (Lacock and Frogwell) continue to receive targeted support to continue this journey – with a view to being judged as good at the next inspection. Frogwell school has made positive improvements since September, and this is reflected in the report. Again, targeted support continues to address the issues identified in the report.
17. All schools due to be inspected have been invited to 'preparing for Ofsted' training, this has been widely appreciated with positive feedback from school leaders. This course has been repeated throughout terms 2 and 3 and will continue to be offered for head teachers and chairs of governors. HMI have delivered training to headteachers of outstanding schools, and those aiming for outstanding due to the changes within the inspection framework. Again, this has been positively received. A focus on curriculum leadership has been offered to all maintained schools through their school improvement advisor – advisors have received training themselves. Safeguarding effectiveness checks have been completed for all maintained schools.

Conclusion

18. Staff absence has limited school improvement activity, especially during terms 2 and 3. It is hoped that with the changes to restrictions, face to face support can resume, however we need to be mindful that potential staff absences may continue to have a negative impact.
19. A recent survey has been sent to all maintained schools, this is still open at the time of writing, however from the 62 responses collected so far, the vast majority have been positive. This survey will be analysed in more detail and reported on in due course. It will be used to form the basis of the school improvement offer moving forward. It does however show that maintained schools continue to feel that the school effectiveness team have a positive impact of their ability to drive school improvement within their schools.

Author:

Lesley Lowe – Head of School Effectiveness (interim)

Contact details: lesley.lowe@wiltshire.gov.uk

Wiltshire Council

Children's Select Committee

15 March 2022

DfE Changes – Updates January 2022 – March 2022

Childcare providers no longer required to tell Ofsted about confirmed COVID-19 cases

1. The Department for Education has decided that from 21 February 2022, if you are a childcare provider, you are no longer required to notify Ofsted, or the childminder agency with which you are registered, of any COVID-19 cases in the setting, whether that is of a child or staff member. You also do not have to submit notifications for any cases that have happened in the last 14 days. [Link](#)

Wiltshire's position:

Early Years settings and childminders are currently being asked to continue to notify the Local Authority via the school effectiveness inbox if they have positive cases and for any staffing issues which may force closure. This is to offer advice and support and ensure if numbers need to be reduced that we have the most vulnerable children in the setting.

Childminders are currently still being told to close or move to an alternative premises for at least a five day isolation period (or until they have two negative LFTs 24 hours apart) if they have a positive test within their household. Separate guidance for childminders has been produced.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/additional-actions-for-childminders-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic/additional-actions-for-childminders-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic>

More support to keep pupils in the classroom

2. Education Secretary Nadhim Zahawi has announced an additional 7,000 air cleaning units to be provided to early years, schools, and colleges to improve ventilation in teaching spaces – further helping to strike the balance between managing transmission risk along with reducing disruption to in-person learning. [Link](#)

Wiltshire's position:

Advice continues to be disseminated to schools via the weekly newsletter and termly heads briefings. Headteachers continue to use the school effectiveness email inbox and regional excellence and improvement leads as a point of

contact for advice and guidance. We are still waiting for details of the number of units allocated to Wiltshire schools.

Hundreds of thousands of pupils benefit from tutoring

5. Over 300,000 tutoring courses began last term, nearing the total figure for the previous academic year, keeping the National Tutoring Programme on track to deliver the ambitious target of two million courses this academic year.

6. Of the 302,000 courses which began last term, an estimated 230,000 were provided through the new, school-led tutoring pillar, showing that the introduction of greater flexibility for schools in providing tutoring is proving powerful in making sure the programme is reaching as many young people as possible. [Link](#)

Wiltshire's position:

Schools are delivering this programme through a range of means, many using in-house staff due to the shortage of additional staff.

Government supporting schools and colleges to provide face-to-face learning for millions of children and young people

8. Hundreds of former teachers have signed up with supply agencies following the Education Secretary's call for them to temporarily return to the profession, data published on 12 January shows. Initial data from around ten per cent of supply agencies shows that 485 former teachers have signed up with agencies, with some teachers already placed back in the classroom during the first week of term. A further 100 Teach First alumni have also expressed interest in supporting the workforce.

[Link](#)

Wiltshire's position:

This has not yet impacted on the workforce in Wiltshire. Last term schools continued to report difficulties in sourcing supply cover in schools.

Reforms to encourage more students to take up language GCSEs

11. In the updated GCSEs, students will be assessed on the most common vocabulary used in conversations and writing, as well as grammar and pronunciation, increasing clarity for teachers and improving the practical benefits for students. [Link](#)

Wiltshire's position: *Guidance is disseminated to schools*

New measures to increase school attendance

13. A new consultation proposes that all schools have robust policies detailing how they will support pupils to attend as regularly as possible and sets out how legal intervention including penalty notices should be used in promoting good attendance by local authorities.

14. The latest data shows a radically different approach to sanctions across the country, with some local authorities issuing no fines in 2020/21, while others issued over 1,500. The new standards will make sure interventions such as fines are always used when all other options have been explored. [Link](#)

Wiltshire's position:

We have responded to the DfE consultation and strongly agree with the intention to standardise the sanction approach across the country. A new Local Authority Attendance Strategy is under development, predicated on the good practice proposals in the DfE consultation document.

Further plans to level up opportunities for every child

18. New measures to make sure children are getting the quality of education they deserve are being announced, as the government continues its drive to level up opportunities for every child and family across the country.

19. The government has confirmed it will go ahead with the creation of a register for children not in school at the earliest available legislative opportunity, alongside plans to give schools greater support on behaviour and rebuild hundreds more school buildings across the country. [Link](#)

Wiltshire's position:

We welcome the intention to legislate for a register of children not in school and this aligns well with our existing practice for monitoring children who are electively home educated. Consultations are live for revised behaviour in schools guidance and suspension and permanent exclusions guidance. These have been shared with schools via the newsletter and we will be responding to both consultations via the Education & Skills Behaviour Support Service.

Improvements seen in children and young people's wellbeing

21. Thousands of children and young people in England are benefiting from support for their mental health and wellbeing in education, as new research shows an improving picture in their recovery from the pandemic. The Department for Education has published its third annual State of the Nation report, providing an in-depth picture of the experiences of children and young people aged 5 to 24 throughout the pandemic during the 2020 to 2021 academic year. [Link](#)

Wiltshire's position:

We welcome this report and will review it in the context of data gathered through the Wiltshire school health and wellbeing survey 2020 and 2021.

Flexible apprenticeships to boost jobs in key sectors

23. New flexible apprenticeships will soon be available to create opportunities for more people to earn while they learn in industries that boost the economy. Up to 1500 apprentices will be recruited on the government's new flexi-job apprenticeship scheme, which will allow people to complete short placements across sectors such as construction and creative during their apprenticeship, opening a new paid training route to a career in these industries. [Link](#)

Wiltshire's position:

Employer Engagement Enterprise Coordinator is sharing the information with businesses in the relevant sectors.

Extra support to safeguard political impartiality in schools

25. New guidance to support teachers in tackling sensitive issues in the classroom in a politically impartial way has been published on 17 February 2022. Teaching about political issues and the differing views on these is an essential part of the curriculum, helping pupils to form their own opinions and prepare them for later life.

26. The new political impartiality in schools guidance will help teachers and schools navigate issues such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the legacy of the British Empire or societal responses to racism in accordance with the law, which states that teachers must not promote partisan political views and should offer a balanced overview of opposing views when political issues are taught.. [Link](#)

Wiltshire's position:

This guidance has been shared with schools. The Wiltshire learning alliance will develop support and gather feedback, as part of their commitment to curriculum support.

School Budgets

27. In the Autumn of 2019, the government announced its pledge to boost schools and high needs funding. Building on the 2019-20 funding levels, the cash increases of £14.5 billion over 3 years would comprise;

- £2.6 billion in 2020-21
- £4.8 billion in 2021-22 (increase by £2.2bn)
- £7.1 billion in 2022-23 (increase by £2.3bn)

In addition, a further £700million was pledged for High Needs nationally in 2020-21, a further £730m for 2021-22 and £780m for 2022-23.

28. The Department for Education (DfE) have continued to allocate school funding on the basis of the National Funding Formula (NFF) which should see all schools benefitting from the additional funding. Nationally, the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) shows an average increase of 3.2% in the pupil-led funding factors compared to 2021-22. The 2022-23 year is another 'soft' year with local Schools' Forum still retaining its role in determining the school funding allocation methodology.

29. Schools Forum set the 2022-23 Schools Budget at their January meeting which was ratified by Full council in February. The headlines included:

- £10.869m increased funding (3.42%) for schools
- £4.855m increased funding (8.4%) to support learners with additional needs due to SEN & disability (high needs)
- Increased funding for early years which means the funded hourly rates are increasing from £4.25 per hour to £4.42 per hour for 3&4 year olds and £5.48 per hour to £5.69 per hour for disadvantaged 4 year olds. In addition, the disability access funding is increasing from £615 to £800 per pupil per annum and the inclusion fund is being expanded to support up to 30 hours per week funding for working parents / carers.

30. In addition to this, £9.5m of Supplementary funding for schools, awarded late, to assist with increased social care levy (the additional 1.5% on employers national insurance) and other rising cost pressures such as energy costs. £2.4

More information can be found here [Agenda for Schools Forum on Thursday 20 January 2022, 1.30 pm | Wiltshire Council](#)

Local Authority Budgets for Children & Education

31. Council approved increases in budget for children and education; £1.7m to reflect rising demand and ensure services in statutory SEN are sufficient; £1.5m representing 4% contractual inflation on placements and SEN transport; £0.7m on demand for placements for children and SEN transport. Savings were agreed in relation to fostering excellence whereby the unit cost of an in house foster care placement are lower than external providers; deleting vacant posts and service efficiencies.

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Wiltshire Council

Children's Select Committee

15 March 2022

Executive Response
Rapid Scrutiny Exercise: Provision of Accommodation for Young People at Transition Time – Gap Analysis

Purpose of the report

1. To present the Executive response to the Rapid Scrutiny Exercise Provision of Accommodation for Young People at Transition Time – Gap Analysis from the:
 - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills
 - Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, SEND and Transition and Inclusion

Background

2. The issue of how effective the council was at getting care leavers into the right housing, including the availability of choice and location, was first raised by the previous Cabinet member for Children's Services, Cllr Pauline Church, in 2019.
3. It was placed upon the Select Committee's forward work plan on 12 November 2019. Subsequently, it was agreed at a work planning meeting between the Select Committee Chairman and the Executive in July 2021 to start the analysis in the autumn of 2021. The scope of the exercise was widened to consider how effective the council is at meeting housing needs for young people at transition time e.g., care leavers or people with special educational needs and disability (SEND) 'ageing out' of existing provision.
4. The final report of the Rapid Scrutiny Group was presented for endorsement to the Children's Select Committee on 19 January 2022. The Children's Select Committee resolved to refer the report's findings and recommendations to the relevant parties for response.

Executive response to the Rapid Scrutiny Group's recommendations (Please note that recommendation numbers match those in the final report and include two additional recommendations added by the select committee on 19 January 2022)

Recommendation 1:

Children's Select Committee consider the draft of the accommodation strategy covering the needs of children and young people with learning disability, mental health, and autism (potentially published mid-2022)

Recommendation is agreed:

The Wiltshire Accommodation Strategy is currently in draft format and has a new working title "Wiltshire Independent Living Strategy". The strategy is currently out to consultation. The strategic lead is Robert Holman, Commissioning Transformation Lead for Whole Life Commissioning, who will present the draft strategy to Children's Select in June 2022.

Recommendation 2:

The Select Committee thereafter receives an annual update on relevant parts of the strategy's delivery

Recommendation is agreed:

Robert Holman, as strategic lead will provide Children's Scrutiny with the annual update on the relevant parts of the strategy's delivery.

Recommendation 3:

The Select Committee continues to monitor the data on care leaver accommodation provided in the Corporate Parenting annual report.

Recommendation is agreed:

Data on the suitability of care leaver accommodation is included in the Quarterly Safeguarding Children Dataset. This dataset is shared with Children's Select and will supplement the information contained in the Corporate Parenting Annual Report which is also shared.

Recommendation 4:

An exercise should be undertaken to identify the gaps/needs of Wiltshire care leavers so that any strategy developed can be targeted and include metrics to allow measurement of performance.

Recommendation is agreed:

The Placement Sufficiency Strategy is currently under review and will be finalised by the end of March 2022. It would be helpful for Children's Select to review the strategy and receive regular updates on implementation and impact.

Recommendation 5:

The Accommodation Strategy in development should reflect the challenges identified through undertaking Recommendation 4 and identify how these challenges will be addressed

Recommendation is agreed:

The Wiltshire Independent Living Strategy captures the need to forecast demand for people with learning disabilities, mental health conditions and/or autism spectrum conditions. The strategy highlights that for UASC and care leavers there is a higher prevalence of poor social, emotional and mental health within these groups. It has taken account of the metrics for this group of young people through the market position statement alongside Wiltshire Demographics. The needs analysis within the strategy

will highlight the metrics identified in regard to Wiltshire's care experienced young people and how we continue to meet need.

Proposal

5. To note the executive response to the report of the **Rapid Scrutiny Exercise: Provision of Accommodation for Young People at Transition Time – Gap Analysis**

Cllr Laura Mayes, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills

Cllr Jane Davies, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, SEND and Transition and Inclusion

Officer contact: Simon Bennett, Senior Scrutiny Officer, 01225 718709, simon.bennett@wiltshire.gov.uk

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Wiltshire Council

Children’s Select Committee

15 March 2022

Executive Response to the Report of the Children’s Select Committee Standing Task Group – Traded Services

Purpose of the report

1. To present the response of the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills to the Report of the Children’s Select Committee Standing Task Group.

Background

2. On 19 January 2022 the Children’s Select Committee endorsed the Report of the Task Group on Traded Services.
3. The Committee resolved to refer the following Task Group’s recommendations to the relevant Cabinet member for response at the Committee’s next meeting on 15 March 2022.
4. The Chair of the Standing Task Group was pleased to report that this had been a very productive meeting and thanked officers and Executive Members for their engagement with the exercise.
5. Members of the task group also wished to highlight the vast progress achieved in the last two years with regards to Traded Services, which they believed reflected the dedication and degree of commitment shown by members of the traded services team and its Head of Service.

Executive response to the Task Group’s recommendations

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|---------------------|--------------|
| Recommendation No.1 | For the council to clearly identify the overarching principle and strategic direction for traded services and the “freedom” it might need to achieve this “vision and mission” within the council’s rules (for example longer-term financial planning, quicker decision making when proposing amendments to charging system). | | |
| Reason for recommendation | The key issue identified was the need for a strategic identity for traded services, which would provide direction to address many of the issues raised during the meeting. | | |
| Cabinet member | Cllr Laura Mayes | Lead Officer | Paul Redford |

| | | | |
|--|-------------------|----------|---|
| Executive response | 01/03/2022 | ACCEPTED | There is clear intent to deliver income and benefit led outcomes from Traded Services; this is included in the Council's business plan. With a clear vision and mission, underpinned by value and vision statements, the decision making and outcomes will have even more impact going forward. |
| Action | | | Target date |
| The Head of Service for Traded Services to agree the direction of travel with Members and the Director of Children's Services and the Director of Education and Skills, supported by a service delivery plan to achieve key priorities agreed for the next twelve months. This will be reinforced by a data dashboard to monitor performance covering the key priorities. | | | May 2022 (Interim Report due to Children's Select Task Group) |
| Success criteria | | | |
| Delivery Service Plan and Data Dashboard to evidence progress made and outcomes achieved. | | | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---------------------|---|
| Recommendation No.2 | For a timeline (or deadline) to be set for the completion of the cost recovery review and for each traded service to identify its key driver and, if possible, for that timeline (or deadline) to be shared with the standing task group. | | |
| Reason for recommendation | The task group felt that the cost recovery review and identification of key drivers were crucial for traded services to maintain a sense of direction and to enable it to scrutinise its decision-making in pursuing opportunities (or not), subsidising some services (or not), etc. | | |
| Cabinet member | Cllr Laura Mayes | Lead Officer | Paul Redford |
| Executive response | 4/3/2022 | ACCEPTED | The review has started and the Task Group will be updated in May, as part of the interim report, with a full timeline for completion. |
| Action | | | Target date |
| A full analysis of annual funding budgets will be undertaken to present a balance sheet for all services under the Traded Services offer. | | | December 2022 |
| Success criteria | | | |
| Traded Services Balance Sheet for every Traded Service by December 2022. | | | |

Recommendation No.3

For future reports to include:

In the executive summary / head of service's summary

- a. overall vision and mission for traded services as a whole;
- b. risk assessment (based on the swot analysis already undertaken), which could include resource availability / academisation / competitors, etc. Ideally this would be RAG rated and would show trend from one report to the next;
- c. a single gathering of evidence to demonstrate how traded services support the delivery of the council's business plan (rather than for each service's report);
- d. a table showing:
 - i. whether a traded service is statutory / or not (may be both);
 - ii. whether a traded service is "benefit led" (benefits to children / schools) or "financially led";
 - iii. a 1 to 5 scale showing the council's order of priority (e.g. "1 – nice to have – limited risks if not provided", "5 – must have – high risk if not provided")
- e. a table / graphic showing:
 - i. the percentage of schools having purchased any service (product or contract or item) from traded services, ideally showing the split between primary / secondary schools and LA maintained / academy schools / outside of county schools
 - ii. the number of in-county schools (compared to the total number of schools in the county) who have purchased anything from traded services and how many services they have purchased – if possible highlighting the outliers (if this is easily identified through Right Choice); e.g. 150 schools out of 252 in the county have purchased 15,426 services (contract / product / service), which means an average of 103 services purchased per school, however 5 schools purchased over 200 services and 8 schools only purchased 12.
- f. A table or summary of customers "other than schools" engaged with (and by which traded services), i.e. early years setting, childminders, youth groups, as well as "outside of county" customers engaged with.

| | | | |
|---|--|----------------------------|--|
| | <p><i>For each service's report</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> g. each service to have identified one main goal for the year ahead and indicate key steps to achieving this; h. a single key driver for each traded service (and if possible for traded services as a whole), e.g. commercial / value added for schools, etc.; i. risk assessments (<i>see b above for details</i>); j. income and expenditure analysis for each service (traded income and traded cost) and whether this meets the expectations for that traded service (i.e. is that traded service expected – or designed - to run at a loss / break even / make a surplus); k. opportunity analysis – for each service to identify the top 5 commercial opportunities, their feasibility and, if appropriate, the steps proposed to take these opportunities forward. | | |
| <p>Reason for recommendation</p> | <p>To consolidate the report to enable adequate scrutiny when it is presented to either the Standing Task Group or Children's Select Committee.</p> <p>It should be noted that this was the first report to be presented to overview and scrutiny, and the task group appreciated the level of information included and recognised the work that had clearly been required to produce such a comprehensive report. It was also accepted that it may take time for some of the elements in this recommendation to be implemented.</p> | | |
| <p>Cabinet member</p> | <p>Cllr Laura Mayes</p> | <p>Lead Officer</p> | <p>Paul Redford</p> |
| <p>Executive response</p> | <p>4/3/2022</p> | <p>ACCEPTED</p> | <p>The feedback for report content will be adopted for the November annual report and where data is available to cover each of the points it will be reported. There will be some adaptations made for the May report, to reflect some of the feedback earlier, but not all will be achieved by the time the May report is due. Where data is unavailable for certain requests, the next best data will be presented for consideration to respond to the feedback.</p> |
| <p>Action</p> | <p>Target date</p> | | |

| | |
|--|---------------|
| | |
| Review of report content and format to make sure it is reflecting the feedback offered on the back of the first Traded Services Report presented in November 2022. | November 2022 |
| Success criteria | |
| Traded Report May 2022 and Traded Full Year Report November 2022 | |

6. The support, scrutiny and feedback the Children's Services Committee and its Standing Task Group provided have been warmly received by all the Traded teams involved.
7. The January 2022 feedback provided on the Traded Services report will be adopted for reporting going forward, understanding that the November Full Year Report will present the best opportunity to reflect all the changes to the reporting format in line with the recommendations presented.
8. Where data is not available to satisfy the recommendations exactly, substitute data will be presented for the Task Group's consideration.

Proposal

9. To note the executive response to the Report on Traded Services of the **Children's Select Committee Standing Task Group**.

Cllr Laura Mayes, Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills

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

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Wiltshire Council

Children's Select Committee

15 March 2022

Task Group and Rapid Scrutiny Update

Purpose

To provide an update on any recent work from task groups and rapid scrutiny exercises linked to the Children's Select Committee (CSC), as well as information on any upcoming overview and scrutiny (OS) activities for the committee.

Proposed activities

There have been no requests or proposals received for the Committee to establish a new OS exercise.

There are currently three active task groups, and the following are listed in the Forward Work Programme.

Conversations are ongoing with relevant Cabinet Members and Directors to establish appropriate start dates for these activities:

- Children and Young People's Mental Health Task Group
- Access to Post-16 education Task Group (*spring 2022*)
- Youth provision and youth service funding Task Group
- High needs block funding Rapid Scrutiny
- Health Outcomes and meeting health needs Rapid Scrutiny

Updates from active Task Groups

1. Children's Select Committee – Standing Task Group

Supporting officer: Marie Gondlach

Membership

Cllr Helen Belcher
John Hawkins
Cllr Jon Hubbard (Chair)
Cllr Jacqui Lay
Cllr Caroline Thomas
Cllr Jo Trigg

Terms of Reference

At its 6 July 2021 meeting, the Children's Select Committee resolved to

establish this Standing Task Group:

1. To undertake detailed reviews of the regular reports that come within the Children's Select Committee's remit and to bring updates to the Committee on its work;
2. To present any key issues, findings and recommendations to the Children's Select Committee, and / or other relevant committees, for discussion, endorsement or further scrutiny where appropriate;
3. To invite all members and substitutes of Children's Select Committee to its meetings, should they wish to attend and participate.

Recent activity

There has been no meeting of the Standing Task Group since the last Children's Select Committee meeting.

4. Disadvantaged Learners Task Group

Supporting officer: Ceri Williams

Membership

Cllr Jo Trigg (Chair)
Cllr Trevor Carbin
Cllr Gordon King
Cllr Kathryn Macdermid
Cllr Caroline Thomas
John Hawkins

Terms of Reference

Whilst Wiltshire has a relatively low number of disadvantaged learners, they are largely underperforming compared to regional and national levels. This task group will aim to:

- assess the council's current work and aspirations
- identify the reason(s) for the high rates of 'underperformance' relative to regional and national rates
- explore solutions to raise performance levels, based on best practice across the country.

Recent activity

The task group has met on three occasions. The focus to date has been towards understanding the Wiltshire context; the number of disadvantaged learners (DLs), the performance levels and the efforts being undertaken to deliver improvement. Witnesses to speak with the task group have included the lead from our Early Years team and the Intensive Support and Vulnerable Learners Lead. To understand the national picture, the task group is scheduled to meet with the Education Endowment

Foundation on 10 March. Members are also hoping to shortly speak with some headteachers to gain an improved understanding from the schools' perspective.

The task group is scheduled to bring its final report to the CSC on 8 June 2022.

5. Fostering Excellence Task Group

Supporting officer: Marie Gondlach

Membership

Cllr Liz Alstrom
Cllr Chuck Berry (Chair)
Cllr Ruth Hopkinson
Cllr Sam Pearce-Kearney
Cllr Mark Verbinnen

It should be noted that Cllr Jack Oatley was appointed to the task group but had to resign at the second meeting as he was no longer able to attend the scheduled meetings of the task group.

Terms of Reference

For the Fostering Excellence task group to:

1. review how the Fostering Excellence project has been / is / will be addressing the issues identified in the report presented to CSC on 10 March 2020:
 - a. Increase initial enquiries and therefore assessments and approvals of Wiltshire Council foster carers;
 - b. Improve the retention of Wiltshire approved foster carers;
 - c. Increase the percentage of Wiltshire children in foster care cared for by Wiltshire Council foster carers (at the time 46%);
 - d. Maintain high occupancy rates of Wiltshire approved foster carers (at the time 80%+).
2. identify how the effectiveness of the Fostering Excellence project will be measured and reported, and be satisfied that this is robust and delivering improvements whilst achieving the savings identified in the budget 2022-23;
3. identify how the benefits of being placed with Wiltshire Council foster carers (who are receiving enhanced training / support as part of Fostering Excellence) for children in care will be measured and reported, and be satisfied that this is robust;
4. identify best practice across the country for recruitment and retention of in-house foster carers.

Recent activity

The task group held its scoping meeting on 18 January 2022, when it also elected its Chair (Cllr Chuck Berry) and agreed its terms of reference (as shown above).

The task group held its second meeting on 3 February 2022 where it considered the following:

- What Fostering Excellence is,
- Why Wiltshire Council has chosen this fostering model,
- Whether other councils use a Fostering Excellence model (if so who they are and sharing of good practice / learning),
- Key milestones for the project (past and upcoming) – including key successes and key issues / risks,
- Officers / structure involved in “delivering” the project
- Budget - What is driving the savings to be achieved?
Where is the council investing to deliver Fostering Excellence?

The task group held its third meeting on 3 March 2022 and focused on understanding the data collected and how it is analysed to monitor progress for the project. In doing so the task group also considered:

- Occupancy rate,
- Placement stability,
- How effectiveness is reported and currently monitored by the council.

The task group has two more meetings scheduled and is looking to present its final report to CSC on 8 June 2022.

Proposals

- 1. To note the update on task group and rapid scrutiny activities provided.**
- 2. To endorse the terms of reference for the Fostering Excellence Task Group.**

Report authors:

Ceri Williams, Senior Scrutiny Officer, T: 01225 713 704,
E: ceri.williams@wiltshire.gov.uk

Marie Gondlach, Senior Scrutiny Officer, 01225 713 597, E:
marie.gondlach@wiltshire.gov.uk

Children's Select Committee - FWP - March 2022

Last Updated 7 MARCH 2022

| Children's Select Committee – Current / Active Task Groups | | |
|--|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Task Group | Start Date | Final Report Expected |
| <p>Disadvantaged / vulnerable Learners Whilst Wiltshire has a relatively low number of disadvantaged learners, they are largely underperforming compared to regional and national levels.</p> <p>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.</p> | 31 November 2021 | |
| <p>Fostering Excellence To identify:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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) | 18 January 2022 | 19 May 2022 |
| <p>Business Plan Metrics Task Group As agreed at the Children's Select Committee on 19 January 2022 – to review the metrics to be included in the Business Plan for measures linked to the remit of the committee</p> | | 8 June 2022 |
| <p>Business Plan – service plans As agreed at the Children's Select Committee on 19 January 2022 – to review the service plans supporting the Business Plan linked to the remit of the committee</p> | After the Business Plan metrics tg | |

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| <p>Children and Young People’s Mental Health This will follow on from the work of the CAMHS task group but the terms of reference will be reviewed to ensure a more holistic approach.</p> | tbc | |
| <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>May link to the Getting to Outstanding items to committee and briefing.</p> | After briefing to CSC | |
| <p>Youth provision and youth service funding</p> <p>Area Board youth service funding</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Youth Provision – gap analysis</p> <p>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).</p> <p>NB link with Youth Voice team’s work</p> <p>To develop consistency across the 18 area boards in terms of allocating youth funding and eligibility criteria.</p> | tbc | |
| <p>Access to Post-16 education</p> <p>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.</p> <p>NB – may link to follow up work from the Youth Transport Task Group’s final report.</p> | Spring 2022 (tie in with academic year) | |

| Children's Select Committee - Rapid Scrutiny | | | |
|---|--|--|-----------------------------|
| Topic | Details | | Date |
| SEND provision – data set | tbc | | |
| 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. | | Start February 2022 onwards |
| 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). | | Date tbc |

| Children's Select Committee - FWP - March 2022 | | | Last updated 7 MARCH 2022 | | |
|--|--|---|---------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Meeting Date | Item | Details / Purpose of Report | Associate Director | Responsible Cabinet Member | Report Author / Lead Officer |
| For consideration by the Standing Task Group. | | | | | |
| | Corporate Parenting bi-annual report | March (brief update) October / November (annual report) | | | |
| | Adoption | Annual item. 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 joint scrutiny panel's annual report. | | | |
| | Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership | To receive annual report from the partnership presenting work in the past year and priorities / objectives for the year ahead. | | | |

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|---|---|---|---|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Meeting Date | Item | Details / purpose of report | Associate Director | Responsible Cabinet Member | Report Author / Lead Officer |
| | Performance monitoring reports | 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. | | | |
| | Traded Services - annual report (November 2022) | To receive the second traded services annual report - this should be linked with the Standing Task Group meeting on 4 January 2022 | Helean Hughes (Director - Education and Skills) | Cllr Laura Mayes | Paul Redford |
| Information briefings | | | | | |

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|--|--|--|---------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Meeting Date | Item | Details / purpose of report | Associate Director | Responsible Cabinet Member | Report Author / Lead Officer |
| | Information briefing - employment and apprenticeship | <p>To receive information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEET (not in education, employment or training) numbers in Wiltshire – including national figures for comparison (ons) • 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. | | | |

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|--|--|---|--|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Meeting Date | Item | Details / purpose of report | Associate Director | Responsible Cabinet Member | Report Author / Lead Officer |
| | Information briefing - 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. Anticipated to be a shorter briefing (30 minutes). | | | |
| | Information briefing - Demand modelling for children services | To develop some awareness of the work undertaken, common factors that drive demand, how to anticipate impact and volume – informing members of the complexities of managing and anticipating demand. Once this briefing has been delivered there may be further updates on specific demand analysis. | | | Tamsin Stone |
| | Information briefing - FACT (Families and Children Transformation Programme): the journey so far | There is also a proposed task group and agenda item Timeline – late September, October for the briefing and November for agenda item. | Martin Davis (Director - Families and Children) | | |

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|--|---|--|--|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Meeting Date | Item | Details / purpose of report | Associate Director | Responsible Cabinet Member | Report Author / Lead Officer |
| | Information briefing - Family Learning Service | To raise awareness of the service and the support it offers to families. Anticipated to be a shorter 30 minutes briefing. | | | |
| | Information briefing - learning from Covid-19 | To inform members on the lessons learnt from Covid on how some of the mitigations or new ways of working implemented to manage the pandemic could be adapted for ongoing use to improve the efficiency/productivity of the service (This potentially could be an agenda item at some point as well). NB the briefing should be linked to a presentation from Wiltshire CIL to Health Select Committee and work undertaken by Wiltshire Parent Carer Council. | | | |
| | Information briefing - MASH and early support | September / October 2021 | | | |
| | Information briefing - School Funding | Yearly briefing ahead of consideration of the budget. | | | |
| | Information briefing - school improvement programme | Linked to agenda item - briefing in November | Helean Hughes (Director - Education and Skills) | | |

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|---|--|--|---|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Meeting Date | Item | Details / purpose of report | Associate Director | Responsible Cabinet Member | Report Author / Lead Officer |
| | Information briefing - SEND provision: See the person not the disability | To understand SEND and provision by the council (including awareness of funding). This briefing would underpin future scrutiny work (proposed rapid scrutiny) on SEND provision and High Needs block funding. | | | |
| | Information briefing - Young Carers in Wiltshire | This briefing could inform 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 are aware of and access the support on offer. | Helen Jones (Director - Joint Commissioning) | | |
| Standing items (at all meetings) | | | | | |
| | DfE Changes - Update from Department for Education | A report presenting an update on developments relating to children's services arising from the Department for Education. | Lucy Townsend (Corporate Director - People) | Cllr Laura Mayes | Nicola McCann |

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|--|--|--|--|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Meeting Date | Item | Details / purpose of report | Associate Director | Responsible Cabinet Member | Report Author / Lead Officer |
| | School Ofsted Judgements | 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. | Lucy Townsend (Corporate Director - People) | Cllr Laura Mayes | Louise Lewis |
| | Update from Wiltshire Youth Voice Representative | An update including a summary of recent activities of the Wiltshire Youth Union (WYU), the Youth Safeguarding Board (YSB) and the Children in Care Council (CiCC). | Lucy Townsend (Corporate Director - People) | Cllr Laura Mayes | Gary Binstead |
| 8 June 2022 | | | | | |
| 8 Jun 2022 | Corporate Parenting bi-annual report | To consider the mid-year annual report from Corporate Parenting | Lucy Townsend (Corporate Director - People) | Cllr Laura Mayes | Lisa Pullin |

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|---|--|--|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Meeting Date | Item | Details / purpose of report | Associate Director | Responsible Cabinet Member | Report Author / Lead Officer |
| 8 Jun 2022 | Performance monitoring report | As approved at CSC on 12 November 2019 (OS/executive meeting outcome) - that the committee receives performance monitoring reports on the overall service (following on from the pre-meeting briefing at the November meeting on the council's self-assessment process), likely to be June (to consider the year-end data from the previous year) then January meetings. | | Cllr Laura Mayes | |
| 06 July 2022 | | | | | |
| 6 Jul 2022 | Children missing education / children missing out on education | 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 | | | |

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|---|--|---|---|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Meeting Date | Item | Details / purpose of report | Associate Director | Responsible Cabinet Member | Report Author / Lead Officer |
| 6 Jul 2022 | Elective Home Education (including for Children with SEND) | Item follows the resolution from the 5th March 2019 Children's Select Committee: "To receive further data and analysis in 12 months on children with SEND receiving Elective Home Education." | Helean Hughes (Director - Education and Skills) | Cllr Laura Mayes | Jen Salter |
| Agenda item – date to be set | | | | | |
| | Pupil Performance in Public Tests and Examinations | 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. | | | |
| | 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). | | | |

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|--|----------------------------------|--|---------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Meeting Date | Item | Details / purpose of report | Associate Director | Responsible Cabinet Member | Report Author / Lead Officer |
| | School Improvement Programme | As agreed at the 10 March 2020 meeting (schools Ofsted judgments) to receive a report on implementation / progress of the school improvement programme. (NB with pre-meeting briefing as well) | | | |
| | Youth Transport (including SEND) | <p>Update following task group's work and executive response - National Bus Strategy and any decision or progress regarding a single "Wiltshire Youth Card"</p> <p>.</p> <p>To include input from the council's review of transport services for children and young people with SEND (commissioning team).</p> <p>NB – may link to the proposed Access to Post-16 education task group</p> | | | |
| | Outdoor education | Update following task group's work and executive response (CSC 10 March 2021) | | | |

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|--|---|---|--|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Meeting Date | Item | Details / purpose of report | Associate Director | Responsible Cabinet Member | Report Author / Lead Officer |
| | FACT update | <p>Following consideration of update on 10 March 2020:</p> <p>Request an update for March 2021. The Chair and Vice-chair will identify specific areas for update from the report considered today and inform officers accordingly. The update should include more figures for improved outcome for young people and also figures on savings / costs avoided to demonstrate the impact of the FACT programme.</p> <p>For example number of Five to Thrive champions trained, outcome / learning from the Multi-Agency Use of CMS, outcome of performance reviews, etc.</p> | Lucy Townsend (Corporate Director - People) | Cllr Laura Mayes | |
| | Early Years and Childcare Standards Annual Report | 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. | | | |

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
Textphone 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/ofsted



28 February 2022

Lucy Townsend
Corporate Director of People
Wiltshire Council
County Hall
Bythesea Road
Trowbridge
BA14 8JN

Dear Ms Townsend

Focused visit to Wiltshire children's services

This letter summarises the findings of a focused visit to Wiltshire children's services on 24 and 25 January 2022. The inspectors were Kendra Bell, Her Majesty's Inspector and Steve Lowe, Her Majesty's Inspector.

Inspectors looked at the local authority's arrangements for care leavers.

The visit was carried out in line with the inspection of local authority children's services (ILACS) framework. Inspectors were on site for the duration of the visit. A range of evidence, including case discussions with personal advisers, social workers and managers, was considered. Inspectors also spoke to a number of care leavers and partner agencies, scrutinised performance management and quality assurance information and children and young people's case records.

Headline findings

Care leavers in Wiltshire receive the right support, at the right time, to help them make progress in their lives and a large majority have positive experiences. They are well supported by a passionate, skilled, and stable workforce. Their individual achievements and successes are recognised and celebrated by workers, managers, leaders and elected members who are aspirational for them and share an ambition to be the 'best parents in the country'. Leaders have a good understanding of service strengths and development areas and actively seek scrutiny and challenge from external sources and through regular and varied consultation with care leavers. This leads to plans which drive service improvement and help care leavers achieve their potential.

What needs to improve in this area of social work practice?

- The frequency of supervision and recording of reflective practice discussion and actions.
- The depth of information gained from audits that focus on the experiences of care leavers, and the extent to which their voices are included in this work to help inform learning and service planning.

Main findings

Care leavers have stable and trusting relationships with their workers and are visited regularly. Their needs are reflected sensitively within pathway plans, most of which are written with them and are clear about what needs to happen and by when. Workers use a range of techniques and communication methods, including the particularly inclusive work carried out by the children and young people's disability team, to support care leavers to share their wishes and feelings. When needed, interpreters are used to help care leavers talk to workers about their needs and experiences and to identify any risks to them. This helps workers access the support and services they need and to help keep them safe.

Identity is generally well understood for care leavers, and this helps inform the support and services they receive. However, for some care leavers, the impact that their care experiences have on them as individuals is not always sufficiently understood or considered. Care leavers who sought or who are still seeking asylum are helped well by specialist workers and a range of community services to help them settle and start their new lives. There is clear focus and emphasis on giving them education and training opportunities and on helping them to achieve stability in all aspects of their lives, including their legal status.

Although pathway plans are almost always reviewed within timescales, they are not always reviewed when important events happen for care leavers to ensure that the current plan reflects changes in their needs and situations. Not all visits to care leavers record the purpose and outcome. Visit records do not always reflect how visits are best used to understand and demonstrate the progress care leavers make.

Care leavers are well supported in accessing the help and services they need to meet their physical and emotional health needs. They have access to their health information and records to allow them to understand both their current health needs and their health histories. They have strong support from their personal advisers and this really benefits their emotional well-being. At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, enhanced support to care leavers helped lessen loneliness and the impact of isolation. Care leavers who have limited support networks can access a range of services that provide the longer-term emotional and practical support they need as young adults learning to live independently. Senior leaders know there is more they can do to further build on and improve mental and physical health services for care leavers. Work is under way with health partners to achieve this.

Most care leavers live in safe, stable and suitable accommodation that is well matched to their needs. Effective systems are in place to help senior managers measure and monitor the sufficiency and quality of accommodation. This includes senior managers visiting accommodation to see the quality first-hand. Senior managers and staff from the local authority and a range of relevant agencies work together to prepare care leavers to move to the right accommodation at the right time. This work has resulted in a drop of 50% in homelessness applications from care leavers over the past year. Care leavers are actively encouraged to live with their foster carers or remain in semi-independent living until they are ready to move to independent living. Their needs are carefully considered and reviewed by a dedicated 'destination' panel to make sure they are prepared practically and emotionally and are ready to live in semi-independent and independent accommodation. They are helped by workers and carers to prepare for adulthood and to learn independent living skills, such as managing money, paying bills, laundry, and cooking. They have help to prepare for the responsibility of holding a tenancy and how to maintain it. When care leavers are at risk of losing their tenancy, there is purposeful liaison between housing and care leaver services at an early stage to help care leavers take actions to turn the situation around. Care leavers in Wiltshire are helped to live successfully in independent accommodation and hold secure tenancies because of the preparation and support they receive.

There is a strong focus in pathway plans on education, employment and training. Care leavers receive careers advice and guidance to help them make the right choices for them. They are helped to apply for higher education, training and apprenticeships and given the support they need to stay in their chosen pathway and to succeed. When things do not go well for them or they make the wrong choices, they are helped to understand why and to make new ones. Senior leaders and staff are aspirational for all care leavers and celebrate their achievements through star awards and other events. There are a significant number of care leavers attending further and higher education and they have help with the living costs associated with being a student, and to live in safe accommodation.

The Wiltshire care leaver offer, available as a downloadable app, usefully sets out information on the benefits and entitlements available to care leavers. The offer provides details of practical and financial support, including help with driving lessons and exemption from council tax. Care leavers know that support from their personal adviser is there when they need it, including up to the age of 25. The offer is currently being reviewed with care leavers and a whole-council and community approach is being taken to provide even greater local employment and training opportunities for care leavers.

Senior leaders and members of the council listen to care leavers and proactively and creatively seek their views. The corporate parenting panel is inclusive of care leavers and provides effective scrutiny of the quality and impact of services received by care leavers. An active children in care and care leavers forum, supported by a vibrant

Children and Youth Voice team, provides opportunities for care leavers to influence and shape the support and services they receive. Senior leaders invited and responded quickly to independent scrutiny and feedback from the Department for Education National Implementation Adviser for Care Leavers. This learning involved direct consultation with care leavers and staff and is being used well to shape current improvement plans.

A well-established and stable senior leadership team drives improvement and provides vision and purpose for staff. Effective governance, systems, policies and procedures provide the foundations that support staff to work effectively with care leavers and to help them achieve the best outcomes they can. The emphasis and focus on relationship-based practice with care leavers is a real strength.

Performance management information, complaints, feedback and learning from individual case work is used well to identify strengths, areas for improvement and inform the focus of audit activity. Managers and staff at all levels are actively involved, and learning is taken back into the workforce and actions tracked. However, audit activity does not always include direct feedback from care leavers. This means their voices are not always captured well within audits and so cannot best inform learning and improvement planning. The depth of information gained from audits is too limited to provide the local authority with meaningful insight into the progress and experiences of care leavers.

Management oversight of frontline practice is mostly regular and valued by staff. For a small number of staff, there are gaps in the frequency of supervision, discussion is not always reflective and actions arising are not always clearly set out.

Staff enjoy working in Wiltshire and morale is high. This is having a positive impact on practice and improved outcomes for care leavers. Although busy, most staff have caseloads which are manageable and additional staff have recently been recruited. Staff feel very well supported by visible and approachable senior leaders and managers and speak of a high warmth and high support culture. Staff spoke highly of their training and learning opportunities and are especially positive about the impact recent training has had in helping them to further improve their practice.

Ofsted will take the findings from this focused visit into account when planning the next inspection or visit.

Yours sincerely

Kendra Bell
Her Majesty's Inspector