

CHILDREN'S SELECT COMMITTEE

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN'S SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 31 JANUARY 2017 AT THE KENNET ROOM - COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE BA14 8JN.

Present:

Cllr Jon Hubbard (Chairman), Cllr Jacqui Lay (Vice Chairman), Cllr Pat Aves, Cllr Mary Champion, Cllr Atiqui Hoque, Cllr Chris Hurst, Cllr James Sheppard, Cllr Philip Whalley, Rev Alice Kemp, Dr M Thompson, Miss Tracy Cornelius, Mr J Hawkins, Cllr Anna Cuthbert (Substitute) and Cllr Andrew Davis (Substitute)

Also Present:

Cllr Trevor Carbin, Cllr Richard Gamble and Cllr Laura Mayes.

1 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Mary Douglas (who was substituted by Cllr Andrew Davis), Cllr Sue Evans, Cllr Simon Jacobs (who was substituted by Cllr Anna Cuthbert), Cllr Helen Osborn, Cllr Ricky Rogers, Miss Sarah Busby, Miss Cathy Shahrokni (who was substituted by Ms Jen Jones) and James Wilkins.

2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Resolved:

To confirm and sign the minutes of the previous meeting held on 6 December 2016, subject to the following amendment:-

Minute No. 95 – Final Report of the Child Sexual Exploitation Task Group

To add the following words at the end of the third paragraph:

“The prevent strand was all about preventing our young people from being targeted, groomed and falling victims. What it didn’t cover was how we prevent those who fall victims becoming perpetrators themselves when they move on into adulthood. To stop behaviour that is unacceptable the mould has to be broken and behaviour which

intimidates, bullies, abuses and damages lives is unacceptable and we are as a society challenging those who perpetrate such behaviour.”

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

4 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman made the following announcements:-

a) Overview & Scrutiny Legacy Workshop 2013-2017

A scrutiny legacy workshop was held on 17th January 2017 for scrutiny and executive members. The activity provided an opportunity for Members to reflect on Overview and Scrutiny's approaches, successes and challenges during the current Council. Attendees were asked to consider what messages and recommendations should be passed on to O&S in the next Council, so that it could continue to build on its contribution to delivering the Council's priorities.

b) Cabinet items

On 7 February 2017 Cabinet was due to consider the following item:

- School Admission 2018/19

5 Public Participation

Cllr Jacqui Lay asked the following question:-

“In Wiltshire the Duke of Edinburgh Scheme is operated in a number of our schools but in RWB & Cricklade Area Board, Bradon Forest School does not operate the scheme, hence there is an independent group who are running the scheme for young people from the Purton area and young people who attend Bradon Forest School. I have been notified that the support Wiltshire Council is giving in relation to Safeguarding, Health and Safety and Insurance is being withdrawn as from August 2017. When enquiries were made it seems this decision may not only affect this independent group but also the schools operating the scheme. It would be good to have a briefing on this for all councillors so that we are aware of any impact it would have on our young people and those offering the scheme.

To add to this I understand that a number of the sporting associations, for example All England Badminton, offer Safeguarding, Health and Safety and Insurance to their affiliated coaches hence I would have thought that the national Duke of Edinburgh Scheme could be offering this support. If not then is this something the Area Boards could buy through Youth Action Wiltshire? I think we would all agree the DofE Schemes are very worthwhile for our young people who participate and if we can support this locally then there needs to be a process to allow us to do so.”

The Chairman stated that a written response would be prepared for Cllr Lay which would also be copied to other members of this Committee for information.

6 Pupil Performance in Public Tests and Examinations 2016

The Committee received a report by Carolyn Godfrey, Corporate Director, which provided an overview of pupil performance at the end of each key stage and compared attainment in Wiltshire with national, south west and statistical neighbour performance.

It was pointed out that information regarding the performance of vulnerable learners at Key Stage 4 had not yet been published and that provisional figures had been included that were subject to validation and therefore might be subject to change.

Members noted that Wiltshire continued to have a high and increasing percentage of places in good and outstanding schools and there had been consistent improvement in this measure over the last few years. Educational outcomes at key Stages 4 and 5 remained high, but performance in primary schools was not as good, particularly in phonics and maths. The attainment of disadvantaged learners (pupils eligible for the pupil premium) at each Key Stage continued to be a high priority for improvement as did improving the educational outcomes of other vulnerable pupils at all key stages. The School Effectiveness Team continued to work with all schools, including academies, to support and promote improvements.

During discussion, Members expressed concern at the continuing performance gap between Wiltshire and the National average especially regarding children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

Regarding phonics and maths, Members enquired if Wiltshire schools were differing in their approach to schools elsewhere in the England. It was reported that schools had been visited in Wandsworth and Somerset but no appreciable differences in style or method had been found. It was felt that children should be taught these subjects by qualified teachers rather than by teaching assistants as was happening sometimes at present. However, Members were informed that there had been a 60% reduction in the School Improvement Budget during the last four years. An Education Transformation Board had been set up in order to help develop a new model.

Resolved:

- (1) To note the contents of the report.**
- (2) To congratulate all learners in Wiltshire on the progress being made, recognising the efforts put in by children and to thank teachers and the officers for their continuing dedicated hard work.**

7 Nursery Places

Consideration was given to a report by Carolyn Godfrey, Corporate Director which highlighted the demand for childcare in Wiltshire and also provided information on the sufficiency of places in different parts of the County.

It was noted that currently there was sufficient provision, though it was acknowledged that parents might not be able to obtain their first choice of nursery.

However, in September 2017 there would be the introduction of 30 hours free entitlement for working parents with children aged three and four. Each parent would be earning, on average, a weekly minimum amount equivalent to 16 hours at the national minimum wage and less than £100,000 per year. It was noted that currently all three and four year olds received 15 hours free entitlement. Many of those parents who would be eligible to take up the 30 hours free entitlement would be parents who would have always traditionally returned to work at this stage. The increased demand for childcare places would come from those parents who had been incentivised to take up employment due to the opportunity to access the 30 hours free entitlement so making childcare affordable. A consultation had recently been carried out with parents and early signs indicated that a high number of parents would be interested in using 30 hours of free entitlement.

The Committee noted that there was also extensive housing development across Wiltshire which would impact on demand for nursery provision particularly around the larger market towns and Salisbury. There would also be a growth in population as a result of army rebasing.

Within the majority of the community areas across Wiltshire there appeared to be sufficient childcare provision. However, the areas of highest concern were Trowbridge, Melksham and the Ridgeway Farm Estate at Purton. Plans were being made to increase provision in these areas. Demand in all Community Areas would continue to be monitored so that the Council would be able to meet its childcare sufficiency duty.

After some discussion,

Resolved:

To note the contents of the report and request an update in 12 months' time to find out the impact of the increased childcare entitlement from September 2017.

8 Early Help Dataset

The Committee received a report by Carolyn Godfrey, Corporate Director which presented the Dataset as part of the reviewing cycle. It was noted that the Early Help Dataset had been created in September 2014 and had undergone a formal review by the Early Help Task Group, its findings having been endorsed by this Committee in May 2016.

Since the last presentation of the Dataset, work had continued to establish indicators for those items for which data did not exist or was difficult to access. New indicators had also been added, including baselines and targets where this data was available.

It was pointed out that discussions were taking place with other local authorities as part of the ongoing development work to ensure that the Dataset remained fit for purpose. It was noted, in particular, that under the outcome RAG rating, further work was needed to assess those indicators about children and young people with CAFs (Common Assessment Framework).

Resolved:

To endorse the latest version of the Early Help Dataset and to thank the officers for the detailed work involved.

9 Final Report of the Safeguarding Children and Young People Task Group

Consideration was given to a report which presented the conclusions and recommendations of the Safeguarding Children and Young People Task Group.

The Chairman, as Chairman of the Task Group, introduced the report and explained that the Task Group had originally been established following a multi-agency Ofsted inspection of Wiltshire, undertaken in March 2012. A report was presented to this Committee on 28 March 2013. Recommendation 32 of the report re-established the Safeguarding Children and young People Task Group with new terms of reference for at least 18 months.

In January 2016 the Committee endorsed an interim report from the Task Group and endorsed the following four areas of future work for the Task Group, following which it would be disbanded:-

- (1) To review the internal case file audit process and the format and contents of the internal case file audit reports.
- (2) To meet with the Wiltshire Safeguarding Children's Board (WSCB) Chair to agree how recommendations 3, 28, 29 and 30 of the Task Group's interim report would be implemented and how this should be monitored.
- (3) "Getting to Good" – to review the work planned to achieve at least "Good" from OFSTED. To identify comparable Local Authorities, who achieved good at the OFSTED inspection and investigate the differences in processes with the potential to gather examples of good practice.
- (4) To consider how to make the practice of Independent Reviewing Officers more pro-active and ensure there is engagement between reviews.

It was pointed out that some of the recommendations had already been implemented and others were being considered and included in a scoping exercise.

The Local Government Association (LGA) topic was noted as a possible future pre-meeting briefing topic for the committee.

Resolved:

To endorse the report of the Task Group and refer it to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services for response at the Committee's next meeting.

10 Final Report of the School Improvement Strategy Task Group

Consideration was given to a report which presented the conclusions and recommendations of the School Improvement Strategy Task Group.

Cllr Philip Whalley, as Chairman of the Task Group, introduced the report and explained that at its meeting on 14 October 2014, this Committee agreed to include the School Improvement Strategy as a work priority.

A task group was established by this Committee on 14 April 2015 to consider the effectiveness of the School Improvement Strategy in its first year, including a comparison with other local authority areas. The following terms of reference were subsequently approved by this Committee:-

- (1) To review the efficiency and effectiveness of the Wiltshire School Improvement Strategy.
- (2) To compare Wiltshire's School Improvement Strategy with those of other local authorities.
- (3) To make recommendations aimed at meeting our collective goal of ensuring all pupils attend an excellent school and achieve their full potential.

Cllr Whalley stated that the Task Group had concluded that currently Wiltshire had a robust and effective school improvement strategy which was "fit for purpose". This was verified by the general performance of Wiltshire's schools as set out in the latest OFSTED data which showed that 98% of Wiltshire's secondary pupils were now taught in a good or outstanding school. Furthermore, because of the direct impact of the school improvement programme, 72.5% of schools that received intensive support from the School Improvement Team (because they were assessed as in need of improvement) improved their grade to G or O at their next OFSTED inspection.

However, it was pointed out that all the evidence received had led to the conclusion that a failure to offer schools and academies an effective School Improvement service was likely to have a detrimental impact on the quality of education in Wiltshire, and this would also negatively affect the LA's education, economic and social objectives. As such, the ultimate aim should be to retain an effective school improvement service and to develop the present level of knowledge, experience and expertise currently available.

The Committee noted that further conclusions had been difficult to draw because of the changes and reversals in Government policy during the review period and the uncertainty over the transitional financial arrangements.

Members were informed that trading services were being developed which would be available to all schools and academies.

Resolved:

To endorse the report of the Task Group and refer it to the Cabinet Member for Children's services for response at the Committee's next meeting.

11 Executive Response to the Final Report of the Child Sexual Exploitation Task Group

Consideration was given to a report setting out the response of the Cabinet Member for Children's Services to the final report of the Child Sexual Exploitation Task Group which had been presented to this Committee at its meeting on 6 December 2016 and had been endorsed.

During discussion, it was considered that every effort should be made to ensure that the recommendations put forward by the Task Group were progressed. It had been suggested that the Community Engagement Managers be encouraged to draw to the attention of their area boards the need for everyone to be vigilant to the very serious problem of safeguarding and child sexual exploitation. To progress this proposal Members reiterated their previous suggestion that a workshop be arranged with Community Engagement Managers to consider how best to raise awareness of these issues in their communities.

Members also drew attention to the need to ensure that all councillors and staff were adequately trained and it was noted that this subject had been included as part of the induction of all councillors after the local elections in May.

It was noted that future updates from the Safeguarding Children and Young People Panel would now include a section on child sexual exploitation.

Resolved:

To endorse the executive response to the Final Report of the Child Sexual Exploitation Task Group and to thank the members of the Task Group for the valuable work they had undertaken.

12 DfE Changes - Update from Department for Education

The Committee received an update from Carolyn Godfrey, Corporate Director, on developments relating to children's services arising from the Department for education from November 2016 to January 2017 as follows:-

- Early Years Funding consultation – government response
- Early Years National Funding Formula: allocations and guidance
- Schools National Funding Formula: Government consultation response – stage 1
- Schools National Funding Formula – stage 2 consultation
- Proposal for National Funding Formula for High Needs
- High needs strategic planning fund
- New funding for school improvement
- Academies update
- Annual Report 2015/16
- National Assessment and Accreditation System for child and family social workers
- Junior individual saving accounts for looked-after children
- Government response to Sir Martin Narey’s independent review of residential care
- Youth Justice Review
- Update on the social care common inspection framework
- Update on the new inspections of local authority children’s services

During discussion, it was noted that the Government’s ambition was that all schools would become academies forming a fully school-led system, where head teachers and school leaders collaborated to drive improvement in their schools. Furthermore, the Government had announced that from April 2019 school would be directly funded from the Department for Education. Cllr Laura Mayes reported that she had held a meeting with Nick Gibb, MP, Schools Minister regarding this but further discussions would be needed on the impact this announcement would have on Wiltshire schools.

Resolved:

To note the update provided.

13 **Forward Work Programme**

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

Resolved:

To note the Forward Work Programme for this Committee.

14 **Date of Next Meeting**

Resolved:

To note that the next scheduled meeting of this Committee was scheduled to be held on Tuesday 28 March 2017 at County Hall, Trowbridge, starting at 10.30am.

15 **Urgent Items**

There were no items of urgent business.

(Duration of meeting: 2.00 - 4.20 pm)

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