

## CHILDREN'S SELECT COMMITTEE

---

### MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN'S SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 17 APRIL 2018 AT THE KENNET ROOM - COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE BA14 8JN.

#### Present:

Cllr Jon Hubbard (Chairman), Cllr Mary Champion, Cllr Andrew Davis, Cllr Christopher Devine, Cllr Mary Douglas, Cllr David Halik, Cllr Deborah Halik, Cllr Chris Hurst, Cllr Hayley Spencer, Cllr Roy While, Dr M Thompson, Miss Sarah Busby and John Hawkins

#### Also Present:

Cllr Trevor Carbin, Cllr Pauline Church, Cllr Laura Mayes and Cllr Philip Whalley.

---

#### 16 Apologies

Apologies for absence was received from Cllr Sue Evans and Cllr Jacqui Lay.

#### 17 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

##### **Resolved:**

**To confirm and sign the minutes of the previous meeting held on 6 February 2018.**

#### 18 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

#### 19 Chairman's Announcements

##### (a) **Cabinet Items**

On 27 March 2018 Cabinet considered the following item:-

- Outdoor Education  
Lead Director: Alan Stubbersfield (Interim Director – Education & Skills)  
Contact: Nick Cave, Interim Head of Traded Services

On 24 April 2018 Cabinet would be due to consider the following item:-

- Learning Disabilities In-house Respite Services

Lead Officer: Rhonda Ward

(b) **Outdoor Education**

The Chairman reported that he had both witnessed and had also been informed subsequently that during the debate on the Call-in of the Executive Decision on Outdoor Education which took place at the meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee held on 10 April 2018, some Members tended to speak from a party-political viewpoint. He considered this to be most unfortunate as debates in a scrutiny arena, especially in this Select Committee, were always evidenced based and non-political and he hoped that this would continue to prevail in the future.

20 **Public Participation**

The Committee received a question which had been submitted by Cllr Sue Hughes, a member of Royal Wootton Bassett Town Council and also a member of the Royal Wootton Bassett Local Youth Network (LYN) who she was representing at this meeting. A copy of the question and the response is attached as Appendix 1 to these minutes.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Hughes for her question and explained the 'call-in' process. He stated that this Committee did not have the opportunity to consider the matter as the Committee's Outdoor Education task group report was received at the relevant Cabinet meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> March and subsequently the matter was debated an extraordinary meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee, both of which met prior to this Select Committee meeting.

Cllr Laura Mayes stated that she recognised the benefits of outdoor education which was seen to be a positive experience for children. However, the decision to close Braeside and Oxenwood was not taken lightly and was made after 18 months of work. There had been no evidence that the due process had not been carried out correctly. She went on to explain that although it was anticipated that there would be an annual saving of £130,000 a year following the closure of these two outdoor facilities, £1.4 million would be required to improve the buildings which were in urgent need of restoration. The Council's Capital Budget was very limited and the Council had to balance this with the needs of other services. The Council was prioritising children with special needs.

Cllr Hughes then asked a supplementary question (Appendix 2) to which she was promised a written response.

21 **Family and Children's Transformation (FACT) - Phase One Assessment**

Consideration was given to a report by the Director, Family & Children's Services, which provided an update on the transformation of the Children & Families Service.

It was noted that the Support & Safeguarding Service was launched on 2 October 2017, alongside a new single point of entry to Wiltshire Children & Families Service, thus marking the completion of phase 1 of the Children's Services Integration Project. The report thus provided an overview of the first six months of operation as requested by this Committee in March 2017.

The service aims and objectives were outlined in a report considered by this Committee on 14 March 2017 and it was noted that the Early Help Service and Safeguarding and Assessment Service and their associated teams, including the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub – MASH were directly affected by Phase 1 of the project. The principle aim was to be able to intervene early, when this was necessary, with a family focused approach and minimising the number of officers working with a family and avoiding duplication. Co-location with other services and partners had been pursued persistently over the previous months resulting in greater integrated working with domestic abuse, drug and alcohol and child and adolescent mental health teams. This had resulted in more flexible and prompter working with families.

It was explained that mechanisms for performance management had been maintained and extended to cover this support activity. This included, amongst other things, fortnightly Performance and Outcomes Group meetings, Support & Safeguarding Managers meetings, Annual Service Reviews and a new overarching whole service Performance and Outcomes Board.

During discussion, Members welcomed the changes that had been made so far but did express some concern at the functioning of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs which appeared to be not functioning efficiently in some areas. It was explained that there were 19 of these Hubs strategically placed around Wiltshire and it was true that some were more successful than others at present.

**Resolved:**

- (1) To note the progress made by the Family and Children's Transformation Project as outlined in the report.**
- (2) To request a further progress update in six months to mark one year since the launch of the new service and to include an update on the functioning of MASH.**

**22 DfE Changes - Update from Department for Education**

The Committee received an update from Terence Herbert, Corporate Director, on developments relating to children's services arising from the Department for Education from February to March 2018 as follows:-

- Consultation outcome on eligibility for free school meals and the early years premium under Universal Credit.
- Review of school exclusions

- Alternative provision
- Academies update
- Review of post-18 education
- SEND Tribunal: single route of redress national trial
- Implementation of Children and Social Work Act 2017 Sections 1-7
- Working Together consultation response
- Consultation on Social Work England
- Improvement standards for child and family social workers
- Review of children in need
- Plans to tackle child abuse

Reference was made to the consultation which was currently being carried out on the use of Section 19 permits for road passenger transport in Great Britain and Members enquired as to whether the Council would be responding to this consultation. Officers were aware of this and would respond to Members once they had ascertained the facts.

**Resolved:**

**To note the update provided.**

## 23 **Task Group Updates**

The Committee received updates on the activities of the following Task Groups/Boards:-

- Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS) Task Group
- SEND School Provision Task Group
- Children in Care Leavers Rapid Scrutiny Exercise
- Traded Services for Schools and Outdoor Education Task Group
- Education Transformation Board

**Resolved:**

**(1) To note the updates on task group activity provided.**

**(2) To endorse the following proposals from the CAMHS Task Group:-**

- (a) that Cllr Clare Cape remain on the CAMHS Task Group as a full member.**
- (b) to note that Cllr Hayley Spencer had stepped down from the CAMHS Task Group and endorse that it continue as a 4-member Task Group.**

## 24 **Forward Work Programme**

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

Cllr Christopher Devine enquired if it might be possible for the officers to produce an executive summary of the work undertaken by this Select Committee, ideally sub-divided into areas of service. The Chairman considered this to be a good suggestion and the summary to include current policies and strategies. The officers agreed to look into the possibility of producing such a document.

**Resolved:**

**To note the Forward Work Programme for this Committee.**

25 **Date of Next Meeting**

**Resolved:**

**To note that the next scheduled meeting of this Committee was due to be held on Tuesday 19 June 2018 at County Hall, Trowbridge, starting at 10.30am.**

26 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items of business.

(Duration of meeting: 10.50 am - 12.40 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Roger Bishton of Democratic Services, direct line 01225 713035, e-mail [roger.bishton@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:roger.bishton@wiltshire.gov.uk)

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