

CHILDREN'S SELECT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN'S SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 4 SEPTEMBER 2018 AT THE KENNET ROOM - COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE BA14 8JN.

Present:

Cllr Jon Hubbard (Chairman), Cllr Mary Douglas (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Mary Champion, Cllr Andrew Davis, Cllr Christopher Devine, Cllr Sue Evans, Cllr David Halik, Cllr Deborah Halik, Cllr Johnny Kidney, Cllr Jacqui Lay, Cllr Hayley Spencer, Cllr Roy While, Dr Mike Thompson and John Hawkins

Also Present:

Cllr Jane Davies, Cllr Laura Mayes and Cllr Philip Whalley

43 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Chris Hurst, Miss Tracy Cornelius, Miss Sarah Busby, Miss Jen Jones, Maisy Humphrey and Declan Kiely.

44 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Resolved:

To approve and sign the minutes of the previous meeting held on 19 June 2018.

45 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

46 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman made the following announcements:-

a) Cabinet items

For information, On 3 July 2018, Cabinet considered the following item

Wiltshire Council Adoption Service: 2017-18 Year End Report

Lead officer: Matthew Turner

On 25 September 2018, Cabinet would consider the following items

Consultation about option proposals for Lypiatt Primary School including possible closure

Lead officer: Tom Lindsay

Chairman's Involvement: Briefing paper on the consultation was provided for the item.

Appropriation of Education Land at Poulton Field, Bradford on Avon New!

Lead officer: Will Gray

Chairman's Involvement: Meeting with Will Gray, Estate Surveyor, to assure that sufficient protections would be in place for the local green space.

b) Councillor workshop: Making scrutiny meetings more effective – 10 October 2018

This would be an event for all councillors who have had any role in the scrutiny arena and would look at how to ensure scrutiny meetings of any kind had maximum impact. This would include effective agenda setting, preparation, witnesses, chairmanship, debate, resolutions and tracking actions.

With 18 months' worth of meetings since the 2017 local elections, this was identified by scrutiny councillors as the most important topic to address in the Council's four-year Overview and Scrutiny (OS) Learning & Development Programme.

Through a combination of exercises and group discussion, attendees would be asked to discuss and examine

- what an effective OS meeting is
- what are the ingredients of an effective OS meeting
- what are everyone's responsibilities in terms of delivering those ingredients
- in Wiltshire, what is and isn't working well, and how can we continue to improve?

The results of the day's discussions would then be presented to the OS Management Committee to consider.

47 Public Participation

No questions had been received from councillors or members of the public.

48 Update from Young Person's Representative

The Committee received an update on the activities of the Wiltshire Assembly of Youth (WAY), Youth Safeguarding Board (YSB) and the Children in Care

Council (CiCC) which was presented by the Senior Commissioning Officer in the absence of Maisy Humphries, Children & Young People's Representative.

It was noted that during the summer members of YSB, CiCC and WAY had attended a strategic youth engagement event at Devizes School in partnership with Wiltshire Police. There were a number of clear messages that came out of the event, which included:-

- Young people would rather speak/engage with a youth worker than with workers from across Wiltshire Council and Wiltshire Police.
- The Council and the Police were too formal. Young people considered that if engagements were to be made, then it was important to ensure that these were carried out in a relaxed environment.
- It was necessary for these engagements to take place where young people congregated, e.g. youth clubs, sports clubs and schools.
- Young people do not want to use social media as a form of communication with workers, although sometimes they would use Facebook messenger.
- Generally young people do not read emails but use text messaging as their main form of communication.

Following receipt of this information, and further work that would be carried out, the Senior Commissioning Officer would be looking at how to strengthen and further develop engagement with young people.

During discussion, it was suggested that town and parish councils might be prepared to act as a means of communication by publicising events and other information concerning young people.

Resolved:

To note the update on the activities of the WAY, the Youth Safeguarding Board, and the Children in Care Council and to thank Maisy Humphries for her update to the Committee.

49 **Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report**

The Committee received the draft annual report prior to finalisation by the Corporate Parenting Panel at its meeting on 18 September 2018. The finalised report would be presented to Council 16 October 2018.

It was reported that meetings had been well attended with a young person being present at each meeting. However, as previously noted in Minute No 48 above, young people preferred to attend meetings in places which they regularly met and consideration would be given as to how this desire could be accommodated.

It was pointed out that the current strategic strategies were still relevant and had not been changed. They were as follows:-

- Strengthen the corporate parenting role and corporate parenting function across Wiltshire Council as a whole.
- Continue to improve timeliness of permanency for looked after children across the range of permanency options.
- Ensure that there is sufficient accommodation for looked after children within Wiltshire which meets the needs of those children. Prioritise placement within Wiltshire.
- Improve care leavers journey by ensuring an enhanced offer to care leavers across all areas: education, employment and training, independent living, housing options and health.
- Improve the educational outcomes for looked after children; closing the gap between looked after children and other children in the county.
- Ensure that looked after children are protected from the risk of child sexual exploitation and reduce the frequency with which some looked after children and care leavers currently go missing.
- Ensure that looked after children and care leavers have timely and easy access to mental health services.

During discussion, reference was made to the closure of Aspire House and its effect on the provision of virtual teaching in Wiltshire. It was explained that virtual teaching had now moved out of Aspire House on the recommendation of the virtual school headteacher and work was being carried out on developing a new service specification. It was generally considered that it was more beneficial for children to be educated in the community at a mainstream school as close to their home as possible.

In welcoming the draft annual report, it was hoped that a young person might be available to speak to this report when it was presented to Council.

Resolved:

- (1) To note and endorse the draft Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report.**
- (2) To request further information on Priority 2 at a briefing session immediately before the meeting of this Committee on 5 March 2019.**

Children not in Education Policy

Consideration was given to a report by Terence Herbert, Corporate Director, which provided a copy of the following policies:-

- (1) Elected Home Education, and
- (2) Children Missing Out on Education/Children Missing Education

Members were pleased to see the development of these two policies and generally supported their contents. It was suggested that the draft letter to parents as set out on page 62 of the report be slightly amended so as to refer to *suitable* education rather than *appropriate* education, thus being consistent with the other draft letters to parents with children being home educated.

It was reported that statistical information on children missing out on education/children missing education was being held on a database.

After some discussion,

Resolved:

- (1) To receive a briefing session to present the new dataset on Elective Home Education and Children Missing Education.**
- (2) To receive the Elective Home Education and Children Missing Education dataset annually at Children's Select Committee**

51 **Family and Children's Transformation (FACT) Update**

The Committee considered a report by the Director, Family & Children's Services which provided an update on progress of the Families & Children's Transformation (FACT) programme.

Members were reminded that at its meeting on 17 April 2018, the Committee received a report outlining the rebranding of the Children's Service Integration Project into the Families & Children's Transformation (FACT) programme and set out the activity that would be progressed through projects within the programme. The report before this meeting provided an update on the programme to progress service developments across the partnership that would support the programme to be driven by the following five key principles:-

- **Help when you need it**

We will intervene earlier; providing support early to prevent families' difficulties escalating and in doing so improve outcomes and reduce demand for higher tier services

- **We are Better Together**

We will simplify and integrate processes and improve multi-agency integrated working and collaboration and in doing so reduce spend by eradicating duplication.

- **More time to be with Families**

We will maximise the time our staff can spend with families and in doing so improve the child's experience of support.

- **Investing in our Staff**

We will ensure we are an effective confident workforce with an effective practice framework.

- **Resilient communities with Equity of Opportunity**

We want to ensure all our children and young people reach their full potential by having high aspirations for, and creating opportunities with, those who are disadvantaged through poverty or vulnerability. We want to support families in overcoming difficulties and being able to care for their children and each other.

It was noted that the FACT programme was being overseen by a multi-agency Board, comprising key partner agencies, which in turn reported to the Health & Wellbeing Board.

It was also noted that the FACT programme consisted of eight workstreams covering all aspects of a child and family's need for help and support.

The Chairman stressed the need for joined up working with Adult Services and it was reported that a new Case Management System (CMS) would bring together multiple IT systems across early years, education, early help, SEND and safeguarding into one system, so that all information on families, children and young people was shared in one place. Furthermore, this new CMS system would enable users to input, read and retrieve information relevant to the child and family they were working with and would provide a holistic view of the child and family to help with good decision making.

One of these workstreams was to support young people to live in their families and communities. This workstream was developing a number of projects to take a whole family approach, identifying causes of need and then using the support of relevant professionals and the voluntary sector to meet the needs of the family until stability was reached.

A wraparound multi-disciplinary approach was also supporting projects such as the *No Wrong Door* proposal which was implementing a service delivery model to divert adolescents from being taken into care by providing a multi-agency approach to targeted support including the provision of residential care if required. Members requested that they be provided with more information about this, possibly by including this subject in a pre-meeting briefing.

Resolved:

To note the update on the Family and Children's Transformation programme.

52 Update on Multi-Agency Forums (MAF's)

The Committee is received a brief update on the performance and progress of Multi Agency Forums (MAFs) in Wiltshire.

The update followed previous work on MAFs performed by the Committee. In December 2015 a Task Group of the Children's Select Committee conducted a deep dive meeting focused on MAFs. The Committee endorsed the Task Group's recommendations regarding MAFs at its meeting on 26 January 2016. An Executive Response to the Interim Report of the Safeguarding Task Group was presented to the Committee on 22 March 2016, and monitoring of the outstanding actions taken up by the Safeguarding Children and Young People Panel.

The Director, Family & Children's Services explained that work had started on the standardisation of the MAFs terms of reference which would include:-

- Regular discussion of cases
- Meetings timed to allow schools to attend in the expectation that the head teacher, SENCO or any other appropriate representative of all schools would attend the MAFs.

During discussion, Members expressed concern that there was little evidence that the MAFs were meeting and functioning correctly. It was explained that the Council would be undertaking comprehensive quantitative and qualitative reporting to monitor the effectiveness of MAFs which would be regularly reported to and monitored by the Safeguarding Children & Young People Panel.

Resolved:

To note the updates on the ongoing transformation work both under Family and Children's Transformation and the Wiltshire Safeguarding Children's Board (WSCB) that may have an impact on the future of Multi-Agency Forums (MAFs).

53 Education Transformation Board - Stage 2 Update

Consideration was given to a report by the interim Director, Education & Skills which provided an update on the progress of the Education Transformation Project in Wiltshire and outlined changes to the Local Authority's School Improvement Framework due to be implemented from September 2018.

This Project established the core vision -

'to create a strong, self-improving, self-sustaining school-led system to improve the educational outcomes for every child in Wiltshire.'

Following consultation leading to a conference in February 2018, various characteristics were identified that were desirable in the new system which was subsequently launched in July 2018.

It was noted that outcomes from this new system would be reviewed by the Wiltshire Education Standards Board which was tasked with ensuring that the thematic needs of schools and academies could be met through the providers of support within Wiltshire through Teaching School Alliances and other providers. These providers would need to be able to respond to demands placed upon schools for their continued improvement.

Members noted with some concern that some single school academies were not always engaging with partners and further work would need to be carried out to persuade these schools to collaborate and share their statistics.

After further discussion,

Resolved:

To note the update on stage 2 of the Education Transformation Board

54 **School Ofsted Judgements**

The Committee received a report by the interim Director, Education & Skills which provided an overview of state funded school inspection outcomes at the end of the 2017/18 academic year, including an analysis of inspection outcomes by phase of school, by LA maintained or academies and trends from the previous year. The report also included an analysis of the current Ofsted position from published reports as at the end of July 2018 for all schools and academies and further considered outcomes for schools for inspections carried out during the 2017/18 academic year.

It was noted that Ofsted had the direct remit of 'Raising Standards, Improving Lives' and in its 2017-2022 strategy document stated that it

"exists to be: 'A force for improvement through intelligent, responsible and focused inspection and regulation' "

Inspections focused on the following four main areas

- Effectiveness of leadership and management
- Quality of teaching, learning and assessment
- Personal development, behaviour and welfare
- Outcomes for pupils

Where appropriate the effectiveness of early years or sixth form was also inspected.

From the evidence collected, schools were given an overall effectiveness grade:

- Grade 1 (outstanding)
- Grade 2 (good)
- Grade 3 (requires improvement)
- Grade 4 (inadequate)

It was noted that academies worked with the Regional School Commissioner rather than the Local Authority for school improvement.

From the statistical information provided, the Committee noted that Wiltshire's figures as at March 2018 were broadly comparable with the national average and more closely comparable with those schools in the South West. However, it was worrying to note that Wiltshire's figures (good & outstanding places) had fallen from 93% at August 2016 to 84% in March 2018.

78% of primary schools in Wiltshire with existing grades achieved Ofsted grades the same or better whilst 88% of Wiltshire secondary schools with existing grades achieved Ofsted grades the same or better.

It was drawn to Members' attention that whilst schools graded 2 to 4 required Ofsted inspections every three years, this was not a requirement of schools grading as being outstanding. Some concern expressed on receiving this information but Members were informed that Ofsted were always grateful to receive any concerns or complaints about school standards which could be investigated.

Resolved:

To note the update on school Ofsted judgements.

55 **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:-

- Public spending on children in England: 2000 to 2020
- 30 hours childcare to be extended to foster carers
- Gender separation in mixed schools
- Relationships education
- Academies update
- Working together to safeguard children
- Disqualification by association
- Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners
- Reporting a serious safeguarding incident
- Social Work England: secondary legislative framework and announcement of new Chief Executive Officer
- Family and friends care
- Placing a child under 13 in a secure children's home

- Grant funding for Virtual School Head role for previously looked after children
- Bursary for care leaver apprentices
- Stability Index 2018
- Secure schools
- Children and adolescent mental health services

It was drawn to Members' attention that under the new child safeguarding incident reporting procedure, Wiltshire had reported two serious cases in a two month period, this being the first serious referrals being made in two years.

Members were pleased to note that resulting from the Children & Social Work Act 2017, Wiltshire had been awarded £37,794.79 to support the implementation of the virtual school head's role for previously looked-after children. It was noted that additional funding for this would be provided by Wiltshire Council.

Resolved:

To note the update provided.

56 **Task Group and Board Representative Updates**

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

- Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS) Task Group.
- Traded Services Task Group. Mr John Hawkins, Task Group Chairman, reported that this Task Group had met the previous day. To reflect the changes to the situation with regards to outdoor education the task group would like to propose an amendment, already discussed with the relevant Cabinet Member and officers, to its terms of reference by including the following:
 3. To review and comment on:
 - a) the Council's advertising of the two outdoor education sites (Braeside and Oxenwood);
 - b) the Council's consideration of expressions of interest, including evaluation criteria and weighting;
 - c) the report to Cabinet presenting the findings on the expressions of interests.

Resolved:

To note the updates on task group activity provided.

57 **Forward Work Programme**

The Committee received a document showing the relevant items from the Overview & Scrutiny Forward Work Programme together with the Children's Services Strategy List.

Resolved:

To note the Forward Work Programme for this Committee and the Children's Services Strategy List.

58 **Date of Next Meeting**

Resolved:

To note that the next scheduled meeting of this Committee was due to be held on Tuesday 6 November 2018 at County Hall, Trowbridge, starting at 10.30am.

59 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items of business.

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 am - 1.20 pm)

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

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