

Wiltshire Council

Children's Select Committee

8 January 2019

Outcomes of the Meetings Between the Children's Select Committee's Chairman & Vice-Chairman and the Executive Members

Purpose of Report

1. This report has been produced to inform the Children's Select Committee of the outcomes from the meetings between the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the committee with the Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Skills and the Portfolio Holders for Education & Skills and SEND & Children's Safeguarding.

Background

2. Part of the construction of the forward plan for the committee includes meetings between the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the committee with the relevant executive members and senior officers. These meetings are organised to discuss the current forward plan for the committee and any service priorities that may benefit from overview and scrutiny involvement. The meetings were held this year on 12th December 2018 with one meeting to discuss topics within SEND & Children's Safeguarding, and a separate meeting to discuss topics within Education & Skills.

Conclusions

SEND & Children's Safeguarding

3. Services within the Early Help Offer were discussed. Currently there were concerns over duplication and fragmented working between services. Potential to look into whether the plan in place was sufficient was noted. Lessons from other local authority areas who have gone through similar changes could be investigated.
4. The potential to explore the effectiveness of the Local Youth Network (LYN) funding was discussed. It was noted that whilst under a focused terms of reference this could be dealt with at Children's Select engagement would be needed with service areas other than Children's Services. Areas of investigation could potentially include whether the funding is providing value for money; the future funding opportunities (half LYN funding is from public health); the role, membership, funding guidance of LYNs; and the general education of Wiltshire Council on the role of LYNs.

5. School Readiness was noted as a current priority of the executive. Statistics for social mobility in Wiltshire were low in comparison to national stats. A potential conversation with relevant officers regarding work with nurseries and the “Best Start in Life” workstream in FACT could produce some work for the committee.
6. A “Whole Life Service” was currently in very early stages of development. The service would bridge the current transition for SEND services into Adult Services. This was being explored to tackle the current drop in SEND service quality post-18. This provided an opportunity for scrutiny to become involved early on in the process. It was noted that a briefing on the aims of the new service and discussion with Health Select over ownership of the topic could be a starting point..
7. The progress of the implementation of LiquidLogic was raised as an area of potential interest for the committee, particularly regarding the current status and any future plans.

Education & skills

8. More effective scrutiny involvement in the scrutiny of schools was discussed. An amendment to the current arrangement for the committee receiving reports on Pupil Performance in Public Tests and Examinations was raised. Potentially the committee could receive the relevant data as it is made available, i.e. receiving separate reports on data from key stages across a number of meetings as they become available. It was noted that this may narrow focus and prevent potential lines of enquiry being lost within large reports.
9. Room for potential scrutiny engagement with the Wiltshire Education Standards Board (WESB) was raised. Varied success with collaboration between the WESB and maintained schools was reported. The form in which this engagement was discussed and potential for a scrutiny board representative or monitoring task group or rapid scrutiny were listed as possibilities.
10. Revisiting the School Improvement Framework was suggested as a topic for the committee. Specifically the committee could investigate whether the current criteria used within the framework is effective..
11. A potential agenda item and report from the Skills and Improvement Team on the new Education and Employment Strategy was discussed. It was noted that there could be discussion around creating a new task group to feed into the new strategy through looking at best practice in other local authority areas and meeting with employers.

Proposal

12. That the above topics be used to populate the forward work plan of the Children’s Select Committee, which will be submitted to the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee.

Cllr Jon Hubbard, Chairman of the Children's Select Committee

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Background Papers

None

Appendices

None