

CHILDREN'S SELECT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN'S SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 5 MARCH 2019 AT KENNET ROOM - COUNTY HALL, BYTHESEA ROAD, TROWBRIDGE, BA14 8JN.

Present:

Cllr Jon Hubbard (Chairman), Cllr Mary Champion, Cllr Andrew Davis, Cllr Christopher Devine, Cllr Sue Evans, Cllr David Halik, Cllr Deborah Halik, Cllr Chris Hurst, Cllr Johnny Kidney, Cllr Jacqui Lay, Cllr Roy While, Dr Mike Thompson, Miss Sarah Busby, John Hawkins, Cllr Trevor Carbin (Substitute), Cllr James Sheppard (Substitute) and Ms Jen Jones

Also Present:

Cllr Laura Mayes and Cllr Philip Whalley

17 **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from:-

Cllr Mary Douglas, who was substituted by Cllr James Sheppard.
Cllr Hayley Illman, who was substituted by Cllr Trevor Carbin.

18 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

Resolved:

To confirm and sign the minutes of the previous meeting held on 8 January 2019.

19 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

20 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman made the following announcements:-

a) Cabinet items

For information on 5 February Cabinet considered the following items

School Capital Programme 2019-2024

School Admissions Policies 2020/21

On 26 March Cabinet was due to consider the following items:

Proposal to join a Flexible Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) for Independent and Non-maintained Special Schools (ISS)

Scrutiny engagement – due to the relation with their work, the SEND School Provision Task Group would receive a briefing on this prior to the Cabinet meeting.

Children's Centre Buildings Consultation

Scrutiny engagement – topic is included on this agenda.

b) Overview and Scrutiny Councillor Workshop Outcomes

To be confirmed from 28 February workshop

21 Public Participation

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

22 Update from Youth Representative

The Chairman welcomed Charlie Sweetman and Heather Newton who were attending this meeting to present their report which provided a summary of activities of the Wiltshire Assembly of Youth (WAY), Youth Safeguarding Board ((YSB) and the Children in Care Council (CiCC) during the period December 2018 to January 2019.

The Committee was informed that members of the WAY, YSB and CiCC were committed to the proposal for a refreshed identity which would bring them together under one brand - the Wiltshire Youth Union. Work was being taken forward with the branding team to work with young people to create the brand re-launch in Summer 2019.

Members of the Wiltshire Youth Union and CiCC took part in a council-generated online survey throughout January 2019. This was facilitated to ascertain their views and opinions on a set of three questions posed by the Schools & Youth Liaison Supervisor at Police headquarters in Devizes as part of a 'sextortion' consultation. The questions were as follows:-

- What would be the best form of communication from the Police regarding child sexual exploitation and how to help prevent it?
- What age range should be targeted?
- What would you want highlighted the most?

The youth feedback from this survey had been captured in their November 18 to April 2019 'You Said, We Did' report.

It was pointed out that Child Sexual Exploitation Awareness Day was taking place on 18 March 2019.

Members were pleased to note that following on from his attendance at the last meeting of this Committee, Joel Mutagayika, Member of the Youth Parliament for Wiltshire East had been interviewed by the Wiltshire Times, the Wiltshire Gazette & Herald and by the Council's Communications Team. Joel had spoken passionately about why he became a MYP and sent out a positive message to other young people to do likewise.

Resolved:

- (1) To thank Charlie Sweetman and Heather Newton for their presentation.**
- (2) To note the contents of the report.**

23 **Children Missing Education and Elective Home Education Datasets**

Consideration was given to a report by the Director, Families & Children's Services which provided an update relating to the current position in Wiltshire of those children who were classified as Children Missing Education (CME).

It was explained that the report referred to those children and young people who were missing, i.e. their family or their individual whereabouts being unknown. Generally this was in respect of children who had moved out of Wiltshire, their destination was not known and they did not appear to be on the roll of another school in England.

Members welcomed the report and were pleased to note that, despite the difficulties involved in identifying these children, there had been a reduction in children missing education from 130 in 2017 to 80 as at 14 February 2019, as a result of more vigorous checking and working with partners, including Police and health staff. However, it was appreciated that there were more children that should be included in this category including children from travelling communities, numbers of which were unknown. It was also noted that children were likely to be moving into Wiltshire but were not registered.

The Committee also received a report which provided an overview of the current situation in Wiltshire relating to Elective Home Education. It was noted that a parent/carer could elect to home educate their child at any stage of a child's education. Should this option be taken at the earliest pre-school stage then that child would not be registered on any school roll. However, if the option was taken at a later stage, schools were required to notify the Local Authority and remove the child's name from the school roll. The Local Authority held a register of all children who were known to be home educated, which was overseen by the Education Welfare Service.

The number of young people known to be electively home educated had been steadily increasing from 385 in the academic year 2015-2016 to 619 in 2017-2018. The numbers home educated in the current academic year so far had reached 596. Work was currently being carried out to ascertain the reasons for this increase, bearing in mind that parents/carers had every right to home educate their child. Sometimes the reason was poor school performance and this was being investigated. It was also noted that work was being undertaken to ensure that the standard of home education was good; in most cases the standard was fine.

Reference was made to the needs of children with special educational needs and it was noted that some parents/carers considered that they did not receive sufficient support from mainstream schools.

After further discussion,

Resolved:

1. **To note the information and data provided on Children Missing Education in Wiltshire.**
2. **To note the information and data provided on Elective Home Education in Wiltshire.**
3. **To receive the correct figures on Children Missing Education for the following, and to circulate with the minutes of the meeting:**
 - **Gender Breakdown**
 - **Ethnicity Breakdown**
4. **To add Children Accessing Alternative Educational Provision to the committee's forward work programme as a future pre-meeting information briefing in autumn 2019.**
5. **To receive further data and analysis in 12 months on children with SEND receiving Elective Home Education.**

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

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

The report outlined the programme of achievements for 2018 and also the work plan for 2019. Members were informed that the new workstreams for 2019 were:-

- A good education for all
- Getting the best start in life
- Delivering Multi Professional Support at the earliest point.

- A whole life approach for children and adults with additional needs
- Core skills and a single approach to how we support families

It was noted that the conclusions were missing from para. 42 of the report and officers undertook to provide them for the Committee.

After some further discussion,

Resolved:

1. **To note the update on the Families and Children's Transformation programme.**
2. **To circulate the report conclusions with the minutes of the committee meeting.**
3. **To receive a report in 12 months on the impact of the programme on the outcomes for young people in Wiltshire.**

(Note: Subsequent to the meeting the conclusions were provided and for ease of reference are set out below as follows:-

Many of the developments from last year are now in the go live delivery stage and impact and benefit realisation work is underway and will be reported in the next round. This will be in the structure of a balanced scorecard for each historic and new workstream

- What was the baseline (what were we looking to improve upon)
- Investment received time and people resources from the council and other partners and efficiencies or cashable savings achieved
- Report on the success criteria for each workstream – localised wherever possible
- How were families involved and the outcomes of their feedback)

25 **Children's Centre Buildings Consultation**

A report by the Director of Commissioning was received which set out why the Council was proposing moving children's centre services from buildings to community venues and the related consultation process it was undertaking. This subject was due to be brought to Cabinet on 30 April 2019 and Members were asked to provide comments on the report prior to the Cabinet decision.

The Director explained that the Council was facing reduced funding and, to meet the budget gap in 2019-20, services had been reviewed to identify whether they could be delivered more efficiently. In reviewing children's centres, the Council had considered what savings could be made without having a significant impact on frontline services. Based on the successful use of wider

community venues for children's centre services rather than tie money up in the running costs of buildings,

it was being proposed that the number of buildings be reduced by six and more services be delivered in the community where they were needed and where the families could easily access them. This was a development of the work that was already taking place and followed discussions at contract meetings with providers about how efficiencies could be made with the least impact on services for the most disadvantaged families. Saving money on buildings meant that delivery of staff would be retained and able to work with families. The centres that would be de-commissioned were in the less deprived areas and had very little service delivery taking place in the buildings. It was anticipated that these changes would achieve savings of £250,000 in 2019-20.

The Committee noted that 10 consultation events had taken place in different parts of Wiltshire and all had been very positive. It was ascertained that parents were very keen that the services be maintained but not necessarily in the current children's centre buildings. By way of example, it was pointed out that the Longfield Community Centre in Trowbridge was well used rather than the Longfield Children's Centre.

After further discussion,

Resolved:

To establish a rapid scrutiny exercise on the Children's Centre Buildings Consultation to examine the results of the consultation, the proposed closures and plans for alternative provision, and investigate the potential scope for further scrutiny.

26 **Educational Outcomes for Disadvantaged Learners**

The Committee considered a report by the Director, Education & Skills which provided an overview of the performance of Disadvantaged Learners at the end of each key stage comparing outcomes in Wiltshire with national figures and comparing outcomes in Wiltshire with national figures and also with other local authorities. The report provided an overview of strategic school improvement activity carried out by the School Effectiveness Team.

During discussion, the Chairman suggested that a rapid scrutiny exercise be undertaken to ascertain if the establishment of a Task Group might be productive. Members also considered that there was a need for greater publicity for the courses which were available from the Local Authority. Members welcomed the establishment of a rapid scrutiny exercise and

Resolved:

- 1. To note the data on the attainment and progress of pupils eligible for the pupil premium in Wiltshire.**

2. **To establish a rapid scrutiny exercise to meet with officers and investigate the potential for the development of a full terms of reference for an Educational Outcomes for Disadvantaged Learners Task Group.**

27 **Interim Report of the SEND School Provision Task Group**

Consideration was given to a further report from the SEND School Provision Task Group. The report followed the Cabinet decision in May 2018 to enter a pre-consultation stage on three options for the future provision of SEND education in Wiltshire. Since the end of this pre-consultation the Task Group began evidence gathering regarding the Wiltshire vision for SEND school provision.

After some discussion,

Resolved:

To endorse the conclusions and recommendations of the interim report of the SEND School Provision Task Group and refer them to the Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Skills for response to the next Children's Select Committee meeting.

28 **School Ofsted Judgements**

The Committee received a report by the Director, Education & Skills which included information regarding the most recent Ofsted inspection reports from December 2018 to mid-February 2019. It provided an ongoing view of the effectiveness of schools as seen by Ofsted inspection.

It was noted that six inspections had been carried out since the last report. They were all maintained schools which had retained a 'good' grading. The inspections were all short one-day inspections.

Resolved:

To note the update on Ofsted Inspection from 6 December 2018 to 13 February 2019.

29 **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 December 2018 to February 2019., as follows:-

- Ofsted 2017/18 Annual Report

- National funding formula tables for schools, early years and high needs: 2019 to 2020
- Childcare and early years survey of parents:2018
- Life-saving skills in school
- Consultation on out-of-school settings
- Introduction of T Levels
- Academies Update
- Transport to education and training for people aged 16 to 18
- SEND provision capital funding for pupils with EHC plans
- Autism strategy
- Review of Children in Need – Interim findings
- Safeguarding children affected by parental alcohol and drug use
- Consultation on draft handbooks launched

Resolved:

To note the update provided.

30 **Task Group and Board Representative Updates**

The Committee received an update on the activities of the Traded Services for Schools Task Group.

Resolved:

To note the update on task group activity provided.

31 **Forward Work Programme**

The Committee received the relevant items from the Overview & Scrutiny Forward Work Programme, together with the latest version of the strategy for the Children, Education & Skills Directorate.

Resolved:

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

32 **Date of Next Meeting**

Resolved:

To note that the next scheduled meeting of this Committee was due to be held on Wednesday 15 May 2019 at County Hall, Trowbridge, starting at 10.30am.

33 **Urgent Items**

There were no items of urgent business.

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 am - 1.25 pm)

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