

Wiltshire Council

Children's Select Committee

19 January 2021

Executive Response to the Final Report of the Traded Services for Schools and Outdoor Education Task Group

Purpose of the report

1. To present the response of the Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Skills to the Final Report of the Traded Services for Schools and Outdoor Education Task Group.

Background

2. The committee received the [task group's final reports](#) on 10 March 2020. Due to the overview and scrutiny arrangements under Covid-19, this is the first meeting of the committee when the executive response could be considered.
3. The findings of the task group were presented in two reports for ease of reading (one on outdoor education and one on traded services for schools); however, it seemed more logical to present the executive response in a single document. This is because there was a single recommendation regarding outdoor education, as previous recommendations from the task group had already been presented to Cabinet.

Executive response to the Task Group's recommendations

Recommendation linked to Outdoor Education

Recommendation No.1	Ensure that all councillors are aware of the offer at Braeside and Oxenwood (councillors briefing note, elected wire – scrutiny story of the week, etc.) (<i>paragraph 30 of the report</i>)		
Reason for recommendation	To raise awareness of the centres having remained operational.		
Cabinet member	Cllr Laura Mayes	Lead Officer	Paul Redford
Executive response	12/01/21	ACCEPTED	Completed
Action			Success criteria
Presence maintained on Right Choice platform to promote and encourage education enquiries			Currently furloughed
Target date			Implementation date
01/22			Ongoing from 02/20

Recommendations linked to Traded Services for Schools

Recommendation No.1	Note the recommendations made by the TG and already implemented (paragraph 46).		
Cabinet member	Cllr Laura Mayes	Lead Officer	Paul Redford
Executive response	12/01/21	ACCEPTED	Tasks completed, with one exception - business planning
Action		Success criteria	
Business plans and 5-year financial forecasts have been delayed and impacted due to onset of coronavirus outbreak. These will be resolved once COVID impact has ceased. All other actions completed.		Traded offer continues to be delivered during COVID era.	
Target date		Implementation date	
For business planning and forecasts March 2022		March 2022	

Recommendation No.2	Ensure that the Traded Services for School's team is resourced in such a way to enable it to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. develop a more sophisticated pricing approach, including discounts / packages / bundles offers <i>to maximise customer retention</i>; b. deliver the traded services for schools' project plan <i>to ensure Traded Services for School can become commercially viable</i>; c. develop the traded services' offer "beyond" schools and outside of the county, including "back office support" for charities and community groups (such as building management, DBS checks, etc.), <i>to maximise potential customer base</i>; d. develop a process to record and share information from customers <i>to enable pre-empting of needs and tailoring of approach to enhance customers' experience (and satisfaction)</i>; e. develop with the relevant service(s) the automation of financial reporting (between SAP and Right Choice) <i>to maximise accuracy and release officer's time</i>. 		
Reason for recommendation	As shown in <i>italics</i> in the above		
Cabinet member	Cllr Laura Mayes	Lead Officer	Paul Redford
Executive response	12/01/21	ACCEPTED	Resourcing now part of annual funding
Action		Success criteria	
Procurement of new ERP will delay any merge of accounting procedures between platforms.		Portability and accessibility of data without officer involvement	
Target date		Implementation date	
March 2022		March 2020	

Recommendation No.3	Considers the establishment of a project / governance board made up of relevant director(s), head(s) of service, executive member(s) and representative(s) from overview and scrutiny to support the development and embedding of Traded Services for Schools by providing encouragement and oversight, with an initial focus on the following areas: a. Implementation of the recommendations from the SWAP audit report <i>to ensure robustness of Traded Services for School</i> ; b. Development of key performance indicators for traded services for schools, including Right Choice (usability of the system and quality of the services themselves) <i>to enable monitoring of performance</i> ; c. Development of a business plan by each service area <i>to support the embedding of a commercial approach</i> ; d. Financial reporting <i>to enable monitoring of performance</i> .		
Reason for recommendation	As shown in <i>italics</i> in the above		
Cabinet member	Cllr Laura Mayes	Lead Officer	Paul Redford
Executive response	12/01/21	ACCEPTED	Not yet progressed due to COVID
Action			Success criteria
	Recommendations still to be formally implemented		To be confirmed
Target date			
	March 2022		

Recommendation No.4	Provide an update to the Children's Select Committee within a year on recommendations 3 and 4 as well as any other development for Traded Services for School.		
Reason for recommendation	The task group concluded its work when Traded Services for School was still relatively newly established.		
Cabinet member	Cllr Laura Mayes	Lead Officer	Paul Redford
Executive response	12/01/21	ACCEPTED	Recommendations not completed due to COVID
Action			Success criteria
	All recommendations to be completed after COVID		To be confirmed
Target date			
	March 2022		

Recommendation No.5	Ensure the council takes available opportunities to work with service areas to help them develop in a way that enables them to deliver more efficiently as traded services (i.e. better meet customers' demand) as well as present opportunities for staff (i.e. continuous professional development, revised team structure, etc.).		
Reason for recommendation	To support commercialism opportunities		
Cabinet member	Cllr Laura Mayes	Lead Officer	Paul Redford
Executive response	12/01/21	ACCEPTED	Traded Services Collective to bring all the teams together.
Action			Success criteria
Ongoing work to ensure teams working together to provide services collaboratively.			To be confirmed
Target date			
Ongoing – March 2022			

Recommendation No.6	Ensure that Cabinet identifies a member to have responsibility for commercialism. This member should be made fully aware of the expertise developed by the Traded Services for School team and how this could be used by other service areas developing a commercialism approach.		
Reason for recommendation	To support commercialism opportunities		
Cabinet member	Cllr Laura Mayes	Lead Officer	Paul Redford
Executive response	12/01/21	AMENDED	
Action			Success criteria
To forward this recommendation, and final report linked to it, for consideration by the Commercialism Task Group (which was set up after this task group completed its work).			tbc
Target date			
When the Commercialism Task Group resumes its work. <i>The Commercialism Task Group suspended its activity during the Covid-19 pandemic.</i>			

Recommendation No.7	Consider developing with Human Resources a recruitment process specific to Traded Services with Schools.		
Reason for recommendation	To ensure that traded services for schools can be developed to flexibly meet customers' demand.		
Cabinet member	Cllr Laura Mayes	Lead Officer	Paul Redford
Executive response	12/01/21	ACCEPTED	HR packages revised for 2021

Action			Success criteria
Wrap-around Recruitment package not yet designed. Demand will be assessed after COVID			tbc
Target date			
March 2022			

Recommendation No.8	Raise councillors' awareness of both Right Choice and Traded Services for Schools through communication.		
Reason for recommendation	To enable councillors to advise or signpost schools and other groups.		
Cabinet member	Cllr Laura Mayes	Lead Officer	Paul Redford
Executive response	12/01/21	ACCEPTED	Ongoing work
Action			Success criteria
Information provided to Children's Select Committee annually.			tbc
Target date			
March 2022			

4. Traded Services continues to work with settings and trade services with buy-backs in February/March (Local Authority-Maintained Schools) and August/September (Academies/Multi-Academies Trusts).
5. Whilst maintaining service delivery and trading levels with education sites, the focus for the team has moved to support education sites through the COVID period and has prioritised delivery of:
 - One-stop communication platform to all sites and enquiry resolution
 - Online repository of all COVID-related information, notices and updates
 - Rollout of DfE (Department for Education) and Local Authority Digital Device programmes
 - Rollout of Free School Meals funding and co-ordination of advice and enquiry resolution for parents and schools
 - Co-ordination of PPE (personal protection equipment) supplies to all Schools throughout outbreak.

Proposal

6. To note the executive response to the Final Report of the **Traded Services for Schools and Outdoor Education Task Group**.

Cllr Laura Mayes, Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Skills

Officer contact: Marie Gondlach, Senior Scrutiny Officer, 01225 713 597,
mariegondlach@wiltshire.gov.uk