

Wiltshire Council

Children's Select Committee

08 June 2022

Task Group and Rapid Scrutiny Update

Purpose

To provide an update on any recent work from task groups and rapid scrutiny exercises linked to the Children's Select Committee (CSC), as well as information on any upcoming overview and scrutiny (OS) activities for the committee.

Updates from active Task Groups

1. Children's Select Committee – Standing Task Group

Supporting officer: Marie Gondlach

Membership

Cllr Helen Belcher
John Hawkins
Cllr Jon Hubbard (Chair)
Cllr Jacqui Lay
Cllr Caroline Thomas
Cllr Jo Trigg

Terms of Reference

At its 6 July 2021 meeting, the Children's Select Committee resolved to establish this Standing Task Group:

1. To undertake detailed reviews of the regular reports that come within the Children's Select Committee's remit and to bring updates to the Committee on its work;
2. To present any key issues, findings and recommendations to the Children's Select Committee, and / or other relevant committees, for discussion, endorsement or further scrutiny where appropriate;
3. To invite all members and substitutes of Children's Select Committee to its meetings, should they wish to attend and participate.

Recent activity

There has been no meeting of the Standing Task Group since the last Children's Select Committee meeting.

Two meetings are being organised to cover Traded Services and Performance report.

2. Disadvantaged Learners Task Group

The final report for the task group is included on this agenda.

3. Fostering Excellence Task Group

Supporting officer: Marie Gondlach

Membership

Cllr Liz Alstrom
Cllr Chuck Berry (Chair)
Cllr Ruth Hopkinson
Cllr Sam Pearce-Kearney
Cllr Mark Verbinnen

It should be noted that Cllr Jack Oatley was appointed to the task group but had to resign at the second meeting as he was no longer able to attend the scheduled meetings of the task group.

Terms of Reference

For the Fostering Excellence task group to:

1. review how the Fostering Excellence project has been / is / will be addressing the issues identified in the report presented to CSC on 10 March 2020:
 - a. Increase initial enquiries and therefore assessments and approvals of Wiltshire Council foster carers;
 - b. Improve the retention of Wiltshire approved foster carers;
 - c. Increase the percentage of Wiltshire children in foster care cared for by Wiltshire Council foster carers (at the time 46%);
 - d. Maintain high occupancy rates of Wiltshire approved foster carers (at the time 80%+).
2. identify how the effectiveness of the Fostering Excellence project will be measured and reported, and be satisfied that this is robust and delivering improvements whilst achieving the savings identified in the budget 2022-23;
3. identify how the benefits of being placed with Wiltshire Council foster carers (who are receiving enhanced training / support as part of Fostering Excellence) for children in care will be measured and reported, and be satisfied that this is robust;
4. identify best practice across the country for recruitment and retention of in-house foster carers.

Recent activity

The task group met on 28 April and focused its meeting on the recruitment and retention of in-house foster carers.

The meeting on 19 May focused on identifying, measuring and reporting the benefits of Fostering Excellence.

The task group had hoped to complete its work and present its final report to this meeting, but, as there were areas it wished to explore further (and no “time pressure” to complete its work), the task group has scheduled two further meetings and is now looking to present its final report to CSC on 6 July 2022.

Proposals

- 1. To note the update on task group and rapid scrutiny activities provided.**

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