

Wiltshire Council

Children's Select Committee

28 March 2013

Review of the work of the Children's Select Committee

Purpose

1. To highlight key aspects of the work undertaken by the Select Committee during recent times and to recommend topics as legacy items to the Management Committee for possible inclusion in a new overview and scrutiny work programme after the elections.

Background

2. As a new unitary council in 2009, Wiltshire Council's overview and scrutiny arrangements were agreed for "day one" following consultation during transition and input from an external national advisor.
3. These were revised last May with little change to the structure apart from the creation of a new Management Committee to take overall responsibility for the function and its working relationship with the Cabinet. However most significantly a new style and approach was adopted at the wish of elected members and the extended leadership team based on constructive early engagement, a focus on supporting the development of policy linked to the business plan, and seeking positive outcomes. This has resulted in a much more effective and worthwhile function for all those involved.
4. With Council elections in May, the current Management Committee has asked that each of the select committees produce a brief "end of term" style report in order to highlight some of the good work done. The report is also intended to provide the opportunity for the select committees to recommend ongoing pieces of work for possible inclusion in the overview and scrutiny work programme of the new Council.

Key Activities and Achievements

5. The following is a list of some of the Children's Select Committee's key past activities and achievements which demonstrates the contribution it

has made to decision-making, policy development and good governance of the Council:

Activity	Date	Brief Explanation	Outcome
Task Groups, Rapid Scrutiny Exercises and other ad hoc exercises			
Rapid Scrutiny: Review of SEN Provision	Jan 2010 - May 2011	Considered proposals for SEN service development with respect to primary schools, specialist learning centres, special schools and SEN Support services.	Made recommendations particularly on the consultation process followed. Committee monitored the transitions of individual pupils affected.
Placements For LAC Task Group	Mar 2011 – May 2012	Established to consider the Children in Care Commissioning Strategy. Subsequently undertook longer term work scrutinising performance and budget management of all services for LAC and their carers.	Impacted on several strategies and was also praised in the 2012 Ofsted inspection report. Was 'replaced' by the Safeguarding Children & Young People Task Group in May 2012 following the Ofsted inspection.
Rapid Scrutiny: 11-19 Commissioning Strategy Consultation	July 2011	Drafted a detailed response to the 13-19 Commissioning Strategy consultation document.	Response was endorsed by Committee and its recommendations influenced the final Strategy.
Rapid Scrutiny: Denominational Transport	Sep 2011	Established to consider the proposals to remove funding assistance for this area in detail. A well-attended public meeting was held, including opportunity for affected schools and parents to make representations, and the final report was submitted to Cabinet.	Cabinet received the report and the initial proposals were adjusted, more in-line with Scrutiny's recommendations.

Activity	Date	Brief Explanation	Outcome
Select Committee agenda items			
Strategic Direction Of Small Schools	2009 – 2010	The Council was required to produce a Primary Plan showing how the authority supported schools below the performance target, maximised progression and encouraged consistent performance.	Committee monitored this work.
Ofsted inspection reports	Jan 2010 Sep 2010 Jan 2011 Sep 2011	The Committee received a number of reports providing the outcome of Ofsted inspections, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contact and referral centres • unannounced inspections • annual ratings 	The majority of these reports were noted. The 2012 Ofsted inspection report was addressed in detail by the Safeguarding C&YP Task Group.
Basic Skills in Wiltshire	July 2010 – Jan 2011	The Committee received reports on Basic Skills attainment levels in Wiltshire, plus partnership/governance arrangements, current initiatives and plans for the future.	Monitored and noted.
Youth staffing allocations	July 2010	Following concerns expressed by members, received a report on proposed changes to the allocation of staffing using a formula approach based upon various criteria.	Members were reassured by the formula approach being taken and noted the report.
Scrutiny of the Business Plan	Mar 2011	A report identifying the content in the Business Plan that fell within the remit of the Committee.	Members agreed a list of themes and proposed methods for scrutinising each area.
Annual reports and Business Plans of the Wiltshire Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB)	Annual	Annual reports and business plans from the key statutory body for coordinating local safeguarding activity.	Reports were largely noted, but the Safeguarding C&YP Task Group have made recommendations for more in-

Activity	Date	Brief Explanation	Outcome
			depth future scrutiny.
Wiltshire's Readiness To Meet The New Requirements For Raising The Participation Age (RPA)	May 2012	An overview of Wiltshire' readiness to meet new statutory duties to Raise the Participating Age (RPA), increasing the minimum age at which young people in England could leave learning.	Monitored and noted.

Ongoing work

6. The following is a list of activities and reviews which the Select Committee considers important to include as ongoing pieces of work in any new overview and scrutiny work programme. Every effort has been made to bring reviews to a conclusion in time for the end of the current Council but clearly some things remain ongoing due to the significance or long-term nature of the topic.

Activity	Date	Brief Explanation	Reason for Inclusion
Task Groups			
Safeguarding Children and Young People Task Group	May 2012 -	Established following the 2012 Ofsted inspection of safeguarding and services for LAC. Final report included in this meeting's agenda. The final report recommends the continuance of a task group focusing on this area.	For Committee discussion under item 6.
FE in the Salisbury Area Task Group	May 2012 -	Established to review the post-16 education available in the Salisbury area. Reported its findings and submitted 12 recommendations in May 2012 and the Cabinet Member responded in July 2012. A number of	For Committee discussion

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		<p>recommendations were accepted.</p> <p>Resolved to reconvene in Summer 2013 to review progress. Committee will be asked to confirm this decision on 6 June.</p>	
Major Contracts Task Group	Standing	<p>In 2009 the Task Group's work programme included the following major contracts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Quarriers – providers of accommodation for LAC Contract no longer exists The Task Group was closely involved in reviewing this contract. 2. WHEP – providers of serviced accommodation for 3 PFI schools Ongoing Continues to monitor the services provided by WHEP to the PFI schools 3. Children's Centres Ongoing Made a number of requests for further information re Children's Centres contract, due for review in June 2013. 4. School Food Contract no longer exists Monitored the management of this contract until it was ended due to lack of take-up. 	For Committee discussion
Special Schools and Post-16 SEN	May 2011 -	Submitted a report in July 2012 containing recommendations on the following themes:	For Committee discussion

Activity	Date	Brief Explanation	Reason for Inclusion
Task Group		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projecting future demand for SEN provision • Healthcare in special schools • Capacities, facilities and accessibility at special schools • Post-16 education for pupils with SEN • Residential care for children with SLD <p>Continues to monitor their implementation and undertake further work. Final report due in June 2013.</p>	
Select Committee items			
Coalition updates	Standing item	Reports providing updates on national changes to education and services for children.	For Committee discussion
Pupil Performance in Public Tests and Examinations	Annual item	Provides an annual overview of pupil performance at the end of each key stage and compares Wiltshire's attainment with national, south west and statistical neighbours.	For Committee discussion
Education for excluded pupils	March 2012 -	<p>The transformation of education provision for permanently excluded students of secondary school age. The proposal was to close Wiltshire's four YPSS centres and to delegate responsibility for educating excluded students to secondary schools, which would receive the devolved funding. This was agreed.</p> <p>The Committee supported the proposal as likely to provide an improved service for young people and resolved to monitor the future performance of excluded students.</p> <p>Update expected Nov 2013</p>	For Committee discussion

Activity	Date	Brief Explanation	Reason for Inclusion
Family Information Service and Parent Partnership Service Review	March 2012	<p>Established a rapid scrutiny exercise following significant changes being proposed to the Family Information Service (FIS) and Parent Partnership Service (PPS).</p> <p>The findings of the Rapid Scrutiny Exercise was endorsed, part of which was to receive the outcomes of a 6-month review of the new service model taking place in Spring 2013.</p> <p>This report is expected on 6 June 2013.</p>	For Committee discussion

7. In considering which areas to recommend for future work, the Committee is asked to be mindful that the Management Committee will need to leave space and capacity for those leading the function after the election to develop their own work programme based on issues resulting from public views expressed during the election period and also following early engagement with any new Executive.

Next Steps

8. The Management Committee meets on 11 April and will receive the reports from the 3 select committees. It will also consider a similar report based on its activities primarily in the corporate arena. The members of the Management Committee will give their views on what should be included in a final legacy report which will be written by the Scrutiny Manager in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman. Following the elections this will then be made available to the new Management Committee, appointed by Council on 14 May, at its first meeting scheduled for 23 May.

Recommendations

9. To agree which topics to recommend to the Management Committee as requiring further work in the new Council, including reasons.
10. To note the next steps described in paragraph 8

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