

CHILDREN'S SELECT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN'S SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 13 OCTOBER 2015 AT COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE BA14 8JN.

Present:

Cllr Jon Hubbard (Chairman), Dr M Thompson, Mr J Hawkins, Cllr Sue Evans, Cllr Mary Douglas, Cllr Chris Hurst, Cllr Simon Jacobs, Cllr Mary Champion, Cllr Bill Moss, Cllr Helen Osborn, Cllr Ricky Rogers, Cllr Philip Whalley, Mr Ken Brough, Miss Sarah Busby, Miss Tracy Cornelius, Cllr Trevor Carbin (Substitute), Miss Cathy Shahrokni and Pigott

Also Present:

Cllr Alan MacRae, Cllr Laura Mayes and Cllr Richard Gamble

65 **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Pat Aves (who was substituted by Cllr Trevor Carbin), Cllr Jacqui Lay and Revd. Alice Kemp.

66 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

Resolved:

To confirm and sign the minutes of the previous meeting held on 21 July 2015 as a correct record.

67 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

68 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman made the following announcements:-

- (1) Future Delivery of Family and Parenting Support Services** At the last meeting on 21 July 2015, this Committee received details of a proposal to bring together the commissioned service for families requiring support who did not meet the threshold for social care intervention and the in-

house service, which currently worked with families who were in receipt of statutory intervention.

The Committee resolved that the Chairman should meet with the Cabinet Member and Director to discuss if and how scrutiny might add value to this topic. Following a meeting with Julia Cramp, Associate Director and Cllr Alan Macrae, Portfolio Holder, it was agreed that there may be a future opportunity for scrutiny to help develop the remit and design of the new service, but considered that it would be sensible to await the Cabinet report and decision in November before considering this further.

An update report would be brought back to this Committee in December 2015.

- (2) Child Sexual Exploitation Member Training Sessions** Following the successful sessions held on 17 and 18 September, Members who were unable to attend would have the opportunity to attend a half day training session on raising awareness of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) on Tuesday 20 October 2015, from 1.00pm to 4.00pm, in the Council Chamber at County Hall, Trowbridge. This training would be provided by Blair Keltie (CSE Manager) and Deborah Barlow (Principal Social Worker). The training would ensure that councillors knew what CSE was, how to spot the signs and what action they could take to help eradicate it.

Any Member wishing to attend this session was requested to confirm their attendance via email to corporatebusinesssupport@wiltshire.gov.uk by 13 October. Places would be confirmed by Outlook calendar invitation shortly after 13 October, confirming details for the training session.

Further information about CSE could be obtained from Blair Keltie at blair.keltie@wiltshire.gov.uk

69 **Public Participation**

There were no members of the public present or Councillors' questions.

70 **Children's Community Services Retender**

The Chairman reminded the Committee that the Children's Community Health Services in Wiltshire were being retendered to seek a contract/provider and a report had been presented to the last meeting describing the background to this decision. The tender was advertised in mid-December 2014 and six Pre-Qualification Questionnaires (PQQs) were submitted. Five of these providers were successful at PQQ evaluation and were invited to submit a tender application.

Cabinet made a decision regarding the preferred provider earlier that day in a closed section of the meeting. Although the decision on the provider had been taken, there were still many steps to be taken in the formation of the service and how the services it included would be monitored.

After some discussion,

Resolved:

To establish a rapid scrutiny exercise to be held in January 2016 to help develop the performance monitoring framework within the contract.

71 School Places Strategy 2015-2020 - update

The Committee considered a report by Carolyn Godfrey, Corporate Director, presenting an update on the Wiltshire School Places Strategy.

Members were reminded that the purpose of the Strategy was to set out the context and background for the Council's strategic planning of school places and demand across the Local Authority area. It provided an overview of demographic information for Wiltshire at the current time and included a more detailed analysis of each secondary school planning area, including historic trends and future projections. This Strategy would become a key framework document for the Council in considering any statutory changes to school organisation including the commissioning of new schools and would inform future capital investment projects.

The draft Strategy was presented to this Committee at its last meeting when it was resolved:-

1. To request that all Area Boards are invited and encouraged to respond to the draft School Places Strategy 2015-20 during the consultation.
2. To request that a report is brought back to Committee in October outlining how the draft Strategy has been amended following consultation.

During discussion the following points were raised:-

- There was confusion over terminology as community and educational areas were not coterminous. It was felt that a footnote in the School Places Strategy should state and explain this. It was explained that school planning areas could not be changed as they were set in conjunction with the DfE.

- There was also an inconsistency in language in that the report referred to Community Area Boards. There was a need to include all schools within such an area with an explanatory footnote.
- There was also some discussion about housing allocations as set in Core Strategy and that they were a little optimistic and did not reflect reality. It was explained that these figures were the projected requirements for the life of the Strategy which was for a period until 2026 when presumably requirements might be quite different. It was noted that information was updated every year.

Resolved:

To note the update provided, the impact on the final version of the consultations undertaken, that the Strategy will now go before Cabinet on 10 November and to request that the points raised by Children’s Select Committee be included in the Cabinet report.

72 Ofsted Inspection 2015

Consideration was given to a report by Carolyn Godfrey, Corporate Director, informing the Committee of the Ofsted inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers, the resulting published report and how Ofsted’s recommendations for improvement would be addressed. The inspection had taken place in July 2015 over a four week period and was very thorough.

During the inspection no cases were identified where children and young people were left at unnecessary risk of harm. Inspectors had found the overall effectiveness of Wiltshire services to be Requires Improvement and all the sub-judgements had the same outcome. However, there were many positive points highlighted in the inspection report. The report had been published on 1 September 2015 and the Local Authority was required to submit an improvement plan to Ofsted within 70 working days of the publication of the report. It was reported that the vast majority of improvements suggested were already in the Authority’s action plans and were already being worked on. Members were pleased to note that the Inspectors were confident that the Local Authority knew what needed to be done “to get to good” and that the trajectory was positive.

Members considered that there was continued work to be done by this Committee in the coming months to monitor the ongoing work being undertaken to further improve this service prior to the next Ofsted Inspection.

Resolved:

1. To note the results of the 2015 Ofsted inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers, and how the areas for improvement will be addressed.
2. To thank all officers involved for their hard work preparing for and during the inspection and for delivering the improvements achieved.

73 Anti-Bullying Week 2015

The Committee received a report by Julia Cramp, Associate Director which set out what would be taking place in Wiltshire regarding Anti-Bullying Week in England from 16 to 20 November 2015. The theme would be *Make a Noise about Bullying*.

It was noted that the key aims of the week would be:-

1. To empower children and young people to make a noise about bullying – whether it is happening to them or to someone else, face to face or online;
2. To help parents and carers have conversations with their children about bullying –both as a way of preventing bullying, and to help children who are worried about bullying;
3. To encourage ‘talking schools’ where all children and young people are given a safe space to discuss bullying and other issues that effect their lives, and are supported to report all forms of bullying;
4. To equip teachers to respond effectively when children tell them they’re being bullied; and
5. To raise awareness of the impact of bullying on children’s lives if they don’t tell anyone it’s happening – or if they are not given appropriate support – with a focus on the impact on mental health.

It was reported that recently children and young people had been asked via a survey on pupil health and wellbeing about their experience of bullying. From a response of nearly 7,000, it had been found that the vast majority of children and young people had not been bullied. 81% of primary aged pupils said that they had never been bullied and 70% of secondary aged students stated that they had not been bullied during the last year. Members were interested to note that cyber-bullying appeared to be the least frequent form of bullying overall (23%) but it was nearly double this rate (45%) amongst Year 12 students. There was need for this to be looked into in more detail.

Whilst a number of schools were active in support of Anti-Bullying Week, Members were disappointed to be informed that school academies were

generally not getting involved in this initiative and that consequently, the Wiltshire Assembly of Youth were no longer giving priority to this.

The Committee considered that all councillors should involve themselves in this and support the campaign by attending the young people's led event in their area and also encourage local schools to participate in this campaign by downloading the Anti-Bullying campaign pack, the free resources and entering the national anti-bullying competition.

Resolved:

- 1. To note the report provided.**
- 2. To note that anti-bullying had previously been dropped by Wiltshire Assembly of Youth (WAY) as a work priority due to a lack of involvement by schools.**
- 3. To receive a further report in January 2016 outlining what activity took place in Wiltshire during Anti-Bullying Week 2015.**

74 SEND Task Group - Executive response update

The Chairman reminded the meeting that The Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) Task Group brought its final report to Committee in January 2015 and the Executive response was received in April 2015. It was resolved that the Committee would receive an updated executive response to Recommendation 15 at a future meeting.

“Recommendation 15: [The Cabinet Member] Provides an action plan describing how it will be ensured that:

- Young people with SEND aged 18+ have access to respite care in Wiltshire that is structured and develops their independent living skills alongside peers of a similar age;
- Young people with SEND who exhibit challenging behaviour continue to have access to respite care in Wiltshire when they turn 18, meeting the requirements of the ‘Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 To 25 Years’ paragraph 3.52.”

A further report by the Cabinet Member for Children's Services was received which presented a further Executive response.

Cllr Laura Mayes, Cabinet Member, explained that respite services for young people aged 18 or over were provided through direct provision at one of the Council's residential units or through direct payments which allowed families to purchase their own provision. These services were for young people that met

the social care eligibility criteria as opposed to all young people with SEND. The residential units were primarily concerned with providing respite care rather than providing independent living skills, although support would always focus on developing life skills.

In relation to challenging behaviour the residential units had recently completed building work which had created an environment which had improved the potential to meet the needs of young people with challenging behaviour.

The Committee received the written comments of Revd. Alice Kemp, Chairman of the SEND Task Group, who stated that whilst she welcomed the new provision for young people with challenging behaviour which was now built and operational, she was concerned that there was a potential lack of structure in adult respite care for young adults aged 18 to 25. It was appreciated that there was a need for more work to be carried out to provide satisfactory facilities for this group of young adults.

After further discussion,

Resolved:

- 1. To note the Cabinet Member for Children's Services' responses.**
- 2. To request a written response to the points raised in writing by the Chairman of the SEND Task Group.**
- 3. To carry out further discussions regarding the provision of respite care for young adults.**

75 School and the Local Authority Task Group - Executive response update

The Chairman reminded the Committee that the final report of the Schools and Local Authority Task Group had been endorsed by this Committee in January 2015 and the Executive response was received in April 2015 when it had been resolved to receive further responses to Recommendations 2 and 15 at a future meeting.

Accordingly, Cllr Laura Mayes, Cabinet Member, presented an updated executive response on the implementation of Recommendations 2 and 15 which were as follows:-

Recommendation 2

Original task group recommendation: *[That the Cabinet Member...] Recommends the creation of an overarching director-led group to take a holistic view of all aspects of the council's relationship with schools and the services and support it provides to them. This group should include a range of partners,*

such as those who currently participate in the Schools Forum's Schools Services Board. The group should meet regularly and monitor the quality and take-up of the council's schools services and the continued delivery of the council's statutory responsibilities.

The Committee noted that the view of the Executive was that the remit of the recommended group was too wide and proposed that a Traded Services Stakeholder Group be set up to consider the quality of services on offer to schools from the Council. The oversight of the delivery of the Council's statutory responsibilities was covered by other groups.

The Committee had requested to be kept informed of the composition of the Group and to receive its minutes. The Cabinet Member informed the meeting that the first meeting of the Group had met a few weeks previously but that it had been quite informal. A further meeting of the Group was due to be held the following week and Members requested that the minutes of that meeting be made available to them together with the Groups' terms of reference and membership.

Recommendation 5

Original task group recommendation: *[That the Cabinet Member...] Brings all of the services the council provides to schools into a single, cohesive offer that is proactively marketed in a business-oriented way.*

The report informed Members that the position on traded services had not changed significantly since the Task Group undertook its work. The Associate Director for Commissioning, Performance & School Effectiveness was currently working with the Associate Director for Finance to produce a report for discussion with the Corporate Directors and Cabinet on the Council's future role in providing traded services. This would involve an assessment of whether the cost of delivering services was matched by the income received from trading and how services could be delivered more efficiently.

After some discussion,

Resolved:

To note the further executive response provided and request that the composition, meeting minutes and terms of reference of the Traded Services Stakeholder Group be circulated.

76 Troubled Families Programme - update

The Committee received a report by Carolyn Godfrey, Corporate Director, which provided an update on the Troubled Families Programme.

The DfE had announced funding for Phase 1 of the Programme in December 2011, which facilitated the collaborative working of local authorities with partners to radically transform the lives of the most troubled families. Wiltshire had been allocated 510 families to “turn round” before the end of March 2015, the criteria being families who:

- were involved in crime or anti-social behaviour;
- had a child who had been excluded or was persistently absent from school;
- were in receipt of out of work benefits; and
- had a high cost to the public purse.

It was explained that this was a payment by results scheme and Wiltshire achieved 100% success, making a difference to all 510 families.

Members were informed that Wiltshire joined Phase 2 of the scheme in early January 2015 and started working with 70 families under the new criteria, which were:-

- Parents and children involved in crime or antisocial behaviour.
- Children who had not been attending school regularly.
- Children who needed help.
- Adults out of work or at risk of financial exclusion at risk of worklessness.
- Families affected by domestic violence and abuse.
- Parents and children with a range of health problems.

During discussion, Members were pleased to note the encouraging success rates so far achieved both in Phase1 of the Programme and also the achievements to date in Phase 2. The Committee requested more detailed information in due course on the outcomes of working with troubled families.

Resolved:

To request an update on the Troubled Families Programme in 12 months' time to include the outcomes of work undertaken with families.

77 DfE Changes - Update from Department for Education

The Committee received an update from Carolyn Godfrey, Corporate Director, on developments relating to children's services arising from the Department for Education from July to September 2015 as follows:-

- Childcare Bill: policy statement
- Protecting Children from Radicalisation: the prevent duty
- Keeping children safe in education
- School Admissions Code

- Coasting schools
- Constitution of governing bodies of maintained schools
- Home School agreements
- Behaviour and discipline in schools
- Academies update
- Reviewing Post-16 Institutions
- SEN transfer review
- Children Act 1989: care planning, placement and case review

Resolved:

- 1. To note the update provided.**
- 2. To request an update on the implications of Central Government's 'coasting schools' agenda when appropriate.**
- 3. To request information regarding any effect the new constitution of maintained schools' governing bodies might have on local authority governors.**

78 Task Group Update

The Committee received an update on the activity of the following Task Groups:-

- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Task Group
- Obesity and Child Poverty Task Group (joint with Health Select Committee)
- Positive Leisure Time Activities for Young People Task Group (reconvened)
- Safeguarding Children and Young People Task Group
- School Improvement Strategy Task Group

Resolved:

- 1. To note the update on task group activity provided.**
- 2. To agree that Cllr Pat Aves joins the Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Task Group;**
- 3. To endorse the proposed terms of reference of the Obesity and Child Poverty Task Group (already endorsed by the Health Select Committee);**
- 4. To endorse the proposed terms of reference of the reconvened Positive Leisure Time Activities for Young People Task Group.**

5. To note that the Safeguarding C&YP Task Group is now ensuring there are no duplications or gaps between its work and that of the CSE Task Group and the Safeguarding C&YP Panel with a view to bringing the task group to a close within 12 months;
6. The agree that the School Improvement Strategy Task Group defers commencement of its work until Spring/Summer 2016 and then reviews the effectiveness of the School Improvement Strategy 2015/16.
7. To agree that Dr Mike Thompson and Cllr Trevor Carbin join the School Improvement Strategy Task Group.

79 **Forward Work Programme**

The Committee received a document showing the relevant items from the Overview & Scrutiny Forward Work Programme.

Resolved:

To note the Forward Work Programme for this Committee.

80 **Date of Next Meeting**

Resolved:

To note that the next scheduled meeting of the Committee would be held on Tuesday 8 December 2015, at County Hall, Trowbridge, starting at 10.30am.

81 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items of business.

(Duration of meeting: 2.30 - 4.45 pm)

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