

CHILDREN'S SELECT COMMITTEE

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN'S SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 8 DECEMBER 2015 AT KENNET ROOM - COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE BA14 8JN.

Present:

Cllr Jon Hubbard (Chairman), Cllr Jacqui Lay (Vice Chairman), Dr M Thompson, Rev Alice Kemp, Mr J Hawkins, Cllr Sue Evans, Cllr Pat Aves, Cllr Mary Douglas, Cllr Chris Hurst, Cllr Simon Jacobs, Cllr Bill Moss, Cllr Jeff Osborn (Substitute), Cllr Ricky Rogers, Cllr Philip Whalley, Miss Sarah Busby, Cllr James Sheppard and Miss Cathy Shahrokni

Also Present:

Cllr Alan MacRae, Cllr Laura Mayes and Cllr Richard Gamble

82 **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Mary Champion, Cllr Helen Osborn (who was substituted by Cllr Jeff Osborn), Miss Tracy Cornelius and Miss Freya Pigott.

83 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

Resolved:

To confirm and sign the minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 October 2015 as a correct record, subject to the following amendments:-

- **Minute No 73 – Anti-Bullying Week 2015**

Second and third resolutions to be amended to read as follows:

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.**

- **Minute No 74 – SEND Task Group – Executive response update**

Second resolution to be amended to read as follows:

2. **To request a written response to the points raised in writing by the Chairman of the SEND Task Group.**

84 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

85 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman made the following announcements:-

- (a) **Cabinet Items** The following items were due to be considered by Cabinet on 15 December 2015:-

- **Re-design of Wiltshire Children's Centres – Report on Consultation** To outline the responses to the public consultation on proposed changes to the design and delivery of children's centres.
- **One Joined up Family Support Service for Families in Wiltshire** To propose bringing together the commissioned service for families requiring support who do not meet the threshold for social care intervention and the in-house service which currently works with families who are in receipt of statutory intervention.

The Chairman reported that because these reports were published on 7 December 2015, he did not consider this sufficient time for this Committee to make any meaningful input. However, he encouraged members of this Committee to attend the Cabinet meeting on 15 December 2015 to express their views or else send them to himself or a member of the Scrutiny Team.

- (b) **Children's Community Services Rapid Scrutiny Exercise** In October Wiltshire CCG, Wiltshire Council and NHS England confirmed the intention to award Virgin Care the contract to provide community child health services in Wiltshire for the next five years. This Committee received a report on this in July and an update in October.

As of April 2016, the services currently provided to Wiltshire's children and young people by five different organisations would transfer to Virgin Care. The services would include health visiting, children's community nursing and speech and language therapy. Children's community health services played a key role in ensuring children had the best start in life and that their health needs were met throughout childhood.

At our last meeting the Committee established a rapid scrutiny exercise to help develop the performance monitoring framework for the contract. Participating members would contribute to ensuring that these important services were delivered effectively and met the needs of children across Wiltshire. The exercise would take place in January and two meetings were anticipated.

Members interested in taking part were asked to contact Adam Brown, Senior Scrutiny Officer.

- (c) **Senior Scrutiny Officer Support** The Chairman reported that Adam Brown would provide lead officer support to this Committee. Adam was previously a Democratic Services Officer but had recently been seconded into Emma Dove's post whilst she was on maternity leave. Henry Powell would be taking on lead officer support for the Health Select Committee.

The Chairman, on behalf of the Committee, warmly thanked Henry Powell for all his work and help to the Committee over a number of years and wished him well in his new appointment.

86 **Public Participation**

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

87 **Children's Services Case Management Systems - Briefing**

The Committee received an update on developments with the Council's social care case management system, which had been requested by the Committee in April 2015.

It was explained that currently the work of Children's Services was supported by a range of management systems that were provided through five suppliers. Furthermore, some information was held outside of these systems, such as additional workflow information.

The Committee noted that contracts for existing systems were due to be reviewed and this would provide an opportunity to consider which systems would be fit for the future needs of the service. The Corporate Leadership Team had recognised this need and a proposal for review had been added to the ICT Capital Plan for further consideration and planning. As part of this review models currently used by other local authorities were being examined to see if one model might be suitable to Wiltshire's needs. Both capital and revenue costs were being investigated.

After some discussion,

Resolved:

- 1. To note that a review of the Council's existing case management system was currently being scoped and had been added to the ICT Capital Plan for further consideration and planning, with progress anticipated in March 2016.**
- 2. To request a further update on the review at the Committee's meeting on 31 May 2016.**

88 Early Help Dataset

The Committee received an updated Early Help Dataset following a review by the Early Help Task Group. Carolyn Godfrey, Corporate Director, reported that the Early Help Dataset was a relatively new quarterly dataset, this being the fifth version populated since its creation in September 2014. The dataset had evolved over the preceding 12 months following continuous review from the Early Intervention Sub Group (a joint group overseen by the Wiltshire Safeguarding Children Board and the Children's Trust) and the formal review by the Early Help Task Group.

It was pointed out that charts of the most critical early help measures had been included to show long term sustainability and these would be added to as long term data became available.

During the ensuing discussion, members welcomed the provision of charts in addition to the tables. Members expressed appreciation for the clarity of the tables and found it helpful that they were grouped together in themes. However, members did question why some sections of the early help data tables had been included but without any statistical data provided. In response, members were informed that more of these sections would be populated as further long term data became available.

Resolved:

- 1. To recognise that the revised Early Help Dataset is the mechanism for providing oversight and delivery of the Early Help Strategy and to congratulate officers on its development.**
- 2. To recognise the complexity of embedding this new dataset and note that its further development is a key deliverable for the Early Intervention Sub-Group and is monitored by the Wiltshire Safeguarding Children Board and the Children's Trust.**
- 3. To accept the revised Early Help Dataset as helping to meet the requirements defined and recommended by the Early Help Strategy Task Group.**

89 **Commissioning of Adoption Service to Adoptions West**

The Committee received a briefing note by Carolyn Godfrey, Corporate Director, on the Council's plan to commission out its adoption service to Adoptions West.

It was noted that during the Spring of 2015, the Government issued guidance that local authorities (and Voluntary Adoption Services) should work collaboratively to ensure more effective arrangements were in place to deliver adoption where it was considered to be in a child's best interest. Already underway, the Adoption West initiative was the local response to this with seven local authorities in Gloucestershire, Avon & Somerset and Wiltshire working together to produce a new operational model. A bid for funding had been submitted to the Department for Education to support this transition to a new operating model.

Some concern was expressed on the effect this change could have on the young families affected, it being noted that some children could be placed with families outside their immediate area, thus Wiltshire families could receive children from out of county. Although the number of children up for adoption in Wiltshire was not known, from a national perspective the numbers were decreasing.

After further discussion,

Resolved:

- 1. To note that Adoptions West comprises seven local authorities and is the response to Government guidance that local authorities should work collaboratively on the adoptions process.**
- 2. To note that by January 2016 various potential models for Adoptions West will have been developed and will then be considered by the Governance Group.**
- 3. To request a verbal update on the delivery of Adoptions West in January 2016, noting the potential for more detailed scrutiny input when appropriate.**

90 **DfE Changes - Update from Department for Education - October 2015 to November 2015**

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

- Childcare Bill – The cost of providing childcare analysis of responses

- Teacher misconduct: The prohibition of teachers
- Consultation on intervening in failing, underperforming and coasting schools
- Consultation on funding for school admission appeals – It was brought to the Committee’s attention that Wiltshire traditionally had not come out well in the national formula regarding the allocation of funding for schools but that Wiltshire Council had now joined the f40 Group which could well be of assistance in securing a better slice of the funding.
- Recovery of unpaid penalty notices for absence
- GCSE reform: design and technology
- Implementing the English Baccalaureate (EBacc)
- Academies update
- Teaching improvement since the 2009 to 2010 academic year
- Children’s residential care review: independent call for evidence
- Mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation; Procedural information

Resolved:

- 1. To note the update provided.**
- 2. To request that a brief explanation of the f40 Group and its membership is circulated to the Committee by email.**

91 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:

To note the update on task group activity provided.

92 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.

93 Date of Next Meeting

Resolved:

To note that the next scheduled meeting of this Committee would be held on Tuesday 26 January 2016, at County Hall, Trowbridge, starting at 10.30am.

94 Urgent Items

There were no urgent items of business.

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 am - 12.30 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Roger Bishton, of Democratic Services, direct line 01225 713035, e-mail roger.bishton@wiltshire.gov.uk

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