

## CHILDREN'S SELECT COMMITTEE

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### **DRAFT MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN'S SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 11 OCTOBER 2016 AT KENNET COMMITTEE ROOM, COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE.**

#### **Present:**

Cllr Jon Hubbard (Chairman), Cllr Jacqui Lay (Vice Chairman), Cllr Pat Aves, Cllr Mary Douglas, Cllr Sue Evans, Cllr Atiqul Hoque, Cllr Chris Hurst, Cllr Simon Jacobs, Cllr Ricky Rogers, Cllr James Sheppard, Rev Alice Kemp, Dr M Thompson, Miss Cathy Shahrokni, Wilkins, Cllr Stewart Dobson (Substitute) and Cllr Bill Moss (Substitute)

#### **Also Present:**

Cllr Laura Mayes and Cllr Richard Gamble

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#### **73 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Mary Champion (who was substituted by Cllr Stewart Dobson), Cllr Helen Osborn, Cllr Philip Whalley (who was substituted by Cllr Bill Moss), Miss Sarah Busby, Miss Tracy Cornelius and Mr John Hawkins.

#### **74 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

##### **Resolved:**

**To approve and sign the minutes of the previous meeting held on 19 July 2016.**

#### **75 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

#### **76 Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman made the following announcements:-

## **Cabinet Items**

On 11 October 2016 Cabinet considered the following item:

- Care Leavers Report – an update on the progress made in improving services for care leavers since Ofsted judged the service as requires Improvement during the inspection in June 2015.

### **77 Public Participation**

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

### **78 Troubled Families Programme**

Consideration was given to a report by Carolyn Godfrey, Corporate Director, which presented an update on the work of the Troubled Families programme.

The Committee was reminded that in December 2011 the Government announced funding for local authorities to work with partners to radically transform the lives of the country's most troubled families. Wiltshire was allocated 510 families to "turn round" before March 2015. The criteria for this phase were 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.
- Had a high cost to the public purse.

This was a payment by results (PBR) scheme and Wiltshire had achieved 100% success, making a difference to all 510 families.

The Committee was informed that Wiltshire was now into the second year of phase 2 of the programme and the following new criteria had been set:

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

It was explained that funding was provided through an Attachment Fee of £1,000 per family and Payment by Results of £800 per family where significant and sustained progress had been made or there had been a move into continuous employment.

It was reported that last year 477 families were brought into the programme and 14 families were claimed for, this being in line with other authorities in the South West. There had been changes in the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index resulting in Wiltshire receiving an allocation of an extra 100 families from 2017. This would take the total number of Wiltshire families to 1990 for the five years of the programme.

The Committee was informed that there were two main ways of identifying families as eligible for help and support through this Programme, namely:

- Via the Gateway Panel which gave access to intensive family support, and
- Families receiving effective help from children's centres, early help or social care teams.

A claim could be made for Payment by Results if a family had:

- Achieved significant and sustained progress, compared with all their problems at the point of engagement, or
- An adult in the family had moved off benefits and into continuous employment for at least 13 weeks.

It was noted that just over 100 payments by results claimed had been made in September 2016 and more claims would be made in January 2017.

The Committee was pleased to note that Wiltshire had been recognised by Central Government as having delivered the first phase of the Troubled Families Programme very successfully and that the work had been commented on favourably within the last Ofsted safeguarding inspection.

During discussion it was recognised that the challenge now was to develop a programme further through better information sharing, increased engagement with other partners such as housing and generally improved working. The focus needed to be on better outcomes and reducing the overall cost to a range of services and agencies of supporting troubled families.

It was suggested that this programme be brought to the attention of Councillors by the sharing of success stories in their divisions but without breaking confidentiality. This could be provided using data on a postcode basis and also by sharing the information at community area level.

It was requested that the data criteria submitted to a National Impact Study managed by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) be circulated to the

members of the committee. The study worked with national databases to create a rich understanding of the profile of families across the country. This was supplemented by Family Progress Data, which was collected every six months.

It was reported that the Programme had a further three years left at which point the Government would need to decide how to proceed.

**Resolved:**

**(1) To note the contents of the report.**

**(2) To request an update on the Troubled Families Programme in due course setting out the outcomes achieved in Wiltshire.**

79 **SEND Strategy**

The Chairman reported that at the meeting he attended with Wiltshire Council's Executive Member for Children's Services and officers, SEND transport assistance for schools was noted as an important and broad area for scrutiny consideration.

Scrutiny input had been welcomed to help improve the service in the light of budgetary restrictions and accordingly a report was being presented to this meeting which provided an overview of the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategy 2016 – 2019.

In receiving the report, the Head of SEND Service explained that the SEND Strategy set out the vision and key priorities for provision of services and support for children and young people aged between 0 and 25 years with special educational needs and/or disability (SEND) in Wiltshire. The Strategy set out the broad range of provision available and a clear strategic direction for the future and was approved by the Children's Trust Commissioning Executive in May 2016 and then subsequently published in June 2016.

The Strategy was developed following consultation with a wide range of professionals, parent carers, children, young people, local authority officers, health colleagues and other stakeholders and its scope included:

- Parent carer participation
- Children and young people's voice and influence
- The Local offer
- SEND service
- Short breaks
- Health services
- Early years
- Preparing for adulthood

- Autism
- SEND transport
- SEND funding.

It was pointed out that the focus of the SEND Strategy was on provision for children and young people outside of school. Information regarding in-school provision was available in Wiltshire SEN Strategy Supporting Schools 2015-18.

The Head of SEND Service informed the Committee that there had been considerable overspending on transport, especially associated with out of county placements. There had been a huge effort to reduce the number of referrals outside the county as the overall cost of these placements to the Council was considerably greater than providing the services within Wiltshire.

The Committee noted that much work was being undertaken to prepare people for adulthood and Members were pleased to be informed that more young people post 16 were attending local facilities, with particular support from colleges.

It was noted that the number of post 16 high needs learners had increased by 51% over the last three years to 373 in 2015-16, this being due to a number of factors including the raised participation age, a better understanding of high needs and more accurate record keeping by local colleges. Furthermore, the Government had been suggesting that young people with high needs would be supported in education until the age of 25. However, it was pointed out that, despite the rise in numbers, the total amount spent on post 16 high needs provision had decreased by 30% (from £6,199,988.58 in 2013-14 to £4,356,809.94 in 2015-6).

Members expressed concern at this Government proposal, bearing in mind that at present young people with high needs were supported up to the age of 19. However, there was clearly a need for this age to be extended to 25 years but the problem arose as to how the additional finance would be met. Members requested the Officers to bear this in mind and report back when further information was forthcoming from the Government.

The Committee was pleased to note that Officers from Adult and Children's Services were working together on developments to housing and housing related support for young people with SEND aged 16 to 25. Since May 2016 a Housing Support Commissioning Group had been formed and was currently gathering information and analysing housing support across a number of service areas. Following further analysis this would lead to consultation in 2017 and recommendations for housing support solutions for adults and young people.

Members emphasised the importance of apprenticeships and considered that more work should be undertaken to promote this form of help for young people in their search for employment. The Head of SEND Service advised the meeting that there was a need for further work to be undertaken in recruiting more

employers to employ apprentices. However, it was pointed out that not all apprenticeships led to full time employment. Members appreciated the support that Wiltshire Council was giving by establishing apprenticeships and considered that the Council should act as a trail blazer and do all it could to promote the scheme.

The Committee noted that the SEND transport budget was short by £6 million and it was suggested that the Officers gain information from other local authorities as to how they provided this service. Attention was drawn to a national study which was being carried out in which all councils were being asked to participate and provide statistical data.

After further discussion,

**Resolved:**

- (1) To note the contents of the report.**
- (2) To hold a rapid scrutiny exercise on the provision of SEND transport when the results of the national study were available.**

**80 Executive Response to the Final Report of the Positive Leisure Time Activities for Young People Task Group – 12 month review**

Consideration was given to a report setting out the response of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Communities, Area Boards & Broadband and the Cabinet Member for Children's Services to the report of the Positive Leisure Time Activities for Young People Task Group which had been presented to this Committee at its meeting on 19 July 2016. It was noted that the Youth Service had been moved from Children's Services to Community Services.

During discussion, Members requested information about the number of Locality Youth Facilitators (LYF) currently in post and it was reported that at present there were seven community areas that did not have access to a LYF. However, Cabinet was about to take a look at this provision as part of an overall financial review and possibly pass more responsibility to Area Boards.

Members considered that it would be useful to ascertain how many young people were participating in this service and how this compared with that previously provided. It was reported that a new series of Joint Strategic Assessment (JSA) meetings were about to take place within the community areas and young people were being encouraged to attend these meetings and put forward their views on how the youth service might develop.

Cllr Ricky Rogers informed the meeting that in his experience the new arrangements in Salisbury were working well and in fact seemed to be an improvement on the previous youth service arrangements. It was considered

that any good practice should be shared with other community areas in Wiltshire and in particular by publishing details on Wiltshire Our Community Matters websites.

The Chairman said that it was of paramount importance that young people felt that they were wanted and had a safe environment in which to talk about their problems.

**Resolved:**

**To note the Executive Response provided to the recommendations of the Final Report of the Positive Leisure Time Activities for Young People Task Group.**

**81 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 2016 as follows:-

- Early Years Funding Consultation
- Summary of Government Consultation Document *Schools That Work For Everyone*.
- Identifying children missing from education
- Statement on schools funding
- Academies update
- Consultation on reporting suspected abuse and neglect
- Knowledge and Skills Statement for Achieving Permanence
- Care Leaver Strategy
- DfE research report *Independent evidence review of post-adoption support interventions*
- Future of social care inspection consultation

**Resolved:**

**To note the update provided.**

**82 Task Group Updates**

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

- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Task Group
- SEND Task Group
- School Improvement Strategy Task Group

**Resolved:**

**To note the update on task group activity provided.**

**83 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.**

**84 Date of Next Meeting**

**Resolved:**

**To note that the next scheduled meeting of this Committee was scheduled to be held on Tuesday 6 December 2016 at County Hall, Trowbridge, starting at 10.30am.**

**85 Urgent Items**

There were no items of urgent business.

(Duration of meeting: 2.45 - 4.35 pm)

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