

CHILDREN'S SELECT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN'S SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 6 FEBRUARY 2018 AT THE KENNET ROOM - COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE BA14 8JN.

Present:

Cllr Mary Champion, Cllr Anna Cuthbert, Cllr Christopher Devine, Cllr Mary Douglas, Cllr Sue Evans, Cllr David Halik, Cllr Deborah Halik, Cllr Jon Hubbard (Chairman), Cllr Chris Hurst, Cllr Jacqui Lay (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Hayley Spencer, Cllr Roy White, Dr M Thompson, John Hawkins and Cllr James Sheppard (Substitute)

Also Present:

Cllr Trevor Carbin, Cllr Pauline Church, Cllr Jane Davies, Cllr Laura Mayes and Cllr Philip Whalley

1 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from:-

Cllr Andrew Davis, who was substituted by Cllr James Sheppard
Miss Sarah Busby
Miss Tracy Cornelius

2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Resolved:

To confirm and sign the minutes of the previous meeting held on 19 December 2017.

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

4 Chairman's Announcements

(a) Cabinet Items

On 30 January 2018 Cabinet considered the following items:-

- School Admissions Policies 2019/20
Lead Officer: Debbie Clare
- School Capital Programme 2018-2021 Report
Lead Officer: Clare Medland – The Chairman informed the meeting that Ms Medland would shortly be leaving the employment of the Council to take up a position with Gloucestershire County Council. The Chairman and Members requested that their best wishes be conveyed to Ms Medland, together with their thanks for the considerable contributions that she had made particularly regarding school places.
- Wiltshire Council Adoption Service: 2017 Q1-2 6 Month Report
Lead Officer: Matthew Turner

On 27 March 2018 Cabinet would be considering the following items:-

- Outdoor Education (Part 11 Report)
Lead Officer: Alan Stubbersfield
- Special School Provision in Wiltshire
Lead Officer: Susan Tanner

(b) Budget Scrutiny Timetable

- Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee – Monday 5 February
- Cabinet budget meeting – Tuesday 6 February (am)
- Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee to consider the opposition budget Friday 9 February
- Council to consider and decide the budget – Tuesday 20 February

5 Public Participation

No questions had been received from councillors or members of the public.

6 Pupil Performance in Public Tests and Examinations

Consideration was given to a report on pupil performance in public tests and examinations. The report provided an overview of pupil performance at the end

of each key stage using the latest available data. It compared attainment in Wiltshire with national, south west and statistical neighbour performance and where possible performance trends were identified.

It was noted that at the end of the academic year 2016/17 the majority of pupils in Wiltshire were educated in high quality provision with 88% of pupils in good or outstanding schools.

There had been improvements and continuity of high outcomes for pupils on a number of indicators. Rapid and sustained improvement in phonics had now resulted in Wiltshire being in line with comparators. Results in Key Stage 4 continued to be high as were those for A level results in Key Stage 5.

However, there were some specific areas where improvements were required and these had become strategic priorities. Outcomes in primary schools at Key Stages 1 and 2 had not kept pace with improvements elsewhere and Wiltshire was now below the national average. In particular, Maths at Key Stages 1 and 2 continued to be a priority.

The outcomes for vulnerable groups and especially for Disadvantaged Pupils (pupils eligible for additional funding through the pupil premium), continued to be a priority as outcomes in Wiltshire still needed to be improved to match national figures and those of other pupils in the County at all Key stages.

Cllr Laura Mayes drew attention to the action plan at the end of the report. It was noticed that there were plans to raise the overall standards and ensuring that school standards did not decline any further. This would be achieved by:-

- Monitoring school outcomes through the LASER process and the new annual performance assessments to identify and intervene early with underperforming schools.
- Liaising with the Regional Schools Commissioner to challenge underperforming schools.
- Increase the number of outstanding schools with a focus on developing leadership and high-quality teaching to improve outcomes particularly in Key Stages 1 and 2 through liaising with teaching Schools Outstanding Teaching programmes.
- Implement processes designed by the Education Transformation Board to support self-improving, self-sustaining schools in Wiltshire.

There were also plans to raise the achievements for Disadvantaged Learners particularly in Primary Maths.

During discussion, Members expressed the view that further detailed work needed to be undertaken to identify reasons for the sub national standards in

Maths in Key Stages 1 and 2, although it was appreciated that work was already being carried out regarding this. It was also noted that Wiltshire was the fourth lowest funded local authority for children's services.

Cllr Mayes noted that it would be useful to arrange a meeting with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee to discuss the future monitoring of school performance in Wiltshire.

Resolved:

- (1) To note the contents of the report.**
- (2) To congratulate all learners in Wiltshire on the progress being made, recognising the efforts put in by children, and to thank teachers and officers for their continuing dedicated hard work.**

7 Home Schooled Children

The Committee received a report by the Director, Family and Children's Services in response to a query regarding arrangements for monitoring Elected Home Educated Children.

It was explained that Wiltshire Council had specific responsibilities under the Children Act 2004 and the Education Act 2002 to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children that were educated at home. This responsibility was exercised on behalf of the Council by the Support and Safeguarding Service. It was pointed out that these powers did not bestow on local authorities the ability to see and question children subject to elected home education and establish whether they were receiving a suitable education. Powers were restricted to acting in the best interests of the child where there was a concern that the child was suffering from significant harm. This was noted as the test for all such interventions whether the child was electively home educated or otherwise.

During discussion, Members questioned why parents elected to home educate their children; it was pointed out that there were a number of reasons why parents came to this decision in particular the inability to obtain a place at the school of their choice. In a few cases the decision to home educate was to avoid prosecution for unauthorised absences.

It was generally agreed that the current system was not satisfactory, the local authority in many cases being totally unaware of the existence of home educated children. In order that a local authority could monitor the education, physical and emotional wellbeing of children, ideally there should be a requirement for parents to register their children with the local authority so that annual interviews could take place and the children's work monitored.

Members recognised that in the majority of cases parents chose home education for their children for the best of reasons and these children were generally performing well but the challenge lay in those few cases where this was not the case.

After further discussion,

Resolved:

- (1) To acknowledge the arrangements for monitoring elective home educated children in Wiltshire.**
- (2) To request the Chairman to discuss with the Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Skills exactly what concerns should be addressed with the possibility of establishing a Home Education Task Group and to bring back suggestions to the next meeting of this Committee in April for consideration.**

8 Population Growth

The Committee received a report by the Head of Children's Commissioning and Joint Planning which provided an overview of the population growth data sets, which were and would continue to inform commissioning decisions in future years, with a particular example of how this was being used in the Special Schools Provision Project.

It was noted that there were three main contributing factors to the projected number of children who would be living in Wiltshire over the coming nine years, these being:-

- The birth rate
- The housing development plans for Wiltshire
- The military redeployment into Wiltshire.

Resolved:

To note the report.

9 Nursery Places – 30hours Free Entitlement for Working Parents

The Committee received an update report by the Head of Children's Commissioning and Joint Planning on the impact of the increased childcare entitlement from September 2017, as requested in January 2017.

It was noted that the work being carried out was to meet the requirement to make available sufficient childcare in Wiltshire, so far as was reasonably

practicable, for working parents, or parents who were studying or training for employment, for children aged 0-14 (or up to 18 for disabled children).

The information and data collected formed an important role in the success of funding applications to the Department for Education to support sufficiency and the sector. Members were pleased to note that in the last year Wiltshire was successful in securing additional Early Years capital funding of £1.4 million to support areas in Wiltshire in most need of additional Early Years provision. Further funding had been accessed to provide Early Years provision via the Section 106 agreement funding from housing developers. The funding received had contributed to sufficient capacity for Early Years places for children to access both 15 and 30 hours Free Entitlement in most areas of the County.

Resolved:

To note the contents of the report and to thank the officers for the information provided.

10 Final Report of the Children in Care Leavers Rapid Scrutiny Exercise

At the suggestion of the Chairman, and with the agreement of Cllr Christopher Devine as Chairman of the Rapid Scrutiny Exercise,

Resolved:

To defer consideration of the report from the Children in Care Leavers Rapid Scrutiny Exercise until the next meeting in order that some outstanding work could be completed.

11 DfE Changes - Update from Department for Education -

The Committee received an update from Terence Herbert, Corporate Director, on developments relating to children's services arising from the Department for Education from December 2017 to January 2018 as follows:-

- Ministerial reshuffle
- Improving social mobility through education
- Schools causing concern
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges
- Searching, screening and confiscation: guidance for schools
- Careers guidance and access for education and training providers
- Keeping children safe in education: proposed revisions
- Academies update
- Government response to the National Assessment and Accreditation System consultation (NAAS)
- SEND single route to redress national trial – regulations

- Transforming children and young people's mental health provision: a green paper
- Evaluation of the Troubled Families programme: emerging findings
- Update to joint targeted area inspections and arrangements for 2018

Resolved:

To note the update provided.

12 **Task Group Updates**

The Committee received updates on the activities of the following Task Groups/Boards:-

- SEND School Provision Task Group
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS) Task Group
- Education Transformation Board

Resolved:

(1) To note the updates on task group activity provided.

(2) To endorse that Cllr Clare Cape remains on the Children and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS) Task Group and that, during meetings where Oxford Health are in attendance as either a witness or to provide evidence, Cllr Cape acts as an 'observer' and does not participate in discussion towards any recommendations of this Task Group, due to a possible conflict of interest as she currently undertakes some work with Oxford Health as part of her employment.

13 **Forward Work Programme**

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

Cllr Christopher Devine suggested that the officers prepare a short resume of the work currently being undertaken by this Committee.

Resolved:

To note the Forward Work Programme for this Committee.

14 **Date of Next Meeting**

Resolved:

To note that the next scheduled meeting of this Committee was due to be held on Tuesday 17 April 2018 at County Hall, Trowbridge, starting at 10.30am.

15 Urgent Items

There were no urgent items of business.

(Duration of meeting: 2.30 - 4.40 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

Press enquiries to Communications, direct line (01225) 713114/713115

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