

CHILDREN'S SELECT COMMITTEE

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN'S SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 1 OCTOBER 2013 AT COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNCIL OFFICES, MONKTON PARK, CHIPPENHAM, SN15 1ER.

Present:

Cllr Pat Aves, Ken, Cllr Mary Champion, Cllr Christine Crisp (Substitute), Cllr Andrew Davis (Substitute), Cllr Sue Evans, Mr J Hawkins, Cllr Jon Hubbard (Chairman), Cllr Chris Hurst, Cllr Simon Jacobs, KaylumHouse, Rev. A Kemp, Cllr Jacqui Lay (Vice Chairman), Cllr Helen Osborn, Cllr Sheila Parker, Dr M Thompson and Cllr Philip Whalley

Also Present:

Cllr Richard Gamble and Cllr Laura Mayes

93 **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Miss Sarah Busby and Cllr Alan MacRae.

94 **Minutes of the Previous Meetings**

Resolved:

To confirm and sign the minutes of the previous meetings held on 6 June and 5 July 2013, subject to the following amendment to Minute No 77 of the meeting held on 6 June 2013:-

Min. No. 77 – Minutes of the Previous Meeting – Matters arising – Teacher Representatives on the Committee First sentence to read:-

The *Chairman* referred to discussions that had taken place at the previous meeting concerning the availability of representatives of Primary School and Secondary School Headteachers to attend meetings of this Select Committee and enquired as to how this matter was being progressed.

95 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of disposable interest or dispensations granted by the Standards Committee.

96 **Chairman's Announcements**

Secondary Parent Governor Representative

The Chairman reminded the Select Committee that in April 2013 the Council had appointed two parent governor representatives to this Committee, namely Revd. Alice Kemp as SEN schools representative and Ken Brough as primary schools representative. Unfortunately no nominations had been received for the secondary school representative and officers had restarted the process to fill this position; they were seeking interested parent governors from maintained secondary schools who would like to play a role in the work of both this Committee and that of the Schools Forum, the deadline for nominations being Friday 4 October.

Teacher Representatives

The Chairman was very pleased to announce that Miss Sarah Busby, Headteacher of St Edmund's School, Salisbury had been nominated to represent secondary headteachers on this Select Committee.

Officers were still investigating the appointment of a primary headteacher representative and were consulting the Primary Heads Forum.

97 **Public Participation**

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

98 **Developing the Forward Work Programme**

Consideration was given to a report by the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman which set out outcomes of the meeting with the relevant Executive members and directors held on 15 August 2013. The purpose of that meeting was to discuss the Council's priorities for children's services and the potential future work priorities of this Committee.

The report proposed some key work priorities for this Committee for discussion, prior to referral to the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee for endorsement. It also suggested some new ways of working with regard to Committee meetings to help achieve better productivity and add most value to the decision making process.

The Committee considered the proposed key work priorities for this Committee and commented as follows:-

- Safeguarding Children and Young People – a Safeguarding & Young People Task Group was already established.

- Family Placements – this also came under the terms of reference of the Safeguarding & Young People Task Group.
- Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities (LLDD)
 - SEN in mainstream schools
 - DCA Pathfinder (joined up services for life)
 A task group should be established following a scoping exercise and a report be made back to this Committee at its next meeting.
- Further education in Wiltshire - quality, range and equity of access
A task group should be established following a scoping exercise and a report be made back to this Committee at its next meeting.
- Engaging young people in local decision-making and developing the leaders of the future – Considered to be a priority but further discussion was required with the Executive and appropriate directors before any further action was taken.
- Early intervention – A report would be made to the next meeting of this Committee to help scope O & S activity.

In generally supporting the proposed work priorities, the Committee stressed that a key factor in determining priorities should be where work undertaken could add particularly value to children's services.

After further discussion,

Resolved:

- (1) **To approve the topics proposed within the report as work priorities for the Committee and refer them to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee for endorsement, except provision for gifted and talented pupils, to be considered under a later item.**
- (2) **To support further discussions between the Chairman and Vice-Chairman with Cabinet members, portfolio-holders and service directors to scope the agreed work priorities further, with an update coming to the Committee's next meeting.**
- (3) **To approve the programme of pre-meeting information briefings to enhance the Committee's ability to undertake effective overview and scrutiny. Where possible, these should be aligned to items on the agenda.**

- (4) To approve the proposed approach of making greater use of task groups, rapid scrutiny exercises and fact-finding meetings for looking at topics in detail before reporting back to the Committee.
- (5) To approve the proposed approach of limiting Committee agendas to a few key items whenever possible, in order to allow greater time and therefore add more value to each topic considered.
- (6) To ask Cllr Whalley and other interested members to undertake a scoping exercise to investigate where the Committee can add value to the academies programme and report back to the Committee.
- (7) To delegate authority to the Chairman to seek membership for a task group looking at issues affecting children with SEN/LLDD, and to scope where this exercise could add value. A report back to the Committee with proposed terms of reference.
- (8) To establish a rapid scrutiny exercise to look at the quality and equality of access to further education in Wiltshire, with a report back to Committee with outcomes and proposals of where further work is required.
- (9) To request a briefing at the next meeting on Early Intervention.

99 **Executive Response to the Final Report of the Special Schools and Post-16 SEN Task Group - Part 2**

The Select Committee received a report which set out the response of the Lead Member for Children's Services to the Final Report of the Special Schools & Post-16 SEN Task Group – part 2 which was endorsed by the Committee at its meeting on 6 June 2013 and referred to the executive for response.

The Chairman reminded the Committee that the Task Group, chaired by Cllr Graham Payne, had brought an initial final report to this Committee in July 2012 and the executive response was then received in September 2012. The Committee then asked the Task Group to undertake further work and subsequently a second final report containing six recommendations was brought back to this Committee in June 2013.

After discussion,

Resolved:

- (1) To note the executives response to the Final Report of the Special Schools and Post-16 SEN Task Group – part 2.

- (2) **To request the new task group looking at issues affecting children with SEN/LLDD to note the findings of the Special Schools and Post-16 SEN Task Group.**

100 **Review of Short Break Provision for Children and Young People with SEN/LLDD**

The Committee considered a report which summarised the joint review between the Council and NHS Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group on overnight short breaks for disabled children and young people in Wiltshire.

The report proposed a change to the service model, including the closure of the NHS-run Hillcote residential facility and to re-invest the money in more family-based care and support services for the families of disabled children.

It was noted that the final decision on the potential closure would be taken at the NHS Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group Governing Body meeting in November 2013 following a three month consultation period.

Resolved:

To establish a rapid scrutiny exercise to consider proposals for reviewing the provision of overnight short breaks for children with SEN/LLDD, with authority delegated to the Chairman for seeking membership and for making arrangements to link this exercise with the public meeting currently being arranged.

101 **Support for Gifted and Talented Pupils**

Consideration was given to a report by Carolyn Godfrey, Corporate Director which provided an information briefing in relation to gifted and talented learners. It also set out an overview of the duties, nature and range of provision for gifted and talented learners in Wiltshire.

During discussion it was noted that currently there was no statutory requirement for local authorities to track or offer support specifically for gifted and talented learners. However, schools did continue to identify, track and support such children and young people to ensure that they secured their progression and enabled them to fulfil their potential.

It was suggested that schools be encouraged to make arrangements for the business community to be made aware of these gifted and talented students.

Resolved:

To welcome the report and note its contents.

102 Update on the Provision of Education for Excluded Pupils

The Committee received a report by Carolyn Godfrey, Corporate Director which provided an update on Wiltshire's participation in the three year National Secondary Exclusion Trial (SET) and the development of provision for those pupils permanently excluded or at risk of permanent exclusion since the closure of the Young Peoples' Support Service (YPSS).

It was noted that YPSS completely closed in Wiltshire at the end of August 2013 following which the funding was devolved to schools.

The Committee was informed that the SET was due to finish in July 2014. The original intention of the trial was for the DfE to consider proposing primary legislation to delegate responsibility for permanently excluded pupils from LAs to schools. The DfE had commissioned an independent evaluation of the trial and the final report was due to be published in Spring 2015, this meaning that primary legislation was unlikely to occur before 2016/17.

In these circumstances, Wiltshire secondary schools were planning for further interim arrangements beyond the end of the trial in 2014 and pending any legislation on 2016/17. The LA had indicated that there was no intention to revert to the previous arrangements of providing support for permanently excluded children centrally and had given an undertaking to work with the Wiltshire Association of Secondary & Special School Headteachers (WASSH) to continue the present arrangements by means of a Service Level Agreement.

Resolved:

- (1) To note the update report.**
- (2) To approve the arrangements proposed for continuing the model of devolving funding to secondary schools beyond the end of the exclusion trial in 2014, working with WASSH to revise the SLA.**
- (3) To request a further update report in 12 months' time.**

103 Task Group update

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

- Safeguarding Children and Young People Task Group
- Further Education in the Salisbury Area Task Group

Resolved:

To note the update on Task Group activity provided.

104 Coalition Changes - Update from Department for Education

The Committee received and noted a report by Carolyn Godfrey, Corporate Director, on developments relating to children's services arising from the Coalition Government.

Resolved:

To note the update provided.

105 Urgent Items

The Chairman informed the meeting that this was the last meeting to be attended by Mrs Stephanie Denovan, Service Director – Schools and Learning as she would be leaving the employment of the Council on 18 October 2013. He paid special tribute to the work she had undertaken for children and young people during her career as a teacher, headteacher and as an education officer culminating in her appointment as Service Director.

These sentiments were warmly endorsed by Mr John Hawkins and other members of the Committee who wished her every success in her future endeavours.

106 Date of Next Meeting

Resolved:

To note that the next meeting of the Select Committee would be held on Tuesday 3 December 2013 at the Council's Offices at Monkton Park, Chippenham, starting at 10.30am but preceded by a pre-meeting information briefing at 9.30am.

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 am - 1.00 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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