

CHILDREN'S SELECT COMMITTEE

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN'S SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 14 APRIL 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 Mary Champion, Cllr Bill Moss, Cllr Helen Osborn, Cllr Ricky Rogers, Cllr Philip Whalley, Mr Ken Brough and Miss Sarah Busby and Ms Cathy Shahrokni.

Also Present:

Cllr John Walsh, Cllr Alan MacRae, Cllr Laura Mayes and Cllr Richard Gamble

14 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Christine Crisp, Miss Tracy Cornelius and Ms Amanda Burnside who was substituted by Ms Cathy Shahrokni.

15 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Resolved:

To confirm and sign the minutes of the previous meeting held on 27 January 2015.

Arising therefrom:

Min. No. 7 – Final Report of the Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) Task Group It was noted that the film being made by Devizes Area Board to highlight the challenges and opportunities for SEND young people in the Devizes Area trying to find employment was not likely to be completed until late June. This film would then be shown to members immediately before the next available meeting of this Committee.

16 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

17 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman made the following announcement:-

Recording and Broadcasting Members were reminded that it was intended hopefully quite soon to begin broadcasting this and other meetings of the Council on the internet. To prepare for this, and in accordance with the Leader's comment at Full Council on 24 February 2015, it was intended to record, but not broadcast, this meeting and other meetings moving forward for training purposes. He, therefore, drew everyone's attention to the recording and broadcasting notice on the front of the agenda, which had also been posted on the entrances to this room.

18 **Public Participation**

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

19 **Executive Response to the Final Report of the Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) Task Group**

The Committee received the response of Cllr Laura Mayes, Cabinet Member for Children's Services to the final report of the SEND Task Group, which had been endorsed by this Committee at its meeting on 27 January 2015 and referred to the Cabinet Member for response.

Cllr Laura Mayes thanked the Task Group for the valuable work it had carried out and which had been broadened out into other areas with plenty of work still to be undertaken.

Neil Baker, Chairman of the Schools Forum, attended the meeting and explained that the Schools Forum was responsible for managing the Dedicated Schools Grant. He informed the meeting that there was currently a £1.4M shortfall in high needs funding for 2015-16 and hard decisions were having to be made to remedy this shortfall. He stated that the Education Funding Agency had passed responsibility for funding post 16 students to local authorities and although Wiltshire required funding for an additional 200 places, funding had been received for only 117 additional places. Much work was being carried out with Wiltshire College regarding the needs of post 16 year olds.

During discussion, the following points were made regarding the Cabinet Member's response to the Task Group's recommendations:-

Recommendation 2 – Provides a report showing the evidence base behind the Council's increasing use of placements at local mainstream colleges

rather than Independent Specialist Providers for young people with SEND. This should include data on cost, learner outcomes and destinations.

Response: I support this recommendation and will ensure that officers provide the report as requested, at the Committee's 12 month review.

The Committee requested that a report be presented to the Committee in six months time and this was agreed.

Recommendation 5 - Reassures the committee that clear information, advice and guidance on the post-16 SEND placement process, the decision making criteria, and the options for appealing decisions where necessary are readily available to all young people with SEND and parent carers;

Response: Officers are currently working on this, policies and principles have been drafted and circulated for internal approval. There is to be a meeting next week to obtain final agreement. Once this is in place the information will be made available to all families and young people through the Local Offer.

The Committee requested an update at the next meeting on 2 June 2015.

Recommendation 9 - Works with other Cabinet Members to ensure that the council's procurement framework gives weighting, where appropriate, to organisations that offer employment opportunities for young people with SEND, such as through participating in the council's Supported Internships scheme;

Response: There is a Corporate Procurement Board that now meets and it will need to consider this issue in relation to its duties. I will ask that the Cabinet Member, responsible for this area of work, Cllr Tonge, discusses at the next appropriate Board meeting.

The Committee requested an update at the next meeting on 2 June 2015 following a meeting to ascertain more specific information the following week.

Recommendation 11 – Working with the Cabinet Member for Housing, provides further details of plans in place to develop independent housing with shared communal space that is suitable for young people with SEND, including details of any mapping work undertaken and projected numbers and timescales;

Response: I will take this matter forward with the Cabinet Member for Housing.

The Committee requested an update at the next meeting on 2 June 2015 following a meeting to ascertain more specific information the following week.

Recommendation 14 – Working with the Cabinet Member for Housing, makes the ‘easy read’ Homes4Wiltshire application form available on the Homes4Wiltshire and Wiltshire Local Offer websites;

Response: I will ensure that appropriate information is made available on the Local Offer website, following the work described in Recommendation 2 above, and I will discuss with the Cabinet Member for Housing the recommendation relating to Homes4Wiltshire website.

The Committee agreed to invite Cllr Jonathon Seed, Cabinet Member for Housing to its next meeting on 2 June 2015 to discuss the long term strategy for housing issues.

Recommendation 15 - 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.**

Response: I am aware that this matter is being addressed through close working by both child and adult services and will ensure that the Head of Service SEND, working together with the Head of Service in Adults Services, provides a report on this matter by September of this year.

The Committee requested an update report at its meeting on 13 October 2015.

Recommendation 17 – Working with the Cabinet Member for Campuses, Area Boards, Libraries, Leisure and Flooding, provides information showing to what extent community campuses are being used by people with SEND;

Response: I will raise this matter with the Cabinet Member responsible and explore how this information could be made available.

The Committee requested an update at the next meeting on 2 June 2015 as the Cabinet Member had now changed to Cllr John Thomson.

After further discussion,

Resolved:

1. **To note the Executive response and welcome the actions taken to date.**

2. **To receive updates at the June and September meetings of this Committee.**

20 **Executive Response to the Final Report of the Schools and the Local Authority Task Group**

The Committee received the response of Cllr Laura Mayes, Cabinet Member for Children's Services to the final report of Schools and Local Authority Task Group, which had been endorsed by this Committee at its meeting on 27 January 2015 and referred to the Cabinet Member for response.

Cllr Laura Mayes thanked the Task Group for the valuable work it had carried out, noting that it had been given a wide remit.

Cllr Philip Whalley, as Chairman of the Task Group, stated that he was very pleased that three-quarters of the Task Group's recommendations had been supported by the Executive. He was particularly pleased that the various recommendations regarding a more proactive and business-like approach to the provision of local authority services to schools were to be implemented because it had become clear to members of the Task Group that the market for the provision of these services was becoming more complex and competitive and there was a need to rise to this challenge or there would be a real prospect that some, and perhaps eventually all of Wiltshire's traded services would no longer be viable. The provision and take-up of good Wiltshire services was a vital ingredient that helped to bind Wiltshire schools together regardless of their designation.

It was noted that in response to recommendation 5 the Executive had identified the need for a new post to lead on this work and Cllr Whalley requested that this Committee be kept informed of the progress towards this appointment. Furthermore, it had also been proposed to set up a Traded Services Stakeholder Group to monitor the provision of school services. Members requested that this Committee be kept informed of the composition of this Group and receive its minutes.

It was noted that regarding recommendation 1, the Executive had agreed that there should be an annual report to this Committee with a focus on how the Council had fulfilled its statutory duties to schools and ensured that all children received a good education. The first report should include the issues raised in the Task Group's report. The proposed annual report might not necessarily be a single document and could be a collection of reports provided across the year. The Committee considered that the report should include a review of service provision and take-up.

Cllr Whalley stated that members of the Task Group were disappointed that the Executive did not support the appointment of an officer at associate director

level who had overall responsibility for the Council's relationship with schools and all the services it provided for them. Cllr Laura Mayes explained that the Associate Director for Commissioning, Performance and School Effectiveness had overall responsibility for the Council's relationship with schools which focused on improving educational attainment and progress for all children and young people. However, this Associate Director was not responsible for all services provided to schools, such as payroll and the HR Advisory Service. She stated that the Executive did not accept that all services provided could be the responsibility of one Associate Director. The Committee was disappointed with this view and considered that this matter should be referred to the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee for further consideration to be given to this post holistically.

After further discussion,

Resolved:

- 1. To receive the Cabinet Member's responses.**
- 2. To request an update at the September meeting on progress with regard to the potential appointment of the marketing post and also take up of trading services.**
- 3. To refer the issue of the marketing post to the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee for consideration of this post being given holistically.**
- 4. To request details of the composition of the Traded Services Stakeholder Group with copies of the minutes of these meetings and to request a holistic report on the take up by schools of traded services.**

21 School Improvement Strategy and Vulnerable Learners Strategy

Consideration was given to a report by Carolyn Godfrey, Corporate Director concerning the School Improvement Strategy and the Strategy for the Support of Vulnerable Learners in which was set out Wiltshire's approach to improving the educational attainment of children and young people. It was noted that following discussions with the Executive, the Committee had agreed in October 2014 that school improvement should be one of its work priorities.

During discussion some concern was expressed that the outcomes for our most vulnerable pupils, particularly those in receipt of Pupil Premium funding, had been poor compared with the national average and it was recognised that improving the attainment of vulnerable children and young people was a key priority for the Council. It was noted that meetings had been held with Sir David Carter, the Regional Schools Commissioner, at which these concerns were

discussed and, although the Council had no remit to intervene in the running of academies, contact was made with these schools on a fairly regular basis. Meetings were also held with other local education authorities in the South West two or three times each year when these issues were discussed. It was suggested that a meeting take place with representatives from another local authority similar to Wiltshire but with a better attainment in this area to explore ways of possibly improving outcomes.

It was recognised that these two strategies were key in the continued drive to provide a high quality of education for all children in Wiltshire and to improve the attainment of disadvantaged children and young people.

Resolved:

To establish a task group to consider the effectiveness of the School Improvement Strategy in its first year, including a comparison with approaches in other local authority areas.

22 Pupil Performance Data

The Committee considered a report by Carolyn Godfrey, Corporate Director, which provided an overview of pupil performance in tests and examinations in 2014. The report set out results at the end of each key stage and compared attainment in Wiltshire with the attainment of statistical neighbour authorities, south west authorities and the national picture. Where available, the report provided a comparison of Wiltshire's performance against other authorities using the LA quartile position - 'A' being the top quarter and 'D' being the lowest quarter of Local Authorities in England. The report also gave an overview of recent school improvement work and set out the priorities for the next year.

It was noted that Wiltshire had a high percentage of schools that were good or outstanding. Performance of pupils was generally in line with national figures, although the attainment of most groups of vulnerable children was below national and local comparators.

During discussion Members enquired if there was any difference in attainment between different types of school. It was noted that it was not possible to obtain such information but it was apparent that most sponsored academies were improving and the general trends were positive.

Resolved:

To note the contents of the report and to request an update at the next meeting to include trend details over a three year period, additional data on Key Stage 5 results for other qualifications and the raw data as provided to the Corporate Parenting Panel.

23 Update on provision for excluded Secondary pupils following the National Secondary Exclusion Trial (SET)

Consideration was given to a report by Carolyn Godfrey, Corporate Director.

It was noted that the Committee had last received a report on educational provision for excluded pupils in December 2014 when it had been agreed to receive a further report in March/April 2015 providing updated data relating to provision and further detail on the Council's arrangements for monitoring this provision.

2014/2015 was the first cohort accessing fulltime Alternative Provision as part of the Service Level Agreement set up between Wiltshire Council and the 29 secondary schools within the County.

It was explained that the report provided an overview of the way in which the devolved responsibility was addressed in each area; how the delivery compared with OFSTED expectations; the complex needs of the students accessing fulltime provision and how they were met; links between LA officers, schools and providers and evaluation of provision.

Resolved:

To note the contents of the updated report.

24 Actions to Recruit and Retain Social Workers - Update Report

The Committee noted that the Cabinet would be considering a report on the actions to recruit and retain social workers at its meeting due to be held on 21 April 2015 and a copy of this report had been circulated to this Committee for information.

It was noted that a recruitment campaign had been taking place since August 2014 and this had delivered improvements despite the pressures nationally on the availability of experienced social workers for vacant roles. The progress of the campaign had shown particular success in the recruitment of social work managers and to newly qualified social work posts. Of the 127 vacancies across both services, a total of 74 appointments had been made, which represented 58% of the vacancies to be filled and also took account of the increase in establishment in social worker roles in operational children's services agreed in November 2014, and turnover in both services since the start of the campaign.

The recruitment campaign had achieved positive results in both service areas and there were still candidates waiting to be interviewed so it was anticipated that further appointments from these interviews would be confirmed shortly.

Resolved:

To note the contents of the report.

25 Update Report of the Early Help Strategy Task Group

The Committee received an update report from the Early Help Strategy Task Group which advised:

- whether it considered the current Early Help dataset a suitable mechanism for monitoring the delivery of the Early Help Strategy,
- whether it met the Task Group's initial recommendations, and
- how it could monitor the implementation of the Early Help Strategy going forward.

The Chairman drew the Committee's attention to three options which were being put forward as a means of monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of the Early Help Strategy, which were as follows:

- a. A new Task Group is established to take on the monitoring for an agreed period;
- b. In 12 months the current Task Group is reconvened to reassess the data set;
- c. Reports are presented to the Committee at 6 monthly intervals with the ability to refer issues that require more in depth analysis to a task group or rapid scrutiny as appropriate.

After some discussion,

Resolved:

- (1) To endorse the recommendations from across the three meetings of the Task Group as set out in the report and refer them to the Cabinet Member for a response.**
- (2) To request that update reports are presented to this Committee at six month intervals with the ability to refer issues that required more in depth analysis to a task group or rapid scrutiny as appropriate.**

26 Task Group Update

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

- **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Task Group** – Cllr Jacqui Lay gave a verbal update and presented the Task Group's proposed terms of reference. She pointed out that one further Member for the Task Group was required.

She explained that a hard-hitting play called *Chelsea' Choice*, which portrayed the danger of CSE, had recently been performed at County Hall and was now touring many local schools. There were still five primary schools which had not signed up and it was noted that the appropriate local Members would be asked by Carolyn Godfrey, Corporate Director to pursue this and encourage the remaining schools to participate.

- **Children's Centres Task Group** – Cllr Mary Douglas provided a verbal update and presented proposed terms of reference for the Task Group.
- **Obesity and Child Poverty Task Group (joint with health Select Committee)**
- At its meeting on 27 January 2015, this Select Committee had agreed to form this joint Task Group with the Health Select Committee. Non-executive Members had now been invited to express their interest in participating.
- **Safeguarding Children and Young People Task Group** The proposed terms of reference of the Task Group were presented.

Resolved:

1. **To note the update on task group activity provided.**
2. **To endorse the terms of reference of the following Task Groups:**
 - **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Task Group,**
 - **Children's Centres Task Group, and**
 - **Safeguarding Children and Young People Task Group**

27 Coalition 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 Coalition Government as follows:-

- Early years pupil premium: guidance for local authorities
- Universal infant free school meals: funding allocations 2015 to 2016
- Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing
- Mental health and behaviour in school
- Revised Schools Causing Concern guidance
- Publication of post-16 transport policy statements for the 2015 to 2016 academic year by 31 May 2015
- Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2004
- Academies update
- SEND detained persons transitional guidance and implementation support materials

- Transferring children from police custody to local authority care
- Child performance and activities: licensing legislation
- Promoting the health and wellbeing of looked-after children
- Young carers draft regulations
- Adoption Reform Grant
- The Children's Homes Regulations 2015

Resolved:

To note the update provided.

28 Forward Work Programme

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

The Chairman stated that a meeting with the executive and officers was due to take place on 14 May 2015 and he requested that any issues Members of the Committee might like considered at that meeting should be sent to Emma Dove, Senior Scrutiny Officer by the end of the coming weekend.

Resolved:

To note the contents of the Forward Work Programme for this Committee.

29 Date of Next Meeting

Resolved:

To note that the next scheduled meeting would be held on Tuesday 2 June 2015, in the Kennet Room at County Hall, Trowbridge, starting at 10.30am.

30 Urgent Items

There were no urgent items of business.

(Duration of meeting: 2.30 - 5.00 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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