

CHILDREN'S SELECT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN'S SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 10 SEPTEMBER 2019 AT KENNET COMMITTEE ROOM, COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE.

Present:

Cllr Jon Hubbard (Chairman), Cllr Andrew Davis, Cllr Christopher Devine, Cllr Sue Evans, Cllr Deborah Halik, Cllr Hayley Illman, Cllr Chris Hurst, Cllr Jacqui Lay, Ms Sarah Busby, Mr John Hawkins, Cllr Peter Evans (Substitute) and Cllr Philip Whalley (Substitute)

Also Present:

Cllr Pauline Church, Cllr Mary Douglas, Cllr Alan Hill and Cllr Tony Jackson

65 Election of Vice Chairman

The Chairman reported that the following members of this Select Committee had been appointed Portfolio Holders as set out below:-

- Cllr Mary Douglas, Vice-Chairman, had been appointed Portfolio Holder for Skills and Social Mobility.
- Cllr David Halik had been appointed Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care Transformation.
- Cllr Johnny Kidney had been appointed Portfolio Holder for Communications.

Accordingly, as members of the Executive these three councillors could no longer sit as members of this Select Committee. On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman recorded his thanks and appreciation for the work and contributions these Members had made to the work of this Committee and wished them well in their new roles.

The Chairman also referred to the resignation of Cllr Roy While due to continued ill health. He intended to write to Cllr While thanking him for his contribution to the work of this Committee and conveying Members' kind regards.

It was now necessary to elect a new Vice-Chairman to replace Cllr Mary Douglas.

Resolved:

To elect Cllr Deborah Halik as Vice-Chairman of this Committee for the remainder of the municipal year 2019/20.

66 **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Mary Champion and Dr Mike Thompson.

67 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

Resolved:

To approve and sign as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 16 July 2019.

68 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

69 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman made the following announcements:-

Cabinet items

For information, on 23 July 2019 Cabinet considered the following item:

Provision of loan facility for Wiltshire College

Lead Officer – Simon Hendry

For information, on 17 September 2019 Cabinet would consider the following item:

Update on Outdoor Education sites

Lead Officer – Paul Redford

70 **Public Participation**

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

71 **Update from Wiltshire Youth Union**

The Committee received a verbal update which included a summary of recent activities of the Wiltshire Youth Union (WYU), the Youth Safeguarding Board (YSB) and the Children in Care Council (CiCC) together with a presentation.

In particular, Members' attention was drawn to the Children in Care Fun Day which was due to be held in the Springfield Campus, Corsham on Saturday 2 November 2019 from 10.30am to 3.30pm. Full details of the Fun Day would be sent to all members of the Committee.

During discussion, Members gave their full support to the Fun Day which they hoped would be very successful.

Resolved:

To note the verbal update from the Wiltshire Youth Union.

72 **Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS)**

The Chairman reported that between 3rd and 19th June 2019 Wiltshire Council received an inspection of its Children's Social Care Services from Ofsted.

The Committee received the report of the Lead Inspector, Steve Lowe, which detailed the inspector's grades against the four judgement categories as follows:-

The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families	Good
The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection	Good
The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers	Good
Overall Effectiveness	Good

The Chairman and members of the Committee congratulated the officers on achieving a good grading but it was recognised that there was always room for improvement. It was explained that key headlines for improvement were:-

- Raising awareness of private fostering in the local community.
- The impact of services on children's health and education when they are in care.
- The clarity and accuracy of children's records when they are in care.
- The availability of suitable placements when children first come into care.
- The quality of social work supervision.

Members were pleased to note that Wiltshire Council was the only local authority in the South West to achieve a Good rating in all areas and it was anticipated that the DfE would be asking Wiltshire to help with some improvement work throughout the Region.

During discussion, some concern was expressed at delays which occurred in children accessing the Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). It was suggested that the CAMHS Task Group be asked to investigate waiting times in accessing this Service and the Chairman offered to take this matter up with Cllr Phil Alford, the Task Group Chairman.

Resolved:

- (1) **To note the report from Ofsted detailing their inspection of Wiltshire Council's Children's Social Care Services.**
- (2) **To congratulate the Children's Services Team on the outcomes.**

- (3) To hold a pre-meeting briefing on the Ofsted self-assessment process immediately prior to the start of the next meeting on 12 November 2019.

73 **Update on Wiltshire Council Apprenticeships**

The Committee received a report by the Director, Human Resources & Organisational Development which provided an update on the progress on apprenticeships since the last report in January 2019 including the Council's spend against the apprenticeship levy.

It was noted that the total number of apprenticeships employed by the Council since the levy was introduced was 206, this being 185 within the Council and 21 within Wiltshire schools as at 29 August 2019. 30 of these were new recruits of which 10 had completed their training and had moved into permanent posts. Permanent employment on completion of apprenticeship training was guaranteed by the Council, which was one of the Council's selling points setting us apart from other employers. The remaining 155 were existing employees who were upskilling.

It was explained that more engagement with schools had been taking place to encourage them to use their contribution to the levy. This had so far resulted in a small increase in the number of apprenticeships but it was expected that this would continue.

Apprenticeships were continuing to be targeted to care leavers. An introduction of core skills to all role descriptions had been added after feedback had been received that care leavers were unsure of what essential criteria was needed.

The Director further reported that apprenticeships in social work were being introduced during the next year and it was anticipated that this would help with recruitment.

During discussion, Members enquired if details of apprenticeships at each level per department were available and the Director agreed to provide this for Members.

Resolved:

To note the report and the progress that had been made with the recruitment of new apprentices and the use of the levy for upskilling current staff.

74 **School Ofsted Judgements**

Consideration was given to a report which included information regarding the most recent Ofsted Inspection reports published from mid-June to 31 July 2019. It provided an ongoing view of the effectiveness of schools as seen by Ofsted Inspectors.

There had been six published school inspections since the last report which covered inspections to mid-June 2019. All six were full inspections of which two were the first inspections following conversion to academy status. It was encouraging to note that the three maintained schools were graded as good from this tranche of Ofsted inspections and had all received a robust support package from the Local Authority involving regular reviews of progress and targeted support.

Resolved:

To note the contents of the report.

75 **DfE Changes - Update from Department for Education**

The Committee received an update from the Executive Director, Children & Education on developments relating to children's services arising from the Department for Education from July to August 2019 as follows:-

- Government response to the Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee Report on funding of local authorities' children's services.
- School funding
- School attendance
- School improvement
- Raising standards in schools
- Review of home to school transport guidance
- Update on T-Levels
- Academies update
- Multi-academy trusts (MATs)
- Regulating independent schools
- SWE rules and standards
- Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) progress update
- Domestic Abuse Bill introduced to Parliament
- Serious youth violence
- Offensive Weapons Act (2019)
- New legal duty to support multi-agency action on serious violence
- Home Office relaunches County Lines campaign
- Evaluation of Regional Adoption Agencies

Resolved:

To note the update provided.

76 **Task Group and Board Representative Updates**

The Committee received updates on the activities of the following task groups:-

- Traded Services for Schools Task Group

- Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS) Task Group
- Youth Transport Task Group

Resolved:

To note the updates on the activities on task group activity provided.

77 **Forward Work Programme**

The Committee received the relevant items from the Overview & Scrutiny Forward Work Programme together with the latest version of the strategy for the Children, Education & Skills Directorate.

Resolved:

To note the Forward Work Programme for this Committee and the Children's Services Strategy List.

78 **Date of Next Meeting**

Resolved:

To note that the next scheduled meeting was due to be held on Tuesday 12 November 2019 at County Hall, Trowbridge, starting at 10.30am.

79 **Adam Brown**

The Chairman informed the meeting that Adam Brown, Senior Scrutiny Officer would shortly be leaving the employment of Wiltshire Council to take up a post in Bristol.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman warmly thanked Adam for his valuable contributions to the work of this Committee and wished him well in his new position.

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 am - 12.40 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

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