

## **SCRUTINY FOR POLICIES, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a Meeting of the Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee held in the Luttrell Room - County Hall, Taunton, on Friday 15 June 2018 at 10.00 am

**Present:** Cllr L Redman (Chair), Cllr R Williams (Vice-Chair), Cllr M Dimery, Cllr G Frascini, Cllr N Hewitt-Cooper, Cllr James Hunt, Cllr J Lock, Cllr M Pullen, Cllr W Wallace, Mr Richard Berry, Ms Helen Fenn, Ruth Hobbs and Mrs Eileen Tipper.

**Other Members present:** Cllr S Coles, Cllr A Chilcott, Cllr H Davies Cllr T Munt, Cllr N Taylor

**Apologies for absence:** Ms Helen Fenn and Mr Richard Berry

### **1 Declarations of Interest - Agenda Item 2**

Eileen Tipper declared an interest as a member of the Community Council for Somerset.

### **2 Minutes from the previous meeting held on 16 March 2018 - Agenda Item 3**

The minutes of the last meeting held on 18 May 2018 were accepted, with some amendments to apologies for absence from Cllr Frascini, Cllr Chilcot and Cllr Nicholson, as being accurate and were signed by the Chair.

### **3 Scrutiny Work Programme - Agenda Item 5**

The Committee Chair explained the reports that make up the work programme agenda item and the importance the Committee should attach to planning its future work.

The Committee then considered and noted the Council's Forward Plan of proposed key decisions in forthcoming months. The Committee considered and agreed its own work programme and the future agenda items listed.

The Committee Chair then explained that Task and Finish groups are due to be added to the work programme to look at spending of children's services.

### **4 Public Question Time – Agenda Item 4**

Nigel Behan, UNITE Branch Secretary, submitted questions relating to PIMMS. Nigel Behan asked when the review of PIMMS is due to take place. The response was that this item was due to come to the meeting in September.

### **5 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN 2016-19 - Agenda Item 6**

The Committee began by considering the report which set out the actions SCC and its partners are taking to continue and sustain improvements in children's services. The plan is reported on at a quarterly basis and the reporting looked at progress from January – March 2018. The report provided a summary of activity and progress, complimented by each of the 7 programmes highlight report.

Members of the Board volunteered to be Children and Young Peoples Plan Committee Champions as there were reported to be a number of vacancies.

- Cllr J Williams – Programme 1
- Cllr R Williams – Programme 7
- Cllr W Wallace – Programme 7
- Cllr N Hewitt-Cooper – Programme 3

A Member asked how the 7 committees work together? Who chairs the trust board? How the 7 are managed and what the next outline timetable for the plan is?

I was reported that the children's trust has a rota of who will chair the board each year – this year health is chairing and the vice is the police. There are terms of reference for both boards. The way that this is reported was decided in 2016. Events will be held in the summer and members of the board are encouraged to attend the event, the last event will be held on 23<sup>rd</sup> October and then a draft plan will be put in place.

It was reported that overall there has been improvement in the programmes and they were showing good progress.

## 6 **SEND Peer review** - Agenda Item 7

The Committee considered a report that provided an update of implementation activity and progress against Somerset SEND strategic outcomes and the recommendations of the Gloucestershire SEND peer review.

The Committee considered the report and progress of the Somerset SEND Strategy 2016-2019. The areas for consideration were Performance; where there was a sharp increase in statutory assessment requests and move from funding only to EHCP planned to take over the next 24 months places additional capacity pressures on partner/internal advice givers and the SEND casework team. Statutory assessment requests have almost doubled since January. Current timeliness performance stands at 51% the transfer from funding only to EHCP is due for completion by April 2020 and timeliness performance is likely to remain low until that date whilst National performance is expected to steadily improve. The gap of Somerset performance against National and Statistical neighbours is therefore likely to grow.

There are 22 Tribunals currently in action with a 2016/17 registration of 6.18 per 10,000 school population. This is higher than national average and in conjunction with the growing evidence suggesting poor inclusion indicates significant parental dissatisfaction and a loss of confidence in the SEND partners to support their children and young people. The focus of performance must also address the quality of EHCP's and reviews.

The sharing and analysis of statistical information across key partners remains problematic and isn't routine. Data across partners is used for different purposes and is not easily matched at individual level. Joint commissioning

therefore remains at an early development stage and will be addressed through the Local Area Improvement Network programme group.

**7 Completion Report on the Implementation of the 30 hrs Early Years Capital Projects - Agenda item 8**

The Committee considered this item where they were presented with an update on the 6 funded capital projects that Somerset County Council had been successful in securing from the Department of education. The projects were implemented as part of securing sufficiency duties for the introduction of the extended entitlement (30 hours) funding for eligible working families in the county.

The Committee considered and commented on the participation of early years providers to the extended entitlement (30 hours) scheme, and the number of Somerset families benefitting from the offer.

The Committee considered and commented on each of the 5 capital projects that have been completed and are contributing to the extended entitlement (30 hours) for three and four year olds in Somerset.

**8 Any other urgent items of business - Agenda Item 9**

There were no other items of business and the Chair thanked all those present for attending and closed the meeting at 13:03.

**(The meeting ended at 1.03 pm)**

**CHAIRMAN**