

## **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 20 July 2018 at 10.00 am

**Present:** Cllr L Redman (Chair), Cllr R Williams (Vice-Chair), Cllr James Hunt, Cllr W Wallace, Cllr J Williams and Mrs. Eileen Tipper. Substitutes: Cllr P Clayton, Cllr S Coles, Cllr M Keating and Cllr T Munt.

**Other Members present:** Cllr M Chilcott, Cllr H Davies, Cllr F Nicholson and Cllr G Verdon.

**Apologies for absence:** Cllr M Dimery, Cllr G Frascini, Cllr N Hewitt-Cooper, Cllr J Lock. Mr Richard Berry, Ms Helen Fenn and Ruth Hobbs.

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

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

### **90 Minutes from the previous meeting - Agenda Item 3**

The minutes of the last meeting held on 15 June 2018 were accepted, with amendments to correct Member attendance at that meeting and also the May meeting and were signed by the Chair.

### **91 Public Question Time - Agenda Item 4**

There were no public questions.

### **92 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.

It was agreed that the following items would be included on the work programme:

19 October – Update on Syrian Families in Somerset;  
19 October – Planning for the 2019/2020 CYPP;  
16 November – Pre-validation exam performance in Somerset.

The Committee Chair then requested that Officers contact their respective member champion regarding the 7 CYPP improvement programmes in advance of the September meeting.

**93 Somerset Children's Trust Governance - Agenda Item 6**

The Committee considered this report that provided an overview and an explanation of the governance arrangements of the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP). The CYPP created in 2016 is a three-year multi agency programme that sets out the actions we and our partners need to take to continue and sustain improvements in children's services.

It was noted that the Somerset Children's Trust (SCT) oversees the CYPP which comprises seven improvement programmes, managed by the relevant Board for each improvement area. The Executive of the SCT meets quarterly, the Chair is from the Council and the Vice Chair alternates annually between the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Avon & Somerset Constabulary. This meeting receives all seven Highlight Reports from the lead of the individual improvement programmes each with an overarching executive summary. Those reports are then considered at the subsequent Scrutiny Committee meeting.

There was a thorough discussion of the report and the accompanying diagram and it was requested that future reports might include a list of the members of each of the different boards. There was a discussion about funding and decision making and it was noted that there was not an overall pooled budget for the various work streams undertaken. The ethos of the SCT was about partnership working and discussing problems to find joint solutions. The report was accepted.

**94 Family Support Services Update - Agenda Item 7**

The Committee considered a report that provided an update of implementation activity and progress of the on-going changes to the 'early help hubs' now known as the Family Support Service.

It was noted that the Committee had made representations to the Cabinet last February after having considered the proposed changes in detail and hearing the concerns of a number of families that used the service. The discussion focused on the points raised by the Committee at that time and officers answered a variety of questions about how the changes were being delivered and how that was impacting on the families using those services.

The Committee requested that a further a FSS update report be provided for the December meeting that will include the following:

- Evidence of service provision (following changes) and take up/usage of service;
- Identifying and retaining vulnerable families to ensure they were not 'lost', particularly regarding changes in location and public transport;
- Technology strategy – for staff and accessibility for clients;
- Property – staff bases and service delivery.

**95 Prevention Services for Children - Agenda Item 8**

The Committee considered this item which comprised a report and 2 presentations. Members heard that prevention meant all actions aimed at eradicating, eliminating or minimizing the impact of disease and disability.

The main types of prevention were noted: primary prevention – stopping a behaviour or exposure that leads to a poor outcome or promoting positive behaviours; secondary prevention – the early detection and prompt intervention to minimize poor outcomes (screening) and tertiary prevention – measures aimed at softening the impact of long term disease/disability or situation, such as being in care = cardiac rehabilitation post heart attack.

The Committee was informed about the Somerset Wellbeing Framework designed to provide Somerset Schools with the ‘how to’ Engaging the whole-school community in the importance of mental health awareness; Capturing the views of parents, pupils and teachers on mental health issues; Offering school-based provision and interventions that match the needs of its pupils and staff and Ensuring mental health problems are identified early and appropriate support provided. This included work with the various Team Around The School groups (TAS) that allowed better understanding and development of services to meet need. The Council could then use TAS networks to further complement and enhance other agencies work including Public Health prevention strategies.

The Committee then had the benefit of a presentation about the Edge of Care Prevention Services and it was reported that the Council had good ‘edge of care’ work to prevent children from coming into care, and the local authority is expanding this to support children to return home from care. It was explained how the service plan had been linked to the Ofsted recommendations and an overview was also provided of the current and projected coverage and staffing.

The report was accepted, and the Chair thanked Officers for their interesting and informative presentations.

## 96 **Implementation of new statutory duties to Care Leavers** - Agenda Item 9

The Committee then considered a report about the new duties relating to Care Leavers was published in February 2018 and the new duties became effective from last April. It was explained that implementation of the Leaving Care Service and the duties enshrined in new legislation contributed to Priority 6 of the CYPP.

It was reported that the government would provide a grant of £24,680 for 2018-19 to help to meet the additional staffing necessary to respond to young people who may request Personal Advisor support after the age of 21 and up to their 25th birthday would be received. Information regarding the funding amounts for 2019-20 would be available in February 2019.

In response to the changes the Corporate Parenting Board membership had been extended to include Job Centre Plus, there had been increases in weekly, birthday and festivity care leaver allowances and to the bursary for those in Higher Education.

In response to a question from the Chair it was stated that the Council was in the process of collating information about the range of services and support that may assist care leavers in, or moving to, adulthood and independent living currently provided which included: Health and wellbeing; Relationships; Education and training; Employment; Accommodation; Participation in society.

In addition, it was noted that other measures such as discount vouchers for care leavers for use in high street shops, cafes, and cinemas etc were being considered for the 685 current care leavers aged between 16 and 24. All care leavers were being written to and informed of the various changes and how they might be best able to take advantage of them.

97 **Journey in to Care** - Agenda Item 10

It was agreed to defer this item.

98 **Any other urgent items of business** - Agenda Item 11

There were no other items of business and the Chair thanked all those present for attending and closed the meeting at 12:35.

**(The meeting ended at 12.35 pm)**

**Chair of the Committee  
Cllr Leigh Redman**