

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

Minutes of a Meeting of the Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee held in the Library Meeting Room, Taunton Library, on Friday 16 November 2018 at 10.00 am

**Present:** Cllr L Redman (Chair), Cllr R Williams (Vice-Chair), Cllr N Hewitt-Cooper, Cllr J Lock, Cllr T Munt, Cllr M Keating, Cllr J Williams. Mrs Ruth Hobbs and Mrs Eileen Tipper.

**Other Members present:** Cllr M Chilcott, Cllr H Davies, Cllr D Hall, Cllr F Nicholson.

**Apologies for absence:** Cllr M Dimery, Cllr G Frascini, Cllr James Hunt, Cllr W Wallace, Mr P Elliott and Ms Helen Fenn.

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

There were no declarations made.

### **16 Minutes from the previous meetings held in October - Agenda Item 3**

The Committee agreed, after a few amendments, that the minutes of the meetings held on 8 October and 19 October (that ran to 25 pages) were accurate and the Chair of the Committee signed them.

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

There were members of the public present, however there were no questions asked, statements/comments made or petitions presented.

### **18 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 Cabinet'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. In addition, it was agreed that:

The Chair would liaise with the Chair of the Scrutiny for Policies, Adults and Health Scrutiny Committee regarding consideration of Children's oral health;

To add an item regarding the refresh of the Council's Autism Strategy.

### **19 Children and Young People's Plan 2016 - 2019 - Agenda Item 6**

The Committee considered these very thorough reports on the development of the three-year Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) which started in April

2016 setting out the actions the Council and its partners were taking to continue and sustain improvements in children's services.

The various reports commented on and provided a broad range of information about the activity of the second quarter (July to September 2018) of Year 3 providing a summary of activity and progress, and this was supported by a highlight report from each of the seven improvement programmes.

It was noted that at the end of Quarter 2 six of the seven improvement programmes were rated 'amber' as being partially on track to meet target dates for all actions by March 2019 and it was explained that this may reflect timescales leading to completing actions rather than a lack of confidence in the ability to complete and/or deliver.

Some Members of the Committee who had volunteered as programme champions (in attendance) and officers involved in the programmes were able to provide updates on the progress made and the actions being taken to bring about further improvements in each of the improvement programmes.

There was a question about apprentices working for the Council and it was asked how many of those had previously been in care or not previously in education, employment or training? There were also questions and answers provided regarding the number of Education and Health Care Plans being completed and the number of permanent exclusions in Somerset Schools.

The Committee noted the update.

## 20 **Children and Young People's Plan 2019 - 2022** - Agenda Item 7

The Committee received a very thorough presentation providing an update regarding the development of the three-year Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP).

The new plan would see the CYPP, which started in April 2016 to run until 2019 being refreshed and the new CYPP, setting out the actions the Council and its partners were taking to continue and sustain improvements in children's services, would go through to 2022. As part of this new work officers had taken a reflective look at what had worked well previously whilst also trying to identify and understand what had not worked well.

It was explained that preparatory work so far had included: CYPP consultation days with children and young people; wider consultation; parents/carers; practitioners; partners and other Stakeholders. The views of children and young people had been sought and their priorities to identify the new plans vision.

The Vision would be to have partners fully engaged in a meaningful and robust process that evidences the most relevant outcomes for children and young people. This would be underpinned by a broad range of evidencing and reliable data, and this needed to be flexible to react to a changing environment and to remain valid.

There was a discussion about the new CYPP and Members spoke with enthusiasm noting the importance of ensuring the new CYPP was understood

by different audiences and presented a coherent and complimentary approach with other plans. It was also suggested that whatever the length of the new CYPP that a 2 page executive summary be prepared and thought be given to graphical representations designed to support the text.

The update was accepted.

21 **Protecting children and families from the harm of drugs and alcohol - Agenda Item 8**

The Committee considered this report that had been prepared to give Members an understanding of the work of the commissioned Somerset Drug and Alcohol Service (SDAS) specifically in relation to supporting young people and parents in treatment for drug/alcohol misuse.

It was reported that a strategic approach in Somerset to addressing drug and alcohol concerns recognised that there were different levels of need within the population which required different levels of response in terms of promotion, prevention, early intervention and specialist treatment. A new five-year service contract has been awarded, to the current provider, from 1 April 2019.

The Committee also had the benefit of hearing from a service user who explained about how she had come in to contact with and used the SDAS service and her experiences of recovering from alcohol abuse/addiction. She explained to Members how over a period of some months she had slowly regained her own confidence and was now a mentor for others who accessed the SDAS service.

In response to a question it was noted that the service worked with all ages and would be provided to dependent drug and alcohol users, of any age, and the family, and friends of those users. Some areas had separate services for children and adults. It was noted that the all age model ensured that there were no gaps in transition, and that the whole service understood its role regarding children and families. The Police were also able to make referrals to SDAS.

There was a brief discussion about the number of young people that had received treatment and it was confirmed that the numbers shown within a bar graph in the report indicated cases closed as those had received a successful treatment. This indicated that around 80% of those young people accessing the service had successfully completed a structured treatment.

The Committee accepted the report.

22 **Proposed changes to the support and services for children and their families (CAF-14b) - Update on Public Consultation - Agenda Item 9**

The Committee considered this report about the public consultation on the proposed changes to the Council's support and services for children and their families regarding Cabinet savings proposal CAF 14b. The purpose of the consultation would be to gauge the understanding of the impact of the Council no longer providing 'get-set' services for children with additional needs (at level 2).

It was noted that the consultation had been launched on 5 November 2018 and had been developed by Officers in the Early Help team working closely with colleagues in the Communications, Legal and Somerset Parent Carer Forum to ensure it was written in plain English and that it explained clearly what services were in place now and what services would be in place after the decision.

Members heard that the paper introduced the proposals and explained get-set's role as well as the wider Somerset early help offer. The 4 levels of need were explained, and which aspects of the service would be affected and those that would not be affected by the proposals. It was noted what support is on offer in each of the 5 districts and what support would be offered following implementation of the proposals.

It was explained that there had been a pre-launch of the consultation itself at various meetings before the consultation became 'live' on 5 November and this had been supported by a Member's information sheet, a press release and other awareness updates across social media.

There was a question about the nature of the questions within the consultation and the Director of Children's Services confirmed that he had written those in conjunction with the Cabinet Member.

The report was noted and it was confirmed that an update report would be presented to the Committee's meeting in January 2019.

23 **Any other urgent items of business** - Agenda Item 10

After ascertaining that there were no other items of business the Chair thanked all those present for attending the meeting and closed the meeting at 13.04.

**(The meeting ended at 1.04 pm)**

**CHAIRMAN**