

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 13 September 2019 at 10.00 am

Present: Cllr L Redman (Chair), Cllr M Dimery, Cllr James Hunt, Cllr J Lock, Cllr W Wallace, Cllr J Williams and Mrs Eileen Tipper.

Other Members present: Cllr Chilcott, Cllr Lawrence, Cllr Munt, Cllr Nicholson, Cllr Verdon

Apologies for absence: Cllr R Williams, Cllr N Hewitt-Cooper. Mr P Elliott, Ms Fenn and Mrs Hobbs.

1 Declarations of Interest - Agenda Item 2

There were no declarations made.

2 Minutes from the previous meeting - Agenda Item 3

The Scrutiny Manager explained that he had mislaid the minutes from the last meeting, and these would be presented to a future meeting.

3 Public Question Time - Agenda Item 4

There was a member of the public present but there were no question asked, statements made or petitions presented.

4 Scrutiny Work Programme - Agenda Item 5

The Chair directed the Committee's attention to the Council's forward plan of proposed key decisions, and it was noted that several decisions earmarked for 1 November appeared to be dependent on 'European' funding and sought reassurance. The Director of Children's Services stated that regardless of the status of the UK's withdrawal from the European Union, known as 'Brexit', the Government had committed to matching European funding.

On the topic of 'Brexit' it was asked if the Committee could receive a report outlining the Council's preparedness/plans. The Scrutiny Manager noted that any overall Brexit plan would be best considered by the Policies and Place Scrutiny Committee and he undertook to flag this with a recently created 'Brexit' team. It was requested that a report with a Children and Families aspect regarding contingencies to manage 'Brexit' be brought to a future meeting.

The Chair noted that on the Committee's forward plan a number of items had been suggested that would lend themselves to discussion by a joint meeting with the Adults and Health Scrutiny Committee and the Scrutiny Manager undertook to discuss this with the Chair of that Committee. It was also suggested that members of the Health and Well-being Board be invited, once arrangements had been finalised.

The Scrutiny Manager informed the Committee that he had followed up a request regarding a future agenda item on 'Safe routes to school'. He reflected several items had been highlighted by relevant Officers and the Committee agreed that the Chair, Vice Chair and Scrutiny Manager meet to determine the specific aspects to be considered.

The refreshed outcome tracker was noted and accepted.

5 **Early Help Strategic Commissioning Board Update** - Agenda Item 6

The Chair welcomed Louise Palmer & Angela Gascoigne to the meeting, and they began by providing an overview of the Early Help Board, and they noted the 5 key areas of activity approved by the Cabinet last February designed to develop and improve the early help offer in Somerset:

- Improve the support and interventions for children with some additional needs – level 2;
- Strengthening Early Help infrastructure with partners and redesigning the early help 'front door';
- Strengthening community capacity and capability;
- Improve the support and interventions for children with complex needs – level 3;
- Strengthen the multi-agency strategic approach to early help in Somerset.

They provided a brief presentation to supplement their report and noted that early help should not just be regarded as a service but be established as a recognised way of working. A tiered approach of top down delivery would no longer work, and it was now the case that several different agencies would work together to deliver services for families.

Current work was focusing on how best to capture data and information to identify where help and support was required, and some delivery models were based in a similar way to the get-set service. The importance of identifying what was needed and how best to respond to those needs was recognised, with the subsequent transition to get things in place, which could involve restorative practice and deepening dialogue between organisations.

The Committee heard some examples of different types of work in communities that had helped to bring about a positive change. The Chair of the Committee thanked both Officers for the interesting insight into early help and reflected that the examples of the case studies were heartening to hear things going right.

During the discussion of the report and presentation, issues/concerns were raised, questions asked/answered and further information was provided on:

- Membership of Board, were any other 'Health' providers other than the NHS trust involved? It was noted there were not, but all were welcome to become involved;

- There was a question about provision in the northeast of the County, and it was noted that the new safeguarding arrangements would also feed in to health arrangement there was a co-ordinated approach;
- It was asked how Officers knew interventions were successful and how could they be built on, and it was acknowledged this was a challenge to gather feedback from each intervention, and collect in a disciplined and useful way;
- Regarding the proposed digitising of the assessment process, it was suggested that lessons be learnt from similar programmes to process of change ran smoothly;
- Work was ongoing to link up data and knowledge including the speedy and secure dissemination of information and it was acknowledged that improvement wouldn't happen in it won't happen in a linear way, depend on and making changes across organisations, and building, taking personal responsibility;
- It was suggested that Governor Services be contacted to include some Governor training on Early Help;
- It was noted that it was important, in an era of limited resource to avoid duplication of effort and making the right interventions was key and, get people to understand what they are doing and name it;
- It was asked if the work would go through with the young person to the adult stage and it was noted that there were people from adult services involved and Officers were keen to create those links;
- It was noted that Level 3 support was working well, and it was stated that it was, and the voice of young people had been included when the CYPP had been refreshed CYPP;
- There was a discussion about how better identifying ways to contact people and allow them to access services and it was explained that work on designing 'the front door' to ensure a friendly triage service initially at 'the front door', and improve the skill set and work force development;
- It was noted that the Family Forum in Minehead was a brilliant piece of collaborative local work, and it was suggested that it be copied in other areas of the County.

The Chair summed up the discussion and noted that the Committee would endorse the call for better collaboration and support for transforming data capture and analysis to cope multi agency intervention. He encouraged Members, particularly those who were District Councillors to help work in district councils and to attend connection events.

The Chair also requested that Officers look in to arranging an appropriate visit for the Committee and that an update report be presented in 6 months.

6 **Any other urgent items of business** - Agenda Item 7

After ascertaining there were no other items of business, the Chair thanked all those present for attending, and closed the meeting at 11.00am.

(The meeting ended at 11.00 am)

CHAIRMAN