

Somerset Council – Decisions taken by the Scrutiny Committee - Children and Families on Wednesday, 13 March 2024

| Agenda Item No | Topic | Decision |
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Part A – Items considered in public

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| A1 | Apologies for Absence | Apologies were received from Councillor Jeny Snell (substituted by Cllr Henry Hobhouse), Ruth Hobbs (Co-opted member) and Cllr Peter Clayton and Jo Simons (co-opted member) joined the meeting online. |
| A2 | Declarations of Interest | There were no new declarations of interest received. |
| A3 | Minutes from the Meeting held on Wednesday 10 January 2024 | Resolved that the minutes of the Scrutiny Committee - Childrens and Families held on Wednesday 10 January 2024 be confirmed as a correct record. |
| A5 | Scrutiny Committee - Children and Families Work Programme | The Committee noted the current work plan, outcome tracker and Executive Forward Plan. |
| A6 | Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing in Somerset | <p>The Committee received a presentation on children’s mental health and wellbeing in Somerset, the focus of the item was on the Somerset system wide support for children and young people who self-injure.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the presenters for the excellent presentation.</p> |
| A7 | 2023/24 Children's Services - Budget Monitoring | The Committee received and noted the presentation on 2023/24 Children’s Services budget monitoring position – month 10. This focussed on – external placements, residential placements, Homes & Horizons, fieldwork spend, 23/24 DSG budget monitoring (High Needs, home to school transport and SEND transport). |

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| A8 | DSG Deficit Management Plan (DMP) | <p>The Committee received a presentation on the refreshed DSG Deficit Management Plan (DMP), outlining the actions to mitigate overspending and the DMP. The DMP has the following new elements – tackling design issues, devolving decision-making, universality, building consensus. The presentation also outlined the key risks and opportunities and next steps.</p> <p>At the end of the discussion, The Service Director Education, Partnerships and Skills suggested that a member training session on the DSG and Deficit Management Plan could be arranged, and the Chair thanked her and asked members to consider this.</p> <p>The Committee noted the ongoing work and the DMP.</p> |
| A9 | Understanding Elective Home Education | <p>The Committee received a presentation on understanding Elective Home Education – the purpose of the item was to education / inform members on issues around elective home education (EHE) and covered - the legal framework, the Council approach and responsibilities, data, provided information on the partnership working in the Frome area, changes in legislation and guidance in the pipeline.</p> <p>This includes a mandatory register of children not in school, guidance on what is a ‘suitable education’, including focus on literacy and maths, guidance about support available to EHE families and guidance to support more consistent approach across LAs to school attendance orders.</p> |

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| | | The Commitete welcomed and noted the presentation. |
| A10 | Update from Education Standards Standing Panel | <p>The Committee received an update from the Chair of the Education Standards Panel Cllr Evie Potts-Jones on the work of the Panel and the issues covered at recent meetings.</p> <p>Cllr Potts-Jones invited all members of the committee to attend the meetings of this sub-committee and advised that the next meeting is scheduled for the 25th March 2024.</p> |
| A11 | Report back from committee members on Children's Services Transformation Priorities /Areas | <p>Further to the meeting in December 2023, received report back from Committee members on the following strands in the Children's Services Transformation Priorities / Areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education for Life – Jo Simons • CLA Transformation – Cllr Evie Potts-Jones, Cllr Martin Lovell • SEND Strategy – Cllr Simon Carswell, Cllr Frances Nicholson • Connect Somerset – Tobie Osmond, Ruth Hobbs <p>The Chair thanked members and officers for their ongoing work and the committee noted the update.</p> |

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| A12 | Items for Information - Standing Item | <p>The Committee noted the following items for information:</p> <p>(a) Delivering Better Value – Newton Report – circulated on 3 January 2024</p> <p>(b) Short break provision – action plan – circulated on 21 February 2024</p> |