
SCRUTINY FOR POLICIES, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMITTEE (VIRTUAL MEETINGS FROM MAY 2020 DUE TO CORONAVIRUS) SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

Held on Wednesday 3 March 2021

(Published on 31 March 2021)

3	Minutes from the previous meeting held on 27 January 2021
	The minutes of the meeting held on 27 January 2021 were approved as a correct record.
5	Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee Work Programme
	<p>The Committee considered the current work programme, the outcome tracker for the Scrutiny Committee and the Cabinet Forward Plan.</p> <p>The work programme and outcome tracker was updated, as discussed at the meeting.</p>
6	Overview of prevention work
	<p>The Committee received a presentation from the Council's Strategic Commissioner, children & young people, Ms L Palmer who provided an overview of the Council's approach to early help and prevention. The Committee also heard from Mr C Allcock, Programme Director Safe Families and from Ms R Humphrey, Health Visitor on their early help offer.</p> <p>A number of questions and comments were made following the presentation. In conclusion, the Chair: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) asked Ms Palmer to share details of the Early Help Board meetings, so those members who are interested can dip into them, as observers; (b) said that it is important to note that early help is delivered by many partners and it can happen at any time; (c) that with regard to the 'Safer Families' programme, the Chair said that he would welcome a conversation outside the meeting around how get referrals, how refer in, volunteers involved and the reach across the county; (d) need to follow up on 'how measure success' and Ms Palmer was asked to provide a briefing note on early help, to be shared with all members, to include an explanation about how early help relates to prevention particularly in the sense of being reactive rather than proactive (context).

Item No.	Title
	<p>AGREED: - That the presentation and the update be noted.</p>
7	Elective Home Education
	<p>The Chair invited the members of the public to ask questions and make statement – the questions asked and responses provided will be published in a supplementary pack.</p> <p>The Committee considered a report from the Council’s Strategic Manager Access and Additional Learning Needs, Mr P Curd, which provided an update on the local authority’s work in relation to Elective Home Education (EHE). This follows previous presentations to the committee which has requested ongoing updates. EHE became a topic of interest to the Committee around 3 years ago when the Local Authority’s approach to EHE was unclear, its policy was weak and numbers of EHE children within the county were disproportionately high when compared to similar authority areas. The Committee considered the current data relating to EHE in Somerset; an overview of EHE development work within the Education Safeguarding Service (ESS) and future developmental themes, as set out in section 4 of the report.</p> <p>A number of questions and comments were made and responded to.</p> <p>AGREED – that the report be noted and the work undertaken welcomed.</p>
8	Future Schools Provision in the Crewkerne and Ilminster area
	<p>The Chair invited the members of the public to present the petition, ask questions and make statements. The questions asked and responses provided will be published in a supplementary pack.</p> <p>The Committee received a report and update presentation from the Council’s Assistant Director, Education, Partnerships and Skills, Ms A Walker, together with the Cabinet member for Education & Transformation, Cllr F Purbrick who provided an update on the consultation on the future school provision in the Crewkerne and Ilminster area.</p> <p>The Committee listened to the update and asked questions, which were responded to. During the debate a Motion was also proposed and seconded but was not accepted by majority.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the following comments would be sent to Cabinet as part of its response: -</p>

Item No.	Title
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clarity to be provided on the wording on pages 6 and 25 of the statutory consultation document, to ensure complete transparency in an attempt to minimise confusion around both schools closing and a new school being formed. 2. Clarity to be provided on the status of a hard federation in Ilminster, proposed as an interim solution as part of implementation plans, should the governing bodies choose not to pursue this option. 3. That specific reference be made to SEND in implementation plans. 4. Needs to be further investigation on the issue of whether a MAT solution is possible. <p>The Chair thanked the Committee for the debate and the members of the public for the questions, statements and the petition and advised that the comments which have been accepted will be forwarded to the Cabinet meeting on 17 March 2021. The Cabinet member also thanked the Committee for their consideration and engagement as well as the public and other stakeholders.</p>