

# SCRUTINY FOR POLICIES, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMITTEE

Monday 20 June 2022

2.00 pm Luttrell Room - County Hall,  
Taunton



To: The Chair and members of the Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee

Cllr L Redman (Chair), Cllr O Patrick (Vice-Chair), Cllr S Aujla, Cllr J Baker, Cllr S Carswell, Cllr A Hadley, Cllr Pauline Ham, Cllr S Hart, Cllr B Height, Cllr J Hunt, Cllr J Kenton, Cllr E Potts-Jones and Cllr J Snell  
R Hobbs, E Tipper and The Revd T Osmond – co-opted members

All Somerset County Council Members are invited to attend.

Issued By Scott Wooldridge, Strategic Manager - Governance and Democratic Services –  
9 June 2022

For further information about the meeting, please contact Neil Milne on 01823 357628 or NDmilne@somerset.gov.uk or Fiona Abbott on 01823 357628 or fabbott@somerset.gov.uk

Guidance about procedures at the meeting follows the printed agenda.

This meeting will be open to the public and press, subject to the passing of any resolution under Regulation 4 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

This agenda and the attached reports and background papers are available on request prior to the meeting in large print, Braille, audio tape & disc and can be translated into different languages. They can also be accessed via the council's website on [www.somerset.gov.uk/agendasandpapers](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/agendasandpapers)

**Are you considering how your conversation today and the actions you propose to take contribute towards making Somerset Carbon Neutral by 2030?**



**RNID typetalk**

## AGENDA

Item Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee - 2.00 pm Monday 20 June 2022

**\*\* Public Guidance notes contained in agenda annexe \*\***

1 **Apologies for Absence**

To receive Members' apologies

2 **Declarations of Interest**

Details of all Members' interests in District, Town and Parish Councils can be viewed on the [Council Website](#)

The Statutory Register of Member's Interests can be inspected via request to the Democratic Service Team.

Any new or updated declarations of interest will be received.

3 **Notes of the Advisory Board meeting held on 28 February 2022** (Pages 9 - 14)

The Committee is asked to accept the notes of this meeting.

4 **Public Question Time**

The Chair will allow members of the public to ask a question or make a statement about any matter on the agenda for this meeting. **These questions may be taken during the meeting, when the relevant agenda item is considered, at the Chair's discretion.**

5 **Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee Work Programme**  
(Pages 15 - 18)

To receive an update from the Governance Manager – to assist the discussion attached are:

- (a) The Committee's work programme
- (b) Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee - Meetings Overview 2021 – 2022

Please use the following link to view the latest Executive Forward Plan of planned key decisions that have been published on the Council's website [Executive Forward Plan of Key Decisions](#)

Item Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee - 2.00 pm Monday 20 June 2022

6 **Family Safeguarding - overview**

To receive presentation.

The purpose of this item is to give the Committee the opportunity to gain an understanding of issues and the opportunity to discuss them.

The presentation and links to relevant background papers / information will be circulated prior to the meeting.

*Note – the Chair will allow 45 minutes for this agenda item.*

7 **School Place Planning**

To receive presentation.

The purpose of this item is to give the Committee the opportunity to gain an understanding of issues and the opportunity to discuss them.

The presentation and links to relevant background information will be circulated prior to the meeting.

*Note – the Chair will allow 45 minutes for this agenda item.*

8 **Items for Information**

This is a standing agenda item and will provide details of information sent to Committee members in between meetings, that cover Children & Families Scrutiny policy areas.

If Committee members have any questions or comments on the information, please contact [fabbott@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:fabbott@somerset.gov.uk) in the first instance and before the date of the meeting.

9 **Any other urgent items of business**

The Chair may raise any items of urgent business.

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## Guidance notes for the meeting

### 1. **Council Public Meetings**

The former regulations that enabled virtual committee meetings ended on 7 May 2021. Since then, all committee meetings need to return to face-to-face meetings. The requirement is for members of the committee and key supporting officers to attend in person, along with some provision for any public speakers. Provision will be made wherever possible for those who do not need to attend in person including the public and press who wish to view the meeting to be able to do so virtually.

### 2. **Inspection of Papers**

Any person wishing to inspect minutes, reports, or the background papers for any item on the agenda should contact Democratic Services at [democraticserviceteam@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:democraticserviceteam@somerset.gov.uk) or telephone 01823 357628.

They can also be accessed via the council's website on [www.somerset.gov.uk/agendasandpapers](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/agendasandpapers).

Printed agendas can also be viewed in reception at the Council offices at County Hall, Taunton TA1 4DY.

### 3. **Members' Code of Conduct requirements**

When considering the declaration of interests and their actions as a councillor, Members are reminded of the requirements of the Members' Code of Conduct and the underpinning Principles of Public Life: Honesty; Integrity; Selflessness; Objectivity; Accountability; Openness; Leadership. The Code of Conduct can be viewed at: [Code of Conduct](#)

### 4. **Minutes of the Meeting**

Details of the issues discussed, and recommendations made at the meeting will be set out in the minutes, which the Committee will be asked to approve as a correct record at its next meeting.

### 5. **Public Question Time**

If you wish to speak, please contact Democratic Services by 5pm 3 clear working days before the meeting. Email [democraticserviceteam@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:democraticserviceteam@somerset.gov.uk) or telephone 01823 357628.

Members of public wishing to speak or ask a question will need to attend in person or if unable can submit their question or statement in writing for an officer to read out.

After entering the Council building you may be taken to a waiting room before being taken to the meeting for the relevant agenda item to ask your question. After the agenda item has finished you will be asked to leave the meeting for other members of the public to attend to speak on other items.

A slot for Public Question Time is set aside near the beginning of the meeting, after the minutes of the previous meeting have been agreed. However, questions or statements about any matter on the agenda for this meeting may be taken at the time when each matter is considered.

At the Chair's invitation you may ask questions and/or make statements or comments about any matter on the Committee's agenda – providing you have given the required notice. You may also present a petition on any matter within the Committee's remit. The length of public question time will be no more than 30 minutes in total (20 minutes for meetings other than County Council meetings).

You must direct your questions and comments through the Chair. You may not take a direct part in the debate. The Chair will decide when public participation is to finish.

If an item on the agenda is contentious, with many people wishing to attend the meeting, a representative should be nominated to present the views of a group.

An issue will not be deferred just because you cannot be present for the meeting. Remember that the amount of time you speak will be restricted, to three minutes only.

In line with the council's procedural rules, if any member of the public interrupts a meeting the Chair will warn them accordingly.

If that person continues to interrupt or disrupt proceedings the Chair can ask the Democratic Services Officer to remove them as a participant from the meeting.

Provision will be made for anybody who wishes to listen in on the meeting only to follow the meeting online.

## 6. **Meeting Etiquette for participants**

- Only speak when invited to do so by the Chair.
- Mute your microphone when you are not talking.
- Switch off video if you are not speaking.
- Speak clearly (if you are not using video then please state your name)

- If you're referring to a specific page, mention the page number.
- Switch off your video and microphone after you have spoken.
- There is a facility in Microsoft Teams under the ellipsis button called turn on live captions which provides subtitles on the screen.

## 7. **Exclusion of Press & Public**

If when considering an item on the agenda, the Committee may consider it appropriate to pass a resolution under Section 100A (4) Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 that the press and public be excluded from the meeting on the basis that if they were present during the business to be transacted there would be a likelihood of disclosure of exempt information, as defined under the terms of the Act.

If there are members of the public and press listening to the open part of the meeting, then the Democratic Services Officer will, at the appropriate time, ask Participants to leave the meeting when any exempt or confidential information is about to be discussed.

## 8. **Recording of meetings**

The Council supports the principles of openness and transparency. It allows filming, recording, and taking photographs at its meetings that are open to the public - providing this is done in a non-disruptive manner. Members of the public may use Facebook and Twitter or other forms of social media to report on proceedings. No filming or recording may take place when the press and public are excluded for that part of the meeting.

Please contact the Committee Administrator or Democratic Services on 01823 357628 or email [democraticservicesteam@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservicesteam@somerset.gov.uk) if you have any questions or concerns.

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## **SCRUTINY FOR POLICIES, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES ADVISORY BOARD**

Notes of a Meeting of the Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Advisory Board held virtually via Microsoft Teams on Monday 28 February 2022 at 10.00 am

**Present:** Cllr L Redman (Chair), Cllr R Williams (Vice-Chair), Cllr M Dimery and Cllr B Revans  
The Revd T Osmond, R Hobbs and E Tipper – co-opted members

**Other Members present:** Cllr C Lawrence, Cllr F Nicholson, Cllr C Paul, Cllr L Leyshon, Cllr D Loveridge and Cllr T Munt

**Apologies for absence:** Cllr W Wallace

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

The following declaration of interest was made at the meeting: -

- (a) Councillor T Munt – agenda items relating to Inclusion – Governor at Special School in Somerset - non-pecuniary.

### **2 Notes of the Advisory Board meeting held on Tuesday 25 January 2022 - Agenda Item 3**

The notes of the Advisory Board meeting held on Tuesday 25 January 2022 were agreed and no amendments suggested.

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

There were no public questions.

### **4 Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee Work Programme - Agenda Item 5**

The work programme and outcome tracker and the Council's Forward Plan of proposed key decisions in the forthcoming months, including Cabinet meetings, was considered.

It was noted that this is the last meeting in the Municipal Year as the meeting on Monday 4 April has been cancelled. There is an informal joint workshop with the Adults & Health advisory board on Wednesday 6 April @ 10 am.

The Advisory Board noted the work programme and outcome tracker which will be helpful for the work by the new Committee after the elections.

## 5 **Inclusion Inquiry** - Agenda Item 6

The Chair welcomed the following to the meeting for this agenda item - the Council's Assistant Director, Inclusion, Dr Rob Hart and Mr Brian Walton, Head Teacher Brookside Academy.

The Board received a comprehensive PowerPoint presentation, providing an update on the Inclusion Inquiry which is being led by school leaders as part of the Written Statement of Action (WSOA) and developing an evidence-based understanding of what good inclusive practice looks like and suggestions for improvement. Mr Walton outlined the recommendations from the inquiry: -

- better signposting of support services across Somerset for all stakeholders to access;
- need for better local early intervention strategies;
- needs to be better behaviour planning and support structures (be preventative rather than reactive);
- inclusion data should be shared with schools, on the new Schools Data Dashboard, to ensure that evidence based inclusive practice becomes standard;
- trust building – the cornerstone of the findings – trust and transparency central to children, young adults, parents and Somerset staff when seeking advice / support for SEND or inclusion.

Mr Walton also explained the next steps, to ensure the recommendations become a reality: –

- establish governance arrangements - where the recommendations will be held and embed them into the work plan;
- continue with repeated communication messages and recommendations, sharing and celebrating good inclusive practice;
- link the recommendations in with on-going activities across Somerset to identify those already being addressed and any gaps;
- start proactively seeking opportunities to listen to all voices.

The Chair thanked Mr Walton for the excellent presentation and that it was good to hear about the involvement of young people in the inquiry and also welcomed the use of the word 'earlier' intervention. He also said that sharing of data proposed in this will help to build trust.

The Board then discussed the presentation and the following issues were highlighted: -

- governance question – will be role for all organisations and currently the governance structure is through the WSOA;
- data dashboard – there will be training for governors for example, which will be key and need to be transparent across the system;

- what are the outcomes from the Inquiry work / how make it count for children and young adults? There is a great deal of work happening across Somerset and key is bringing all it together;
- what are plans / how will ensure listen to all voices, including protected characteristics? This has been recognised and identified and will be taken forward.

On behalf of the Board the Chair thanked Mr Walton for attending the meeting and said that he would welcome a visit to the school to see the work being done there.

## 6 **Inclusion and engagement in education** - Agenda Item 7

The Chair welcomed the following to the meeting for this agenda item - the Council's Assistant Director, Inclusion, Dr Rob Hart, Mr Phil Curd, Strategic Manager, Access & Additional Learning Needs and Ms Emily Walters, Head Virtual School & Learning Support. Prior to the meeting, the Board had received more detailed PowerPoint information on inclusion and engagement in education. This agenda item linked with the previous agenda item on the Inclusion Inquiry.

At the meeting, the presenters gave an overview PowerPoint presentation which drew out the main points and issues, covering the following - school attendance, exclusions and suspensions and elective home education, and the role of the Inclusion Partnership Boards; details on key priorities of supporting inclusion and ensuring a consistent and inclusive offer for all children and young people; information on supporting the most vulnerable and role of the Virtual School which can offer support to schools and settings across a broad range of needs.

Dr Hart outlined some key messages – that this is 'work in progress' and there is still a long way to go. He referred to the impact of the pandemic, and growing challenges and levels of need and outlined what are focussing on - in terms of the right support offer, easy to access, a relationship-based approach, working with families and schools and a partnership approach, with schools working together to support and challenge. Dr Hart referred to the more detailed slide pack which provided more information and details on these points.

The Chair thanked Dr Hart, Ms Walters and Mr Curd for the detailed information and for the overview presentation. The Board then discussed the presentation, covering the following – rationale for Inclusion Inquiry and focus on SEND; transition; data on young people not in education, training or employment (NEETs); Parent Carer Forum; anxiety amongst children and young people and families; linking support / role of voluntary sector; how parents and

carers' views were included in the Inclusion Inquiry; what 'success' / 'improvement' will look like; information on pupil referral units; elective home education.

In response, Dr Hart explained that the rationale for the Inclusion Inquiry being set up was the WSoA, which identified that children and young people on SEN were missing out on education as they have been disproportionately impacted and the focus is on engagement and hearing the voices of children and young people as well. Mr Walton said that the data dashboard, referred to in the previous agenda item, will really help and will be a real strength going forward as will the Inclusion Partnership Boards. Dr Hart also said that the Parent Carer Forum has been instrumental in the work around the development of an outcomes framework. The vital work of the PSFA was highlighted and Mr Curd referred to the work of education safeguarding and early help front door and about the work with pupils who are electively home educated. Dr Hart also talked about the focus on early intervention and for schools, parents etc to have confidence in the process and support and decisions being taken.

The Chair thanked all the speakers for the excellent presentation and full discussion and the following matters need to be followed up – how best to share best practice and being open and transparent (data offer), signposting, how bring everyone together.

## 7 **Homes for Children** - Agenda Item 8

The Chair welcomed the Council's Assistant Director Commissioning & Performance, Ms Helen Price to the meeting for this agenda item. Ms Price gave a PowerPoint presentation which updated the Board on homes for children, high needs fostering and therapeutic education, which followed on from the presentation to Members in June 2021.

The Council has now appointed Homes 2 Inspire, Fostering2Inspire and Shaw Education Trust (all part of the Shaw Trust) as the strategic partner to deliver the service and have almost secured home one and are looking for home two. The Council has also been successful in its bid to the DfE for additional capital funding (£1.026m). The Institute of Public Care (Oxford Brooks) are conducting an evaluation, including what worked well and lessons to be learnt. In summary, Ms Price highlighted: -

- the innovation approach used and rationale for the approach, in terms of rising costs but not outcomes and fragmentation of lives;
- the involvement of children and young people, and that providers liked the values based approach;
- will offer different experience of homes and support which is more stable;

- will offer better value for money, controlling spend, blending care to make effective use of resources;
- have secured an experienced, diverse and good Not For Profit (NFP) provider, which is also making significant investment;
- there has been huge interest and are also supporting other Councils to do something similar.

The Chair thanked Ms Price for the update and that the enthusiasm and commitment is self evident and that he was excited about the project.

The Board then discussed the presentation and raised the following – the importance of interpersonal relationships with staff and young people and the recruitment and retention of staff; ages of children and young people in homes, schooling and where homes might be located; contract questions; support around trauma; how placements could work / lived experience; great initiative, imaginative and looks promising.

In response, Ms Price said that will be able to offer strong career pathways for staff. It is a challenging environment to work in and as the provider is a big NFP, will be able to offer something different to staff. With regard to the questions about the contract and its length, Ms Price explained that it is a strategic partnership with integrated management arrangement and the provider has a lot of experience and good track record in delivery and it will be a 10-year partnership. Ms Price also spoke about the proposed model for the service for the children and young people, which will be flexible and will feel a different experience.

The Chair thanked Ms Price for the detailed update and agreed that an update in 6 months be added to the Committee Work Programme.

## 8 **Items for information** - Agenda Item 9

The advisory board noted that the following information item would now be circulated to members following the meeting - Trauma Informed Somerset.

## 9 **Any other urgent items of business** - Agenda Item 10

The Chair said that as this was the last formal meeting of the Committee of the 5-year period he wanted to place on record his thanks to Committee members, Cabinet members and support officers. He thanked the Vice Chair, Cllr Rod Williams for his help and support and that it had been an honour to be Chair of the Committee.

The Chair also said that it had been disappointing that more Committee members and senior leaders had not attended the meeting, which was echoed by other Committee members.

**(The meeting ended at 12.55 pm)**

**CHAIR**

## Scrutiny for Policies Children and Families Committee Work Programme 2022 - 23

Committee meeting dates / proposed agenda items	Lead Officer/Item Lead
<b>20 June 2022 @ 2 pm</b>	
Family Safeguarding - overview	Claire Winter
School Place Planning	Amelia Walker
<b>5 September 2022 @ 10 am provisionally</b>	
Homes for children in Somerset	Assistant Director Commissioning
Education Strategy for Somerset – progress update	Amelia Walker
<b>to be scheduled</b>	
SEND / Progress update on Written Statement of Action	Dr Rob Hart
Ofsted Inspection - update	Claire Winter
Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's) - Trauma Informed Somerset – possible workshop item	To be confirmed

**Note:** Members of the Scrutiny Committee and all other Members of Somerset County Council are invited to contribute items for inclusion in the work programme. Please contact Fiona Abbott, Democratic Services (01823) 357628 & [democraticservicesteam@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservicesteam@somerset.gov.uk) who will assist you in submitting your item.

(What impact does that have on Children in Somerset?)

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## **Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee Meetings Overview 2021 – 2022**

The Committee considered a broad number of issues at its meetings in the 2021 – 2022 Municipal Year, and these have included: -

- Homes for children
- Education performance data
- Development of the Partnership Children & Young People's Plan 2022 - 2025
- Update on our Task and Finish group on School Exclusions
- SCC business plan
- Task and Finish Group on the continuity of Children's Services through LGR
- SCC response to Afghan refugee position
- Experience of younger children in care
- Changes to education governance arrangements in Somerset; development of education strategy for Somerset
- Education, Health and Care – assessments and plans
- Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership
- West Somerset Opportunity Area
- Update on the Written Statement of Action
- Supporting Eco- friendly schools
- Children's Services Business Plan and resourcing through MTFP
- Inclusion Inquiry and inclusion and engagement in education
- Several items for information

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