

SCRUTINY FOR POLICIES, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMITTEE

Monday 16 January 2023

1.00 pm Luttrell Room , County Hall,
Taunton, TA1 4DY



To: The 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 S Hart, Cllr B Height, Cllr J Hunt, Cllr J Kenton, Cllr E Potts-Jones, Cllr M Lovell, Cllr J Snell.

Mrs R Hobbs, Mrs E Tipper and The Revd T Osmond – co-opted members

All Somerset County Council Members are invited to attend.

Issued By Scott Wooldridge, Monitoring Officer and Head of Governance and Democratic Services - 6 January 2023

For further information about the meeting, please contact Neil Milne on 01823 357628 or neil.milne@somerset.gov.uk or Fiona Abbott on 01823 357628 or fiona.abbott@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

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



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AGENDA

Item Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee - 1.00 pm Monday 16 January 2023

****Information on the Committee****

**** 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 Minutes from the previous meeting held on 12 December 2022 (Pages 11 - 16)

The Committee is asked to confirm the minutes are accurate.

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 17 - 30)

To receive an update from the Governance Manager. To assist the discussion, the following documents are attached:

- (a) The Committee's work programme
- (b) The Committee's outcome tracker

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](#)

6 Scrutiny update on the Ofsted Action Plan

Item Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee - 1.00 pm Monday 16 January 2023

To receive an update on the Ofsted Action Plan. The item will be led by the Council's Acting Assistant Director Community and Strategy, Paul Shallcross.

Note – the Chair will allow 30 minutes for this agenda item.

7 **Return Home Interviews process and progress** (Pages 31 - 36)

To receive report and update from the Council's Head of Service, Prevention, Lise Bird.

Note – the Chair will allow 30 minutes for this agenda item.

8 **Verbal Updates on Task and Finish Groups - (a) external placements; (b) home to school transport**

To receive updates on the work of the Committee's Task and Finish Groups: -

- (a) Sufficiency of external placements
- (b) Home to School Transport

Note – the Chair will allow 30 minutes for this agenda item.

9 **Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's) - Trauma Informed Somerset practice model and implementation**

To receive report and presentation.

This item will be led by the Council's Joint Commissioner, Children's and Health, Vikki Hearn and colleagues from CAMHS and Public Health.

Note – the Chair will allow 1 hour for this workshop agenda item.

10 **Items for Information - Standing Item**

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 fiona.abbott@somerset.gov.uk in the first instance and before the date of the meeting.

Item Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee - 1.00 pm Monday 16
January 2023

11 **Any other urgent items of business**

The Chair may raise any items of urgent business.

Information about the Committee

This Scrutiny Committee covers the full range of functions covered by the Lead Member for Children and Families. The key focus of the Committee is to assist the Lead Member, the Executive, the Council and its partners to improve the life chances of all children in Somerset through effective and joined up approaches to the delivery of services.

The membership of the Committee includes 2 co-opted church representatives, 2 co-opted parent governor representatives, 2 school governor representatives and 1 representative from the Schools Forum. These co-opted members have voting rights on education matters.

The Committee has a useful 'glossary of terms' document, and this can be found on the website on the following link – [Glossary of Terms](#)

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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 or telephone 01823 357628.

They can also be accessed via the council's website on 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 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 if you have any questions or concerns.

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SCRUTINY FOR POLICIES, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Meeting of the Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee held in the Luttrell Room - County Hall, Taunton, on Monday 12 December 2022 at 1.00 pm

Present: Cllr L Redman (Chair), Cllr O Patrick (Vice-Chair), Cllr J Baker, Cllr S Carswell, Cllr A Hadley, Cllr S Hart, Cllr A Hendry (substitute for Cllr S Aujila), Cllr J Hunt (attended virtually), Cllr J Kenton, Cllr E Potts-Jones (attended virtually) and Cllr M Lovell
The Revd T Osmond – co-opted member

Other Members present: Cllr T Munt, Cllr M Chilcott, Cllr Cllr A Dance, Cllr F Nicholson, Cllr S Osborne and Cllr L Trimnell

Other Members present virtually: Cllr C Ellis, Cllr A Bradford, Cllr H Shearer, Cllr M Stanton and Cllr R Woods

Apologies for absence: Cllr S Aujla (substituted by Cllr A Hendry), Cllr J Snell, R Hobbs (co-opted member) and E Tipper (co-opted member)

1 Declarations of Interest - Agenda Item 2

There were no new declarations of interest made at the meeting.

2 Minutes from the previous meeting held on Monday 7 November 2022 - Agenda Item 3

The Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 7 November 2022 were approved and signed as a correct record.

3 Public Question Time - Agenda Item 4

There were no questions asked, statements made or petitions presented.

At the last meeting, Mr Whittaker had asked a number of questions relating to the Ofsted Inspection of Children's Services and to policies and procedures in Somerset in particular relating to Special Guardians. The Executive lead member, Cllr Tessa Munt advised the Committee that she had met with Mr Whittaker and that this conversation is ongoing. The written response / outcomes will be shared with the Committee.

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

The Committee considered and noted the Committee's current work programme and outcome tracker and the Executive's Forward Plan of planned key decisions in the coming months.

The Vice Chair queried whether the Education White Paper item still needed to be listed as a future agenda item in the outcome tracker – the Assistant Director Education Partnerships and Skills said that the item should remain on the programme until the position is clearer.

The work plan and outcome tracker were NOTED.

5 **Education Strategy for Somerset - progress update** - Agenda Item 6

The Council's Assistant Director Education and Partnerships and Skills, Ms Walker advised that the Strategy is still being discussed (with SLT, Executive and Department for Education) and will bring back to Scrutiny / engage with Scrutiny as part of any consultation.

Item DEFERRED.

6 **LA Maintained Schools - Core Offer - Business Case** - Agenda Item 7

Pre Executive item

The Committee considered a report and received a PowerPoint presentation from the Council's Assistant Director Education and Partnerships and Skills, Ms Walker regarding the proposals for changing the current support offer for Local Authority Maintained Schools.

The Committee held a thorough discussion of the options after hearing from the Executive Member and receiving a presentation to further explain the background for the proposals, noting there had been a yearlong conversation held with Somerset schools.

During the discussion the following topics were mentioned and answered and further details were provided regarding:

- Changing the financial arrangement between the LA and schools;
- Giving choice to schools, the base offer and bespoke offer
- The proposals would not affect pupil premium
- Limiting the net increase, in cost, to schools to 60%
- Maintaining capacity for schools
- Changes to grant funding

The Committee welcomed the presentation and were generally supportive of the proposed direction of travel and proposals for enhancing the Councils relationship with Somerset Schools. It was noted that all Schools would be able to utilise the admissions service and that a previous underfunding of the school appeals service had been addressed.

The Committee accepted the proposals and endorsed their presentation to the Executive at its meeting on 14 December 2022 by the Lead Member noting the contingency fund for schools is increased from £7k to £17.5k and requested:

- The committee were generally supportive of the adoption of option 3; and
- That the proposals be monitored with regular reports to ensure mitigation where necessary and to limit any negative, detrimental impact to Children, Schools and Schools Staff and that an update report be provided 6 months after implementation (October 2023).

7 **Somerset Connect and links to the Frome LCN development** - Agenda Item 8

The Committee considered a report and received a presentation from the Council's Assistant Director Commissioning, R Selwyn and Strategic Manager Public Health, P Temple, who provided details of the Somerset Connect pilot, (a community-based model) and links to the Frome LCN development. M Wide Deputy Leader Frome Town Council and Chair of Frome Area LCN also joined meeting.

Somerset Connect is an emerging jointly-commissioned (children, adults, and health) community-based model which seeks to better connect, and add value to the work already taking place in communities across the County. The model focuses on three key areas of improvement:

- Access – ensuring families and people in need can easily access the information, guidance and support they need. Removing any existing barriers caused by siloed working.
- Connections – ensuring those services working in communities (health, social care, schools and voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sectors (VCFSE)) can easily connect to ensure the right support, in the right place, at the right time is available.
- Relationships – ensuring that through every contact families and people in need are being empowered to be resilient, building their own community and networks of support.

The Committee made a number of comments, which were responded to at the meeting: -supportive of work, but don't reinvent wheel and learn from other areas; reconsider re consider what called, as 'Somerset Connect' sounds similar to 'Somerset Direct'; connections between people are important; need to include local members (good resource); careful that don't end up with a digital

by default offer; how will hubs be staffed; how ensure appropriate signposting happens; learn from the warm-hubs and full county wide roll out.

In response to the points made, Mr Selwyn confirmed there will be an evaluation of the pilot in the new year (tender); with regard to staffing of the hubs, will provide some support in terms of capacity in each of the primary care network areas; the point made about signposting is a good one; will be clear that its an offer of help available to all families.

On behalf of the Committee the Chair thanked Mr Selwyn, Ms Temple for the report and presentation and Mr Wide for attending.

8 **Verbal Update on Task and Finish Groups** - Agenda Item 9

The Chair provided a verbal update on the Committee's Task and Finish Groups and also advised that the original timeline has been amended due to the SEND Inspection: -

Sufficiency of External Placements

- Membership of the Task and Finish Group - Cllr Leigh Redman (Chair), Cllr Simon Carswell, Cllr Susannah Hart, Cllr Martin Lovell and Ruth Hobbs
- The Group held an initial meeting on 6 December 2022 to discuss numbers of external placements / data. Will meet again on 20 December and then 18 January 2023.
- Will provide further report to next meeting (January 2023)

Home to School Transport

- Membership of the Task and Finish Group – Cllr John Hunt, Cllr Evie Potts-Jones, Cllr A Hadley and Rev'd Tobie Osmond
- Will provide further details to next meeting (January 2023)

The Chair also advised that the Scrutiny at Somerset Council Task and Finish Group is due to hold its first meeting on 14 December 2022. The purpose of the Task and Finish Group is to review the current approach, structure and resource of scrutiny at Somerset County Council and Somerset District Councils and agree an approach to the structure and approach to scrutiny at Somerset Council from 1st April 2023.

The Committee NOTED the updates.

9 **Items for Information - Standing Item** - Agenda Item 10

The Committee noted the following items for information: -

- (a) 2022 Key Stage assessment results – correspondence sent to the Leader Somerset County Council on 14 November and Response received on 15 November 2022
- (b) Somerset [Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report 2021 – 22](#) - circulated on 15 November 2022
- (c) [Peninsula Fostering Framework Agreement](#) - Decision taken on 16 November 2022 – circulated on 21 November 2022

10 **Any other urgent items of business** - Agenda Item 11

There were no other items of business.

(The meeting ended at 3.30 pm)

CHAIR

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Scrutiny for Policies Children and Families Committee Work Plan 2022 - 2023

Overarching themes	Committee meeting dates / proposed agenda items	Lead Officer/Item Lead
12 December @ 1 pm		
Universal Education	Education Strategy for Somerset – progress update	Assistant Director Education Partnerships and Skills Amelia Walker ITEM DEFERRED
Universal Education	LA Maintained Schools – core offer / traded offer – Business Case	Assistant Director Education Partnerships and Skills Amelia Walker
Social Care and commissioning	Somerset Connect and links to the Frome LCN development	Assistant Director Commissioning Richard Selwyn, Strategic Manager, Vikki Hearn and Strategic Manager Public Health, Patsy Temple
	Task and Finish Groups – verbal update (a) Sufficiency of external placements (b) Home to school transport	
Items for Information – Standing Item	Items for Information: (a) 2022 key Stage assessment results – correspondence sent to the Leader Somerset County Council on 14 November and Response received on 15 November 2022; (b) Somerset Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report 2021 – 22 - circulated on 15 November 2022 (c) Peninsula Fostering Framework Agreement - Decision taken on 16 November 2022 – circulated on 21 November 2022	
16 January 2023 @ 1 pm		
	Scrutiny update on Ofsted Action Plan	Acting Assistant Director Community and Strategy, Paul Shallcross

The focus for the Committee is – what impact does this have on the children in Somerset?

Scrutiny for Policies Children and Families Committee Work Plan 2022 - 2023

	Return Home Interview process and progress		Lise Bird, Head of Service, Prevention
	Task and Finish Groups – update and reports (c) Sufficiency of external placements (d) Home to school transport		
Workshop	Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's) - Trauma Informed Somerset practice model and implementation		Vikki Hearn, Joint Strategic Commissioner Children's and Health Mark Conway – CAMHS (or colleague) Jo Leak, Public Health Tim Cockerill, Principal EP
Items for Information – Standing Item			
<i>Cross cutting</i>	<i>Budget items – Medium Term Financial Planning (MTFP) 2023-24 Joint Scrutiny Meeting of Scrutiny Committees - 1 February 2023 @ Canalside</i>		
Joint meeting with Adults & Health Scrutiny – date to be confirmed			
	Draft Integrated Care Strategy		Maria Heard
	Self-harm / mental health issues		
6 March 2023 @ 1 pm			
SEND & Inclusion	SEND Local Area Inspection Response to SEND Green Paper – and policy proposals		Assistant Director Inclusion Dr Rob Hart
Universal Education	Children missing out on education (numbers, who, reasons) Education Strategy and detailed 2022 key stage assessment results		Assistant Director Education Partnerships and Skills Amelia Walker
Universal Education	Provisional – Academisation – progress update		Assistant Director Education Partnerships and Skills Amelia Walker

The focus for the Committee is – what impact does this have on the children in Somerset?

Scrutiny for Policies Children and Families Committee Work Plan 2022 - 2023

Workshop - to be scheduled		
Universal Education	The disadvantage gap - what we know and options to address, to include health impact of inequalities in education	Public Health, SEND, social workers, case studies, wider health organisations, FSM and pupil premium data

Items to be scheduled / recommendations for Scrutiny Forward Plan
Evaluation of the West Somerset Opportunity Area – to be scheduled

Scrutiny for Policies Children and Families Committee Work Plan 2022 - 2023

Universal Education

- Pupil place planning
- Disadvantage gap
- Academisation
- LA maintained capacity and support

SEND and Inclusion

- Attendance
- Written Statement of Action
- Response to SEND & Alternative Provision Green paper
- SEND Strategy

Social Care and Commissioning

- Family safeguarding
- Early Help
- Placement sufficiency
- Strategic partnership
- The Care Review

Cross-cutting items:

- Long-term financial planning that improves outcomes for children (MTP)
- Involving young people and the community in scrutiny
- Mental health and emotional wellbeing (with health partners)
- Medium Term Financial Plan (MFTP) – Children & Families Budgets

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 who will assist you in submitting your item.

The focus for the Committee is – what impact does this have on the children in Somerset?

Scrutiny for Policies Children & Families Committee Outcome Tracker 2022 - 23

Agenda items	Lead / Owner	Agreed Outcome	RAG Status
Meeting held - 20 June 2022			
Family Safeguarding Review	Louise Palmer	<p>PowerPoint presentation from the Council's Strategic Commissioner, in Children's Services Louise Palmer and the Council's Head of Service for Assessment and Safeguarding in Children's Social Care, Paul Shawcross who provided an implementation update on Family Safeguarding in Somerset.</p> <p>Noted the successes and evaluation undertaken by York Consulting which is due in the next month, the positive interim report headlines and issues for consideration - impact of the pandemic on the implementation; the 'workbook'; increasing complexity of cases. It was agreed that the Evaluation Report be circulated to the Committee.</p>	Pending
School Place planning	Amelia Walker	<p>PowerPoint presentation from the Council's Assistant Director, Education Partnerships and Skills, Amelia Walker, the Assistant Director Inclusion, Dr Rob Hart and the Strategic Manager, Phil Curd was provided and offered an overview of school and early years places.</p> <p>The Committee would receive an overview of the new Education White Paper at a future meeting.</p>	Pending
Meeting held – 25 July 2022			
Work plan		<p>Considered and noted the Committee's current work programme and the Executive Forward Plan of planned key decisions in coming months, including Executive meetings. It was agreed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request a 'briefing on a page' about the current situation regarding school exclusions • Request the former Committee's Task and Finish Group report on School Exclusions be circulated • That job titles as well as names, be included on the work plan • Members were invited to email the Chair and Vice Chair if they have any further items they would like the Committee to focus on 	<p>AD Inclusion</p> <p>Clerk - completed</p> <p>Clerk - completed</p>

Scrutiny for Policies Children & Families Committee Outcome Tracker 2022 - 23

Education and Inclusion Services Redesign	Amelia Walker / Dr Rob Hart	PowerPoint presentation from the Council's Assistant Director, Inclusion Dr Rob Hart, who presented the proposals for the Education and Inclusion Services redesign. It was agreed that the Chair and Vice Chair, relevant officers and the lead Member for Children and Families will discuss best route for the Scrutiny Committee to consider the proposals	Item for Information at 7 Nov 2022 mtg
Update on budgetary pressures in Children's Services	Claire Winter	Item DEFERRED	5 September 2022
Information Item		Children & Young Peoples Plan – public facing document	
5 September 2022			
Work Plan		A ' glossary of terms ' has recently been published on the Council's website. Agreed that Home to School Transport presentation would come to next meeting	Oct 22 mtg
2022 Key Stage assessment results for Somerset	Amelia Walker	PowerPoint presentation from the Council's Assistant Director, Education Partnerships and Skills, Amelia Walker, who provided a data and standards update, including the early indications from the 2022 Key Stage assessment results for Somerset and the areas of focus. Testing generates vast quantities of data and therefore accurate and reliable results to pupil level will not be in the public domain until January 2023. The national data is released in October and the Committee would like to see that when can (possibly November mtg). Ms Walker said that she would circulate the presentation given to the informal meeting last year which provided an introduction to education data and performance. The Committee had a broad discussion on the issues raised in the presentation. On behalf of the Committee the Chair thanked Ms Walker for the informative presentation.	Nov 22 mtg Clerk - completed

Scrutiny for Policies Children & Families Committee Outcome Tracker 2022 - 23

Academisation - moving towards 2030	Amelia Walker	PowerPoint presentation on issues from the Council's Assistant Director, Education Partnerships and Skills, Amelia Walker.	Progress update in Feb / March 2023
Update on budgetary pressures in Children's Services	Claire Winter	<p>PowerPoint presentation from the Council's Deputy Director of Children's Services, Claire Winter, who provided an update on the budgetary pressures in Children's Services.</p> <p>The key areas of pressure are external placements for children in care and secondly education transport – home to school and SEND transport and Ms Winter outlined the key performance cost drivers and actions / activity to address pressures. It was confirmed that the education transport strategy will be considered at the Place Scrutiny Committee on 6 September 2022 and will be brought to this Committee in October 2022.</p> <p>It was agreed that the following will be circulated (a) 'Staying Put' policy; (b) numbers in residential care data for 21/22 and how we sit with statistical neighbours.</p> <p>The Committee also congratulated the department for winning the 2022 LGC award for the fostering campaign. It was agreed that Children's Services budget monitoring will be discussed at the next meeting. The Chair also highlighted that at some point the Committee may consider setting up a task and finish group looking at external care placements, in conjunction with Corporate Parenting Board.</p>	On going work by Committee
Homes for children in Somerset – progress update	Daniel Moncrieff	PowerPoint presentation from the Council's Strategic Manager, Daniel Moncrieff who provided a detailed update on the strategic partnership between SCC and 'The Shaw Trust' to deliver homes for complex children and young people including homes for children, high needs fostering and therapeutic education.	Completed
Information Items		<p>Noted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Task & Finish Group Report on School Exclusions – report to Cabinet 23 September 2020 (b) Elective home education – report to Committee 3 March 2021 	Completed

Scrutiny for Policies Children & Families Committee Outcome Tracker 2022 - 23

3 October 2022			
Work Plan		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) progress on Ofsted inspection Children's Social Care Services action plan – will be detailed report and debate at the November meeting (b) detailed 2022 Key Stage assessment results for Somerset – add to January 2023 meeting 	
Budget Monitoring	Rob Hart	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Noted the proposed actions to address the budget trajectory, including the Children's Transformation Programme, which focuses effort on key areas of demand / pressures (b) Noted that the Executive has asked the Committee to review the 2022/23 budget monitoring position for its services and agreed that the Chair and Vice Chair will discuss further establishing a Task & Finish Group to look at the 'top spends', transport and external placements. 	<p>On going</p> <p>Agreed November mtg</p>
Home to School Transport	Phil Curd John Perrett	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) noted the update and current position and proposed next steps and development (b) agreed to add school transport to the Committee's work plan for refreshed Council policy (to reflect statutory guidance and possible discretionary changes (c) agreed that the Chair and Vice Chair to discuss further a possible Task and Finish Group for SEND transport, to include provision for pre and post school club attendance, for example 	<p>Pending</p> <p>Agreed November mtg</p>

Scrutiny for Policies Children & Families Committee Outcome Tracker 2022 - 23

SEND Draft Strategy & Development	Rob Hart Vikki Hearn Ruth Hobbs	<p>(a) Noted the following emerging SEND Strategy Themes which will be underpinned by a number of mission statements, outlining how these will be delivered, for consultation.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Listen, Hear and Respond - Children and young people with SEND and their families will be heard and feel they have choice and control about their lives. Not for me, with me. 2. Working Together and Coordinated - We are working together as a co-ordinated system and at the case level, around the family. 3. Getting Help as Early as Possible - Children, young people and their families are able to access the right support at the right time. 4. Access to the right information, support and provision - Children, young people and their families telling us: "I understand the support and provision that is available to me, and I can access it, if I need it." 5. Preparing for the future - Children and young people have the right skills and options, according to their individual needs, to take control of their future and achieve the ambitions important to them. <p>(b) Asked to see the final report from the Annual Survey when it is available. (c) Asked that the consultation draft of the SEND Strategy be shared with the Committee (d) Agreed that the SEND Strategy be brought back to the Committee after the consultation and engagement has concluded.</p>	Pending
7 November 2022			
Work plan		Agreed to establish 2 task & Finish Groups (a) Sufficiency of external placements; (b) Home to school transport	On going – update to January 2023 mtg
Progress on Ofsted action plan	Paul Shallcross	<p>PowerPoint presentation received and shared with Committee.</p> <p>Draft plan to be shared with Committee Committee to see Improvement Plan in 6 months Noted role of Corporate Parent Board</p>	<p>Clerk – done</p> <p>ACTION Add to work plan</p>

The focus for the Committee is – ‘what impact does this have on the children in Somerset?’

Scrutiny for Policies Children & Families Committee Outcome Tracker 2022 - 23

LA Maintained Schools – core offer / traded offer - overview	Amelia Walker	<p>Presentation on overview of proposed changes to the LA maintained schools core offer</p> <p>AGREED That the report which will be considered at the Executive mtg on 14 December 2022 be shared with the Committee and this to include details of the EIA undertaken.</p> <p>Will be substantive agenda item at Committee’s next meeting.</p>	Full Business Case to December mtg
2022 Key Stage assessment results – national data	Amelia Walker	<p>PowerPoint presentation given on the 2022 education outcomes.</p> <p>In view of the seriousness of the information presented, it was AGREED that the Committee would write to the Leader of the Council expressing alarm and concern and requesting the Executive, as a matter of urgency, task Officers to undertake a review to identify the underlying issues leading to this continued under performance. This review is of critical importance as improvements must be made in Somerset Schools to enable all pupils to achieve better outcomes. The Committee will be closely monitoring progress and will seek reassurance from the Executive and Officers that improvements are being made.</p>	Ongoing
Scrutiny at Somerset Council – to inform the recommendations going to Full Council in February 2023	Jamie Jackson	<p>AGREED that members would be contacted separately, asking for expressions of interest. The Committee NOTED the time commitment involved between mid-November and mid-January 2023.</p>	Ongoing
Information Items		<p>Noted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Briefing on Wyvern Nurseries – Implementation Update – circulated on 27 October 2022 b) SEND, Data and Commissioning FAQ’s - key points from SEND, data and Commissioning workshop on 28 September 2022 – circulated on 11 October 2022 Consultation on SEND Strategy 2023/26 (closes 23 Dec 22) c) Member Development Panel information – circulated on 31 October 2022 d) Education and Inclusion Services redesign / restructure - follow up update – circulated on 28 October 2022 	Completed

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12 December 2022			
LA maintained schools core offer business case	Amelia Walker	<p>Pre Executive item Considered proposals for changing the current support offer, ahead of consideration by the Executive (on 14 December).</p> <p>The Committee welcomed the presentation and were generally supportive of the proposed direction of travel and proposals for enhancing the Councils relationship with Somerset Schools.</p> <p>The Committee accepted the proposals and endorsed their presentation to the Executive at its meeting on 14 December 2022 by the Lead Member noting the contingency fund for schools is increased from £7k to £17.5k and requested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The committee were generally supportive of the adoption of option 3; and • That the proposals be monitored with regular reports to ensure mitigation where necessary and to limit any negative, detrimental impact to Children, Schools and Schools Staff and that an update report be provided 6 months after implementation (October 2023). 	Update to October 2023

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Somerset Connect and links to Frome LCN development	Richard Selwyn / Patsy Temple	<p>Report and presentation on of the Somerset Connect pilot, (a community based model) and links to the Frome LCN development. Somerset Connect is an emerging jointly-commissioned (children, adults, and health) community-based model which seeks to better connect, and add value to the work already taking place in communities across the County.</p> <p>The Committee made a number of comments including – supportive of work, but don't reinvent wheel and learn from other areas; reconsider reconsider what called as 'Somerset Connect' sounds similar to 'Somerset Direct'; connections between people are important; need to include local members (good resource); careful that don't end up with a digital by default offer; how will hubs be staffed; how ensure appropriate signposting happens; learn from the warm-hubs and full county wide roll out</p> <p>There will be an evaluation of the pilot in the new year (tender).</p> <p>On behalf of the Committee the Chair thanked Mr Selwyn, Ms Temple for the report and presentation and Mr Wide for attending.</p>	Completed
Update on Task & Finish Groups		<p>The Chair provided a verbal update on the Committee's Task and Finish Groups and also advised that the original timeline has been amended due to the SEND Inspection: -</p> <p><u>Sufficiency of External Placements</u> - membership of the Task and Finish Group - Cllr Leigh Redman (Chair), Cllr Simon Carswell, Cllr Susannah Hart, Cllr Martin Lovell and Ruth Hobbs; initial meeting held on 6 December 2022 to discuss numbers of external placements / data. Will meet again on 20 December and then 18 January 2023; Will provide further report to next meeting (January 2023)</p> <p><u>Home to School Transport</u> - membership of the Task and Finish Group – Cllr John Hunt, Cllr Evie Potts-Jones, Cllr A Hadley and Rev'd Tobie Osmond; will provide further details to next meeting (January 2023)</p> <p>The <u>Scrutiny at Somerset Council</u> Task and Finish Group is due to hold its first meeting on 14 December 2022.</p>	On going

The focus for the Committee is – 'what impact does this have on the children in Somerset'?

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Information Items	Noted the following: (a) 2022 key Stage assessment results – correspondence sent to the Leader Somerset County Council on 14 November and Response received on 15 November 2022 (b) Somerset Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report 2021 – 22 - circulated on 15 November 2022 (c) Peninsula Fostering Framework Agreement - Decision taken on 16 November 2022 – circulated on 21 November 2022	Completed
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Issues brought forward from last tracker 2017-2022 term of office

- Update from Joint informal workshop with A&H Committee to include Transition arrangements – preparing for adulthood
- Roll out of pantry project etc and support to children & families

The CYPP 2022 - 2025 had been produced following a multi-agency process. The CYPP had three priorities: keeping children and young people safe (priority 1); supporting physical and emotional health and resilience (priority 2); enabling young people to learn and thrive (priority 3)

[Somerset Children & Young People’s Plan – SSCP \(safeguardingsomerset.org.uk\)](https://safeguardingsomerset.org.uk)

Version as at 20/12/2022

Completed	Action complete and will be removed from tracker for next meeting and retained on Master Tracker document.
Pending	Action on-going or plans in place to address.
Incomplete	No action currently in place with a minimum of 3 months since action agreed.

The focus for the Committee is – ‘what impact does this have on the children in Somerset?’

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Somerset County Council
Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families
Committee
16th January 2023

RESPONSE TO OFSTED FINDINGS – MISSING RETURN INTERVIEWS

Lead Officer: Lise BIRD, Head of Service, Prevention

Author: Louise HULL, Team Leader, FIS

Contact Details: louise.hull@somerset.gov.uk

Executive Member: Tessa Munt

Division and Local Member:

1. Summary

- 1.1.** The inspection of the Council's Children's Social Care Services in 2022 rated the services Good across the board and named two areas for improvement and this report provides details on return home interviews. Somerset local authority offers all children who go missing a return home interview, and the Council is working towards the improved take up of return home interviews, with improved use of data to inform individual and service planning.

2. Issues for consideration / Recommendations

- 2.1.** Missing Return Interviews are completed by a small sub team within the Family Intervention Service (FIS) – preventing missing and exploitation team (PMEX)).

Having a dedicated team within FIS who focus on missing children has enabled us to identify trends, areas of concern and patterns that may otherwise be missed, as where we see groups of children going missing several different social workers or FIS workers are likely to be involved.

- 2.2.** PMEX comprises one full time Team Leader, 4 FIWs delivering case work with young people being exploited or at risk of exploitation and 4 workers completing Missing Return Interviews (MRIs) and associated work. The significant uplift in demand is causing ongoing capacity issues which will hamper attempts to improve

performance in this area.

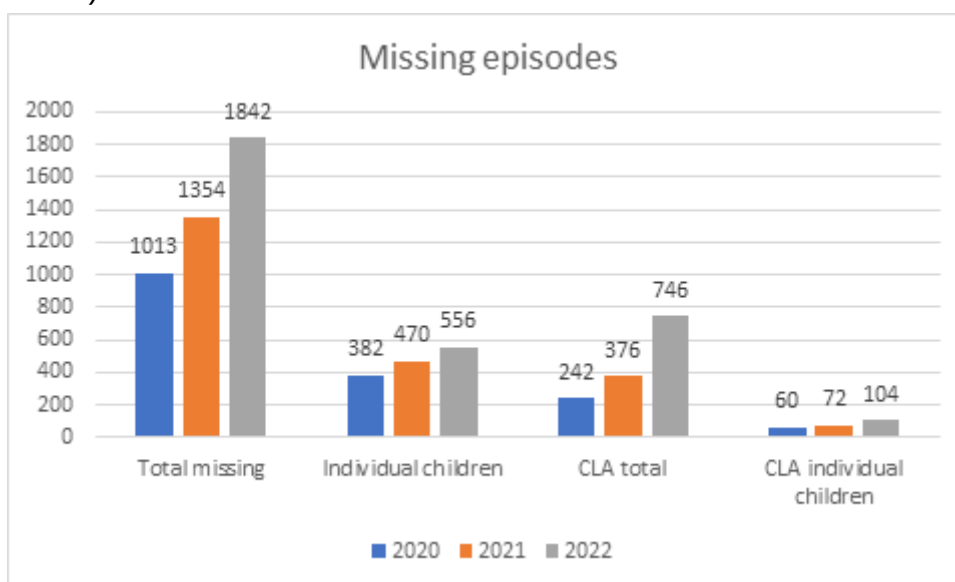
The Committee is asked to consider and comment upon this report.

Some case studies will be shared at the meeting.

3. Background

3.1. Overview of missing episodes

The numbers of missing reports continue to increase year on year increasing from 1013 in 2020 to 1842 so far this year (up to 31st Nov 2022).



The largest increase is within the Children Looked after cohort where we have seen a 208% rise in missing reports (this includes children from other local authorities placed in Somerset) with overall numbers having increased by 81%.

3.2. Managing Risk

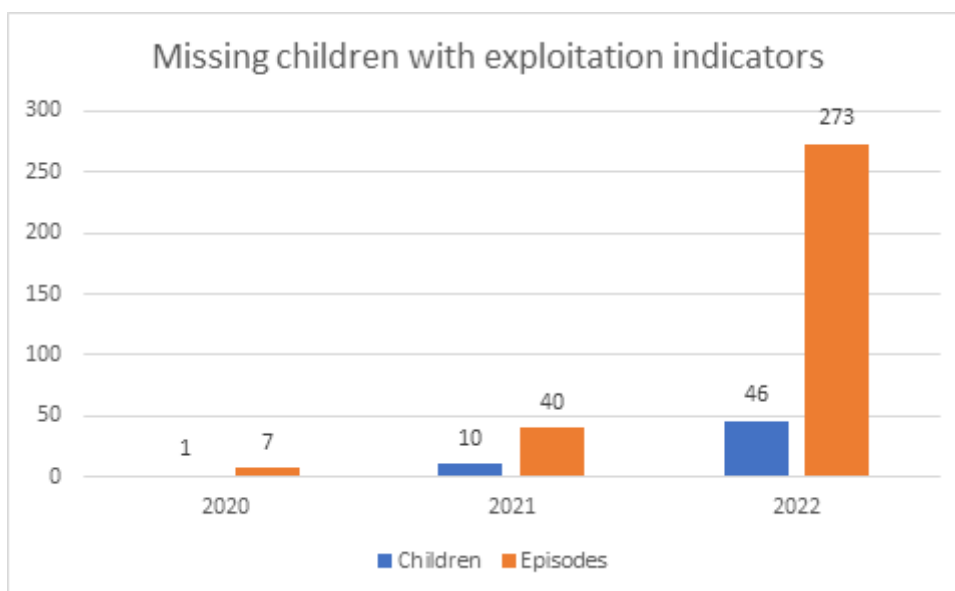
Over the last 3 years we have seen an increase in identified children with a risk around exploitation.

The increase could be attributed to better identification and recording through the work completed by our lead Social Workers for Exploitation roles and the multi-agency discussions which take place weekly around children who are reported missing and thought

to be a risk of harm (High Risk Misper Meeting).

It would also be valid to assume that the increase of known factors, such as county lines and gang type activity, into Somerset has had some impact on the rise.

Whilst the increase in the number of children identified as having an exploitation risk in 2022 was high, the number of missing episodes shows that we had a cohort of children who were being reported missing on a regular basis, rather than more individual children going missing.



4. Consultations undertaken

4.1. Actions taken following OFSTED

Pre Ofsted it was recognised that work needed to be undertaken to refresh and redesign the service, and the work detailed below was largely already in hand but not yet at the point of realisation of benefits:

- I. The ***return home interview form*** has been reviewed and reworked to ensure capture of all the information gathered allowing effective data reporting (reporting is in final completion stages with BI colleagues).
- II. The recording process has been changed to reflect a child has

been given the opportunity to discuss a missing episode through direct contact, even if they then decline. The number of children subsequently being recorded as having engaged has risen by 26% since Ofsted visited.

- III. Work completed with Avon and Somerset Police to roll out the [Philomena Protocol](#), which is ongoing into the spring of 2023)
- IV. Updated the Local Guidance for Missing Children (awaiting sign off) to ensure *meaningful social work contact post return* is better recorded.
- V. Engaged the wider CSC Children's Social Care management team (through the County Managers' Meeting process) to refresh the purpose and process of MRI work and identify challenges and barriers.

5. Implications

5.1. Actions still required and in progress

- I. Somerset Missing Protocol to be updated in line of the above developments
- II. Increase the correct recording of meaningful contact by social workers following missing episodes to allow accurate data capture (During the period Aug to Oct 2022 meaningful SW contact recorded on 27% of Children Looked After? CLA cases – note this does include children placed in Somerset by other LAs which we cannot separate for data purposes).
- III. Collaboration with CSC to refine the number of duplicated reports to streamline information and maximise effective safety planning
- IV. Dashboard data to be reviewed once other parts of the process are finalised.

5.2. Challenges

- I. Capacity within the missing team to offer RHIs within 72 hours of being informed of return. Increased demand and staff absence has impacted success rates
- II. Increased volume of CLA being reported missing. Impact of the Philomena Protocol to be monitored.

- III. Increased volume of calls to EDT concerning children not in placement or at their home where the police do not consider them as missing creates significant additional work across SCC teams in gaining additional information and completing background admin tasks

- IV. Separating Somerset children from other LA children in the case management system data

6. Background papers

6.1. None.

Note For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author

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