

Somerset Council – Summary of Outcomes taken by the Scrutiny Committee - Childrens and Families on Wednesday, 13 September 2023

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

A1	Apologies for Absence	Apologies were received from Councillor J Snell (substituted by Cllr R Wilkins) and Councillor J Baker (no substitute).
A2	Declarations of Interest	<p>The following declarations of interest were made at the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Cllr F Nicholson – agenda item relating to educational modelling – Frome (item 7 refers) – co chair of Governors of 5 schools in Minehead and area mentioned in discussions – personal. (b) Cllr P Clayton – agenda relating to Regional Adoption Agency (item 8 refers) – have consultancy contract and independent panel member for Adopt South West – personal. (c) Ruth Hobbs – co-opted member – going through mediation with Somerset Council regarding child’s EHCP – personal.
A3	Minutes from the Previous Meeting held on 12 July 2023	Resolved that the minutes of the Scrutiny Committee - Childrens and Families held on 12 July 2023 be confirmed as a correct record.
A5	Scrutiny Committee - Children and Families Work Programme	<p>The Committee received and noted the current work programme and outcome tracker and the Executive’s Forward Plan.</p> <p>The Chair highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The additional meeting on Wednesday 25 October at 10 am at Deane House

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		<p>,Taunton will be a joint meeting with the Scrutiny Committee – Adults and Health;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The meeting on 15 November will be held in the Sedgemoor Room, Bridgwater; • There will be an additional meeting on Tuesday 12 December at 10 am and this will be held in the Chamber at Brympton Way, Yeovil; • To note that Committee Members will be invited to attend the Adults and Health Committee on 7 December for the following agenda item – Overview of Crime & Disorder.
A6	2023/24 Children's Services - Budget Monitoring	<p>The Committee received a presentation on the 23/24 Children’s Services budget as at the end of July 2023 (Month 4).</p> <p>The 23/24 Children’s Services (General Fund) has a net budget of £123.1m and has forecast overspend of £8.8m (7.1% of budget). This variance is in External Placements. The full year projection is £131.9m. The key cost drivers, risks, issues and opportunities were highlighted.</p> <p>Referenced the Dedicated Schools Grant (DGS) which has £14.1m forecast in year deficit; cumulative £34.8m deficit. The key cost drivers including with the High Needs Block, risks, issues and opportunities were highlighted.</p>

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		The Committee asked a number of questions and made a number of comments and that going forward the information be provided in advance of the meeting.
A7	Education Modelling - Frome - next steps	<p>The Committee received a presentation which provided an update on the on-going work and discussions about education structures in the Frome area.</p> <p>The Committee welcomed and noted the update.</p>
A8	Regional Adoption Agency	<p>The Committee considered a report regarding the proposed changes to the Regional Adoption Agency (Adopt South West).</p> <p>This sought the Committees’ views on the request from Cornwall Council to join the Regional Adoption Agency; the request from Adopt South West to revise the funding formula for each Council’s contribution to the agency; the options in terms of the timescale for phasing in any agreed change in funding arising from a change in formula.</p> <p>The Committee was generally supportive of the proposal and that the position re Isle of Scilly (Ofsted judgement) be included in the decision making report.</p>
A9	External Placements Task and Finish Group - response from Executive on recommendations	The Committee had considered and agreed the report of the External Placements Task and Finish Group at its meeting on 6 March 2023 .

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	made by the Task and Finish Group	Further to the meeting on 4 May 2023 , the Committee considered the update from Cllr Tessa Munt, the Executive lead member for Childrens Services on the recommendations made by the External Placements Task and Finish Group. The Committee noted the update.
A10	Learning from the West Somerset Opportunity Area	The Committee noted the presentation on the learning from the West Somerset Opportunity Area programme.
A11	Items for Information - Standing Item	Noted that the briefing on Education Data will now be circulated after the meeting. There will be a presentation on this at the November meeting.