

# Public Agenda Pack



Notice of Meeting of

## **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - CHILDRENS AND FAMILIES**

**Wednesday, 13 September 2023 at 10.00 am**

**Luttrell Room - County Hall, Taunton TA1 4DY**

To: The members of the Scrutiny Committee - Childrens and Families

Chair: Councillor Leigh Redman  
Vice-chair: Councillor Evie Potts-Jones

Councillor Suria Aujla	Councillor Jason Baker
Councillor Simon Carswell	Councillor Peter Clayton
Councillor Caroline Ellis	Councillor Andy Hadley
Councillor John Hunt	Councillor Jenny Kenton
Councillor Martin Lovell	Councillor Frances Nicholson
Councillor Jeny Snell	Ruth Hobbs – co-opted member
The Revd Tobie Osmond – co-opted member	Eileen Tipper – co-opted member

---

For further information about the meeting, including how to join the meeting virtually, please contact Democratic Services on (01823) 357628 or email: [democraticserviceteam@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:democraticserviceteam@somerset.gov.uk).

All members of the public are welcome to attend our meetings and ask questions or make a statement **by giving advance notice** in writing or by e-mail to the Monitoring Officer at email: [democraticserviceteam@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:democraticserviceteam@somerset.gov.uk) by **5pm on Thursday, 7 September 2023**.

This meeting will be open to the public and press, subject to the passing of any resolution under the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A: Access to Information.

The meeting will be webcast and an audio recording made.

Issued by (the Proper Officer) on Tuesday, 5 September 2023

# **AGENDA**

## **Scrutiny Committee - Childrens and Families 10.00 am Wednesday, 13 September 2023**

**Public Guidance Notes contained in Agenda Annexe (Pages 7 - 8)**

**Information on the Committee (Pages 9 - 10)**

**Click here to join the online meeting (Pages 11 - 12)**

### **1 Apologies for Absence**

To receive any apologies for absence.

### **2 Declarations of Interest**

To receive and note any declarations of interests in respect of any matters included on the agenda for consideration at this meeting.

(The other registrable interests of Councillors of Somerset Council, arising from membership of City, Town or Parish Councils and other Local Authorities will automatically be recorded in the minutes: [City, Town & Parish Twin Hatters - Somerset Councillors 2023](#) )

### **3 Minutes from the Previous Meeting held on 12 July 2023 (Pages 13 - 22)**

To approve the minutes from the previous meeting.

Note regarding minute 4 (Public Question Time) - the responses can be found in the [addendum document here](#)

#### **4 Public Question Time**

The Chair to advise the Committee of any items on which members of the public have requested to speak and advise those members of the public present of the details of the Council's public participation scheme.

For those members of the public who have submitted any questions or statements, please note, a three minute time limit applies to each speaker and you will be asked to speak before Councillors debate the issue.

We are now live webcasting most of our committee meetings and you are welcome to view and listen to the discussion. The link to each webcast will be available on the meeting webpage, please see details under 'click here to join online meeting'.

#### **5 Scrutiny Committee - Children and Families Work Programme (Pages 23 - 38)**

To receive an update from the Service 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](#)

#### **6 2023/24 Children's Services - Budget Monitoring (To Follow)**

To consider PowerPoint presentation.

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

#### **7 Education Modelling - Frome - next steps (Pages 39 - 46)**

To consider PowerPoint presentation.

The item will be led by the Council's s Service Director, Education, Partnerships and Skills, Amelia Walker and Head of Education Places, Phil Curd.

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

## **8 Regional Adoption Agency (To Follow)**

To consider Report.

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

## **9 External Placements Task and Finish Group - response from Executive on recommendations made by the Task and Finish Group (To Follow)**

To consider the response from the Executive.

The Committee considered and agreed the report of the External Placements Task and Finish Group at the meeting held on 6 March 2023. Click on the following link to view the report considered and agreed at the meeting on 6 March 2023 – [External Placements Task and Finish Group](#)

*Note – the Chair will allow 15 minutes for this agenda item.*

## **10 Learning from the West Somerset Opportunity Area (To Follow)**

To receive presentation.

This item will be led by the Council's Strategic Manager, Julia Ridge.

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

## **11 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 the Committee's policy areas.

- (a) Education Data – information / briefing note will be provided by Amelia Walker, Service Director Education Partnerships and Skills

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

This page is intentionally left blank

## Guidance notes for the meeting

### Council Public Meetings

The legislation that governs Council meetings requires that committee meetings are held face-to-face. The requirement is for members of the committee and key supporting officers (report authors and statutory 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.

#### 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 [Committee structure - Modern Council \(somerset.gov.uk\)](#)

### 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](#)

### 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.

### Public Question Time

If you wish to speak or ask a question about any matter on the Committee's agenda please contact Democratic Services by 5pm providing 3 clear working days before the meeting. (for example, for a meeting being held on a Wednesday, the deadline will be 5pm on the Thursday prior to 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, or alternatively can attend the meeting online.

A 20-minute time slot for Public Question Time is set aside near the beginning of the meeting, after the minutes of the previous meeting have been agreed. Each speaker will have 3 minutes to address the committee.

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.

### **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.

There is a facility in Microsoft Teams under the ellipsis button called turn on live captions which provides subtitles on the screen.

### **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.

### **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.



## **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](#)

This page is intentionally left blank

## Children and Families Scrutiny Committee – 13 September 2023

[Click here to join the meeting online](#)

### Microsoft Teams meeting

**Join on your computer, mobile app or room device**

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 344 607 275 256

Passcode: VZa3WF

[Download Teams](#) | [Join on the web](#)

**Or call in (audio only)**

[+44 1823 772277,,704825681#](#) United Kingdom, Taunton

Phone Conference ID: 704 825 681#

[Find a local number](#) | [Reset PIN](#)

[Learn More](#) | [Meeting options](#)

This page is intentionally left blank



Minutes of a Meeting of the Scrutiny Committee - Childrens and Families held in the Luttrell Room - County Hall, Taunton TA1 4DY, on Wednesday, 12 July 2023 at 10.00 am

**Present:**

Cllr Leigh Redman (Chair)

Cllr Peter Clayton

Cllr John Hunt

Cllr Martin Lovell

Cllr Rosemary Woods (substitute for Cllr Suria Aujla)

Eileen Tipper - co-opted member

Cllr Andy Hadley

Cllr Henry Hobhouse (substitute for Cllr Evie Potts-Jones)

Cllr Frances Nicholson

Cllr Jason Baker – attended remotely

Ruth Hobbs – co-opted member

**In attendance:**

Cllr Tessa Munt

**Other Members present remotely:**

Cllr Alan Bradford

Cllr Nick Cottle

Cllr Sue Osborne

Cllr Claire Sully

Cllr Norman Cavill

Cllr Liz Leyshon

Cllr Gill Slocombe

**1 Apologies for Absence - Agenda Item 1**

Apologies were received from Cllr Evie Potts-Jones (substituted by Cllr Henry Hobhouse), Cllr Suria Aujla (substituted by Cllr Rosemary Woods), Cllr Simon Carswell (no substitute), Cllr Jeny Snell (no substitute) and Cllr Jenny Kenton (no substitute).

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

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

### **3 Minutes from the Previous Meeting held on 4 May 2023 - Agenda Item 3**

Resolved: -

That the minutes of the Scrutiny Committee - Childrens and Families held on 4 May 2023 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

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

Submissions / request to speak had been received from the following members of the public and the information provided had been circulated as a supplementary agenda pack.

1. Ms E Elliott – the questions were read out at the meeting by S Mathivet.
2. Ms H Washbourne – attended the meeting and read out her questions.
3. Mrs V Pearson – attended the meeting and read out her questions.

On behalf of the Committee the Chair thanked them for their questions and for taking the time to attend the meeting.

It was agreed that the responses will be circulated in an addendum document with the minutes from the meeting.

### **5 Scrutiny Committee - Children and Families Work Programme - Agenda Item 5**

The Committee received and noted the current work programme and outcome tracker and the Executive's Forward Plan.

The Chair highlighted the following: -

- In view of the work plan, the need for some additional meetings to be scheduled and it is proposed that an additional meeting is arranged in October – details to be circulated.
- Members of the Committee will be invited to attend the Scrutiny Committee – Communities meeting on 9 August for the following agenda item – Recommissioning of the 16+ housing / supported accommodation.

### **6 22/23 Budget outturn position and 23/24 Emerging issues - Agenda Item 6**

The Chair welcomed the Council's Strategic Manager, Finance, Sian Kenny and the Service Director, Children and Families, Jayne Shelbourne-Barrow to the meeting.

Ms Kenny provided an overview of the budget outturn position for 2022/23 and issues around the 2023/24 budget.

Ms Kenny highlighted the following matters: -

- Financial overview position - 2022/23 outturn approx. £20m overspent; 2023/24 budget monitoring emerging issues £40m overspend; 2024/25 MTFP forecast Feb '23 £40m but with inflation likely to be higher.
- High level information on the 2022/23 Outturn General Fund Children's Services £21.4m overspend.
- The emerging issues / risks / mitigations relating to the General Fund for 23/24.
- Information on the 22/23 outturn of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).
- 2022/23 outturn and LA maintained school balances.
- The 23/24 emerging issues / risks / mitigations relating to the DSG and schools.

The Committee asked a number of questions and made a number of comments which were responded to at the meeting:

- What influence does the local authority have in respect of the overspends highlighted – *the MTFs considered by Executive for 24/25 already included information on High Needs and the impact on the local authority.*
- 22/23 outturn / overspend and position with regard to the current financial year – *advised that the service is working on the Qtr. 1 budget monitoring report (position at end June) which will be considered at the September Executive meeting.*
- The Chair asked that members have this information at the earliest opportunity – *also confirmed the LA does closely monitor current budget positions / financial forecasts.*
- Position regarding the DSG and the 'override' mentioned in the presentation – *the current cumulative High Needs deficit is £20m – estimated to rise to c£70m by March 2026, without mitigation being in place (analysis of Somerset position from national Newton Europe Delivering Better Value programme, at which point it will become a general fund liability; the DfE is holding the deficits nationally (and it is a national not just a Somerset issue); would become an issue for the local authority in 25/26 if the override is not extended.*
- School deficits – *9 schools (out of 133 local authority maintained schools) shared a cumulative deficit position of £1.9m, which represents an in-year deficit of £1.2m to carry forward into 23/24 and Wadham Secondary school position is of considerable concern as it had an accumulated deficit of £1.5 at 31 March 2023 without an agreed recovery plan; outlined work being done with the school and the underlying problems have been addressed by an area restructure; role of new education sub group highlighted and plans being worked on – will come back to the committee on that when agreed; this situation clearly needs to be resolved.*

- Overspend in home to school transport and SEND school transport – *significant review undertaken by Edge Public Solutions who have identified a range of actions which are being taken forward in relation to both areas.*
- Sufficiency of special school places – *the DfE is building special free school in Ash with 120 places and this will be open for September 2024 (2-year delay); the DfE is also planning to build a school with 64 places in Wells (opening timeline 2027 - 2029). There is a financial impact of not having those schools in place as those already identified as currently needing special school places are being placed, as an alternative, in independent non-maintained school setting . The increased costs of these provisions compared to a special free school is a budget impact of - £1.3m per term (and therefore approximately £4m each academic year).*
- *There will be budget sessions for all members from September and there will be a session on the DSG which will be useful to attend.*
- Having stable workforce is good news but a more stable workforce impacts on staff turnover savings (23/24 General Fund emerging issues) – *having stable workforce is good news but level of underspend seen in previous years is therefore not likely to occur in 23/24.*

On behalf of the Committee, the Chair thanked Ms Kenny for the update. The Committee will continue monitor the Childrens Services budget position and will also be included on the agenda for the next meeting.

## **7 Academisation Finance Policy and Procedure - Agenda Item 7**

The Chair welcomed the Council's Service Director Education Partnership & Skills, Amelia Walker to the meeting. Ms Walker gave a presentation outlining the proposed changes to academisation finance policy and procedure ahead of consideration by the Executive at its meeting on 2 August 2023. The Committee was invited to comment on the draft report and the proposal.

Ms Walker outlined why the changes are being proposed, which is around openness and transparency; the need for coordination; financial pressures. The Council supports the principle that schools should be able to choose their future, this is better achieved within a planned and transparent framework for decision making and implementation that allows all stakeholders, particularly schools, multi-academy trusts and the local authority to deliver change in a manner which mitigates the inevitable risks associated with change. These proposals are designed to mitigate risks and provide clarity and stability in relation to financial measures associated with a change of status from local authority maintained to academy status.



The Committee had no negative comments on the report and suggested that the information in Table set out in Appendix 1 (schools by phase and status) needed to be updated.

## **8 Update on Homes & Horizons Partnership - Agenda Item 8**

The Chair welcomed the Council's Strategic Manager – Strategic Partner Development, Daniel Moncrieff to the meeting. Mr Moncrieff gave a presentation providing a detailed progress update on the homes and horizons strategic partnership. This is the Strategic Partnership between SomersetFT, the Council and The Shaw Trust, supporting children with complex needs including homes, high needs fostering and therapeutic education.

Mr Moncrieff highlighted the following:

- The progress on purchasing 6 homes and 1 further home in progress and are searching for 8<sup>th</sup> home.
- 4 young people in the first 4 homes and next 2 children move shortly – the next home is due to open in about months' time.
- Registered Manager recruitment and support workers trained – 67 staff recruited and 55 staff trained through joint model.
- Therapeutic education staff in place and all young people engaged with some education activity.
- Hearing the voice of young people.
- Therapeutic education provision – best mechanism to provide this with an Academy school and going through the free school presumptive process - Misterton site is 1<sup>st</sup> of the 2 planned locations – mentioned the registration discussions with DfE Regional Director – awaiting DfE sign-off and cannot start building works until receive that – interim education package therefore until up and running.
- High Needs Fostering – led to increase in fostering and high need fostering with 8 potential foster carers identified.
- Finances and fiscal savings.
- Some risks and issues / management and mitigations, including the education provision not able to open (also impacts on fostering) – continuing to negotiate with the Regional Director, whilst developing interim provision.

The Committee asked a number of questions and made a number of comments which were responded to at the meeting:

- Had undertaken very careful work when selecting Shaw Trust and wonder if there is anything can do to help in the discussions with the DfE – *doing what can and hope can be resolved before need to consider next steps.*
- Support the need to apply pressure appropriately to allow good work to continue.

- Do like that young people's voices are included and would also like to hear about *outcomes* for young people (i.e. the impact this work is having on their lives) - *all the young people who moved into the homes had experienced numerous placement breakdowns and confirmed are tracking that with data (noting the role of the Corporate Parent Board in receiving that sort of detail).*
- Engagement with the community when open homes – *confirmed is ongoing – meet with local members initially, then parish councils and have community engagement event for the people in the immediate vicinity of the home, so they can meet the Manager and staff of the home and see what the homes is like before a young person moves in. The vast majority of the people we meet through those events at all the homes have been really positive and constructive. The process go through in terms of community engagement allows people to have regular correspondence with the managers and the Executive member has been to the community engagement events as well.*
- Importance of taking the community 'with us' in this recognised.

The Committee congratulated Mr Moncrieff and the whole team on the recent national award for the Children's home partnership. In conclusion, the Chair thanked Mr Moncrieff for the detailed update and to continue building on the success of the homes and horizons partnership.

## **9 Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing in Somerset - Agenda Item 9**

The Chair welcomed the following to the meeting for this agenda item:-

- Dr Tim Cockerill – Somerset Council, Principal Educational Psychologist
- Patsy Temple – Strategic Manager, Public Health
- Mark Conway – Deputy Head CAMHS
- Patrick Worthington – NHS Somerset, CYP Mental Health Commissioner
- Nik Harwood – CEO Young Somerset
- Lisa Walker – Somerset Council, Strategic Manager, Ops Perm and Wellbeing

The Committee received a detailed presentation on children's mental health and wellbeing in Somerset, covering the following:

- The national and local picture, which reflects the national context, increased pressures and need across various teams and service areas, including increasingly complex and crisis presentations.
- Prevention and early support - achievements and key areas of focus / priorities.
- An update on the Trauma Informed Somerset practice model and implementation and the system wide trauma informed training offer.
- Support for those with mild-moderate mental health needs –Mental Health Support Teams work with children and young people aged 5-18 to provide low intensity cognitive behavioural therapy interventions for mild to moderate mental

health and behavioural difficulties in school and community settings across Somerset. Young Somerset is a third sector organisation and can apply for external funding and so bring more funding into the county.

- CAMHS data, which shows sharp rise in urgent care needs, presenting to the liaison teams at Musgrove and Yeovil Hospitals.
- Next steps – collaboration, trauma informed care, ‘reversing the pyramid.’
- The specialist support for Children Looked After, Care leavers and Kinship families.
- The strategic commissioning priorities, as there is a lot of unmet need and are in process of recruiting a dedicated project lead to inform service response.
- Need to embed the principles of the approach – children and young people get help they need: right place, right time, right person – further establish the community / education based mental health offer.
- Mentioned regional summit taking place in early October which members are very welcome to join if they wish.

The Committee asked a number of questions and made a number of comments which were responded to at the meeting:

- Position on the recruitment of trauma informed coordinator and the training offer – *approval to recruit to this post was given recently and the postholder will start driving change forward; there is a clear plan in place for September as agreed level 2 offer for all schools, so this is further ahead than the coordinator role; trauma informed principles and approach within the whole school approach for emotional wellbeing through the Somerset Wellbeing Framework.*
- Clarification on the data detailed on slide 5, support for those with mild-moderate mental health needs – *an explanation on what the data is saying was given. Schools engagement mentioned as well. Will share the most recent quarterly report which provides more detail on this (for example ‘completion rate’).*
- Questions on the network of trauma informed champions and how this will operate – *will be sector champions so not necessarily in schools; going to develop pathfinder schools which will become hubs of best practice, so a peer support model.*
- Questions on staffing, recruitment, and retention of mental health staff / Young Somerset – *Talking Therapies mentioned – Health England fund trainees who are then employed during their training year and receive a postgraduate diploma qualification from Exeter University. There are 6 funded places for January and able to select and recruit very well. They get a 2-year training contract – are then able to become a senior practitioner or clinical supervisor which helps with retention too, so working on pathways (creatively) as a system across Somerset.*
- Question on whether young people self-present with eating disorders – *rarely self-present but other conditions do self-refer – have good and established liaison with acute sites as a system in Somerset. Joined up with Young Somerset*

*to develop 'Jigsaw' which is a service which Young Somerset operate alongside liaison to try to reduce the number of re presentations and this is having a good impact.*

- Reference to teachers' professional skills issue / nuanced – *culture of school / system matters. One of the aims of the Education for Life Strategy is on getting right culture across 'everywhere that children are.'*
- Question on the self-injury information – *the Summit mentioned earlier will explore this – members are welcome to participate in the steering group if have time.*

In conclusion, the Chair thanked the presenters for the positive and extremely detailed presentation and asked for an update to the Committee in 6 months' time.

## **10 Somerset Youth Justice Partnership Board Plan 2023 - 2024 - Agenda Item 10**

The Chair welcomed the Council's Operations Manager, Somerset Youth Justice Team / Prevention Services, Ms Helen MacDonald to the meeting. The Committee received a report and presentation on the Somerset Youth Justice Partnership Board Plan 2023 - 2024.

The Somerset Youth Justice Partnerships Board's annual 'Youth Justice Plan' was submitted to the National YJB on 30 June and will be signed off by Full Council (retrospectively) in September 2023 (in accordance with Regulation 4 of the Local Authorities (England) Functions and Responsibilities Regulations 2000).

Ms MacDonald highlighted the following:

- Purpose of the Somerset Youth Justice Plan 2023/24
- Headline achievements in 2022/23 – highlights further opportunities, risks, and challenges to provide a focus for the priorities for 2023/25 and sits alongside the Boards strategic priorities 2023 - 2025.
- The strategic priorities
- Reoffending – in Somerset is 43.6% (this relates to an increase in a very small cohort) - June 2020 – June 2021 – of some concern as it is higher than the southwest, England & Wales and the Avon & Somerset PCC for the same period.
- Majority of work is around prevention and diversion – to avoid escalation; education and impact on 'not in education, employment or training' (NEET); Serious youth violence; Custody.
- Challenges and risks – due Inspection very soon; demand; small but increasing number of children assessed as high or very high risk due to county lines, exploitation, serious youth violence; rurality (lack of access to public transport); changes in workforce.

The Committee asked a number of questions and made a number of comments which were responded to at the meeting:

- Felt that the format of the Plan was somewhat confusing – *the Plan is determined by the Youth Justice Board and this comment will be reported back.*
- Question on knife crime data; tactical and operational responses – *multi agency approach and steps taken are based on national learning and committed to having evidence-based approach moving forward.*
- Prevention work in schools and turnaround project in secondary schools – has positive feedback and valued by schools – is there a plan to do work with younger aged children – *nothing immediate – there is the Teachable Moments initiative, voluntary participation, good youth work practice in school settings and like to see that continue. The Turnaround project is for age 10 upwards.*
- The team is small but very effective and child centred which is more powerful strategically – would welcome seeing an evaluation or audit of the Teachable Moments initiative.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chair thanked Ms MacDonald for attending the meeting and for presenting the Plan.

The Committee:

1. Noted the contents of the Youth Justice Plan submission, including review of previous year's performance and plans for the forthcoming year.
2. Noted and accepted the annual Youth Justice Plan and Somerset Youth Justice Board 2-year strategic plan for 2023 – 2025.

## **11 Home to School Transport Task and Finish Group - interim update** - Agenda Item 11

The Committee received an update from the Executive member, Cllr Tessa Munt.

The Transport Review has been completed by Edge Public Solutions, with a report provided to officers in May. Richard Hall has met again with the Task and Finish Group to discuss the report findings and recommendations. David Carter (Service Director Infrastructure and Transport) and the Service Director Inclusion are scheduled to discuss the review recommendations at the Council's Transition, Transformation and Change Board on 18 July, with a view to seeking approval to establishing a transformation programme to address the review recommendations over a two-to-three-year period.

The Committee:

1. Noted the update.

2. That due to the imperative for change (delivering required savings and protection of the service from risk of failure), asked for the report to be shared with members at the earliest opportunity and for the Executive member to report back to the next meeting.

**12 Items for Information - Standing Item - Agenda Item 12**

The Committee noted the following items for information:

- (a) Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) publication – Scrutiny of Children’s Services – a short guide – circulated on 9 May 2023
- (b) Homes and Horizons Partnership – circulated on 15 May 2023
- (c) Progress update on Ofsted Action Plan – circulated on 10 July 2023
- (d) Children’s Services – current structure chart – circulated on 28 June 2023

**(The meeting ended at 1.16 pm)**

.....  
**CHAIR**

## Scrutiny Committee - Children and Families Work Plan 2023 - 2024

Overarching themes	Committee meeting dates / proposed agenda items	Lead Officer/Item Lead
<b>Outstanding items from 2022/ 2023</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Transport policy / Post-16 Travel Policy and the ‘Somerset Ticket’</li> <li>• Children missing out on education (numbers, who, reasons)</li> <li>• <del>Evaluation of the West Somerset Opportunity Area (September ‘23)</del></li> <li>• <b>Workshop The disadvantage gap</b> - 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</li> <li>• <b>Possible workshop with Adults &amp; Health Scrutiny</b> Self-harm / mental health issues – 10 January 24 meeting?</li> <li>• <b>Possible workshop with Adults &amp; Health Scrutiny</b> Transition arrangements – preparing for adulthood – 25 October mtg?</li> </ul>	
<b>Items to be scheduled 2023/24</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Household Support Fund</a> / schools (added 15/05/23) (is a Key Decision 23/05/23)</li> <li>• <b>Possible workshop with Adults &amp; Health Scrutiny</b> Children &amp; Young People’s access to Dentistry / child oral health improvement (added 04/05/23) will be discussed initially at Scrutiny Chairs mtg – 25 October mtg?</li> <li>• <a href="#">Oral health survey of 5 year old children 2022</a> published March ‘23</li> <li>• EHCP process (added 27/06/23) – November mtg?</li> <li>• School place sufficiency – EY, Nursery places, primary, secondary and special schools (added 27/06/23) – December mtg?</li> <li>• Elective home education numbers (added 27/06/23)</li> <li>• Pupil referral unit (added 27/06/23)</li> <li>• Councillor DBS checks (added 13/07/23)</li> <li>• Provisional – joint with Adults and Health Scrutiny - Asylum Resettlement Programme following issues raised by groups working with asylum seekers in the community in Somerset (added 01.08.23)</li> <li>• Complaints (added 14.08.23)</li> </ul>	
<b>Thursday 4 May 2023 @ 10am</b>		
Education Partnerships & Skills	LA Maintained Schools Core Offer – update / response from last meeting and 2023/24 budgets	Amelia Walker
Education Partnerships & Skills	Terms of reference of the proposed Task Group on education standards	Amelia Walker
Inclusion	SEND Strategy and the Accelerated Progress Plan (APP)	Dr Rob Hart and Deputy Director for Commissioning, NHS Somerset, Andrew Keefe

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

## Scrutiny Committee - Children and Families Work Plan 2023 - 2024

Overarching themes	Committee meeting dates / proposed agenda items	Lead Officer/Item Lead
Social Care	Reforms in children’s social care – draft consultation response	AD Community & Strategy, Paul Shallcross
Children & Families	Task and Finish Group – sufficiency of external placements – initial response from Executive	Cllr Munt / Claire Winter
Inclusion	Task and Finish Group – home to school transport – verbal update	Dr Rob Hart
Cross-cutting	Items for Information – Standing Item (a) Information on Children and Families Board (b) Feedback on the <a href="#">‘Education for Life’</a> launch event	
<b>Wednesday 12 July 2023 @ 10am</b>		
Cross-cutting	Budget outturn position 22/23 and issues 23/24 - overview	Executive Director of Children, Families and Education Claire Winter Strategic Manager, Finance, Sian Kenny
Education Partnerships & Skills	Academisation / Education Finance	Service Director - Education Partnerships and Skills Amelia Walker
Commissioning	Update on Homes & Horizons Partnership	Strategic Manager, Daniel Moncrieff
Inclusion	Children’s Mental Health and Wellbeing in Somerset	Dr Tim Cockerill, Patsy Temple, Mark Conway, Patrick Worthington, Nik Harwood and Lisa Walker
Inclusion	Home to School Transport Task and Finish Group – interim update	Executive member / Service Director – Inclusion, Dr Rob Hart
Children & Families	Somerset Youth Justice Partnership Board Annual Plan	Jayne Shelbourne-Barrow Helen MacDonald, Operations Manager
Cross-cutting	Items for Information – Standing Item (a) Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) publication – <a href="#">Scrutiny of Children’s Services – a short guide</a> (b) <a href="#">Homes and Horizons partnership</a> (c) Progress update on Ofsted Action Plan; Life Story work’ (d) Children’s Services – current structure chart	Cathy Jones, Strategic Manager



## Scrutiny Committee - Children and Families Work Plan 2023 - 2024

Overarching themes	Committee meeting dates / proposed agenda items	Lead Officer/Item Lead
Commissioning	<p><b>Communities Scrutiny Committee – 9 August 23 @ 10am</b></p> <p>Members of the Children &amp; Families Scrutiny Committee invited to attend the meeting for this item:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Recommissioning of 16+ housing / supported accommodation</a> (initially added to work plan on 17/05/23)</li> </ul>	Service Director Commissioning, Richard Selwyn
<b>Wednesday 13 September 2023 @ 10 am</b>		
<b>The Luttrell Room, County Hall, Taunton</b>		
Cross-cutting	2023/24 Children’s Services – Budget Monitoring	Strategic Manager, Finance, Sian Kenny
Education Partnerships & Skills	Education Modelling - Frome – next steps	Service Director - Education Partnerships and Skills Amelia Walker and Strategic Manager Phil Curd presenting
	Regional Adoption Agency	Executive Director of Children, Families and Education Claire Winter
	External Placements Task and Finish Group – response from Executive on recommendations made by the Task and Finish Group	Executive member / Executive Director of Children, Families and Education Claire Winter
Education Partnerships & Skills	Learning from the West Somerset Opportunity Area	Strategic Manager, Julia Ridge
Cross cutting	Items for Information (a) Education Data	Amelia Walker
<b>Additional mtg - 25 October 2023 @ 10am</b>		

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

## Scrutiny Committee - Children and Families Work Plan 2023 - 2024

Overarching themes	Committee meeting dates / proposed agenda items	Lead Officer/Item Lead
<b>Prov - Joint workshop adults and health - TBC</b> <b>JMR, Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton, TA1 1HE</b>		
	Transitions – Children’s Services into Adults Services	CS and ASC
	Children’s oral health	CS and ACS
	Public health topic - TBC	
Commissioning	Update on Children’s Transformation Programme	Executive Director of Children, Families and Education Claire Winter
<b>15 November 2023 @ 10 am</b> <b>Sedgemoor Room, Bridgwater House, King Square, Bridgwater, TA6 3AR</b>		
Education Partnerships & Skills	LA maintained schools core offer – update	Service Director - Education Partnerships and Skills Amelia Walker
	2023/24 Children’s Services – Budget Monitoring	Strategic Manager, Finance, Sian Kenny
Inclusion	Progress update on SEND Strategy / APP	Service Director - Inclusion Dr Rob Hart and Deputy Director for Commissioning, NHS Somerset, Andrew Keefe
	Update on short break provision (respite)	Fostering Service
Education Partnerships & Skills	Education finance paper – consultation	Service Director - Education Partnerships and Skills Amelia Walker

## Scrutiny Committee - Children and Families Work Plan 2023 - 2024

Overarching themes	Committee meeting dates / proposed agenda items	Lead Officer/Item Lead
Education Partnerships & Skills	Standing Panel for Education Standards – update	Service Director - Education Partnerships and Skills Amelia Walker Chair of Panel
<b>Scrutiny Committee – Adults and Health – 5 December @ 10 am</b>		
	Members of the Children & Families Scrutiny Committee invited to attend the meeting for this item:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview of Crime &amp; Disorder (added 22.08.23)</li> </ul>	
<b>Additional meeting – Tuesday 12 December 2023 @ 10am Venue – Council Chamber, Brympton Way, Yeovil</b>		
	School place sufficiency – EY, Nursery places, primary, secondary and special schools  (added 27/06/23)	
<b>Wednesday 10 January 2024 @ 10am The Luttrell Room, County Hall, Taunton</b>		
	Budget outturn	
	MTFP	
Inclusion	Children’s Mental Health and Wellbeing in Somerset Focus possibly self-harm – invite Adults & Health scrutiny cttee to meeting	Dr Tim Cockerill and colleagues
Commissioning	Housing related support and accommodation for 16 – 25 year olds – update  The new service will go live in April 2024.	Service Director Commissioning, Richard Selwyn

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

## Scrutiny Committee - Children and Families Work Plan 2023 - 2024

### Future meeting dates

- Wednesday 13 March 2024 @ 10am
- Wednesday 15 May 2024 @ 10am

# Scrutiny Committee - Children and Families Work Plan 2023 - 2024

## Universal Education

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

## SEND and Inclusion

- Attendance
- Accelerated Progress Plan (Joint Local Area SEND Inspection)
- SEND & Alternative Provision
- 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 (MTFP) – 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 Democratic Services (01823) 357628 & [democraticservicesteam@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservicesteam@somerset.gov.uk) who will assist you in submitting your item.

This page is intentionally left blank

## Scrutiny Committee - Children & Families Outcome Tracker 2023 - 24

Agenda items	Lead / Owner	Agreed Outcome	RAG Status
<b>3 October 2022</b>			
Home to School Transport	Phil Curd John Perrett	<p>(a) noted the update and current position and proposed next steps and development</p> <p>(b) agreed to add school transport to the Committee's work plan for refreshed Council policy (to reflect statutory guidance and possible discretionary changes</p> <p>(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>	<p><b>To be scheduled</b></p> <p><b>To be resumed after external review</b></p> <p>T&amp;F agreed @ November '22 mtg</p>
<b>16 January 2023</b>			
Scrutiny update on Ofsted Action Plan	Paul Shallcross	<p><a href="#">PowerPoint presentation</a> on the Ofsted Action Plan and progress made.</p> <p>Covered the two named areas for improvement, which are – placement sufficiency (which is also a national issue) and which is being considered by the Committee's Task and Finish Group; the take-up of return to home interviews and which is also being considered as a separate agenda item at the meeting; and other key areas of focus, such as the early help demand management work and strategy discussions and audit work. AGREED that the Life Story Work, which is taking place for the majority of children looked after, and data around that, will be an agenda item at a future meeting.</p>	<p><b>Completed</b></p> <p><b>Update to June / July '23 mtg Information item</b></p>
Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's) - <b>Trauma Informed Somerset</b> practice model and implementation	Vikki Hearn	<p><a href="#">Workshop item</a></p> <p>Trauma Informed Charter being developed – to be shared.</p> <p>Coordinator position being recruited to pull together training resources and training plan for the next two years and to be linked with the development and progression of the Children and Young People's Mental Health Transformation Plan</p> <p>Progress update in 6 months'</p>	<p><b>Completed</b></p> <p><b>Update to July '23 mtg as part of children's mental health &amp; wellbeing item</b></p>

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

## Scrutiny Committee - Children & Families Outcome Tracker 2023 - 24

6 March 2023			
Joint Local Area SEND Inspection Outcomes and update on SEND Green Paper	Claire Merchant-Jones	Received a report and PowerPoint presentation from the Council's Head of SEND, Claire Merchant-Jones on the recent Joint Local Area SEND Inspection outcomes. The revisit inspection took place between 28 November and 1 December 2022 and the Committee received a copy of the revisit inspection report; also received update on the response to the <a href="#">SEND Green Paper, published on 2 March 2023</a> . This sets out plans to change the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and alternative provision system in England.	<b>Completed</b>
		It was AGREED that the Committee receive an update on the new Inspection Framework and the APP in 4 months. The Committee has previously agreed that the SEND Strategy will be come to Scrutiny.	<b>Update to May '23 mtg</b>
		The Committee additionally commented that a flow chart would be helpful, showing the reporting mechanism for the Children & Families Board, its terms of reference and membership and how the views of children and young people are represented on the Integrated Care Board.	<b>Item for information at May '23 mtg</b>
Education for Life Strategy	Amelia Walker	Received a presentation from the Council's Assistant Director Education Partnerships and Skills, Amelia Walker on an Education for Life Strategy for Somerset 2023 – 2028.	<b>Completed</b>
		Asked to see proposed terms of reference of the Task Group on education standards. Asked for details of the launch event on 21 March 2023.	<b>Update to May '23 mtg</b>
Core Offer - update	Amelia Walker	Received presentation, outlining background to the proposals and changes made following extensive reflection and feedback.	<b>Completed</b>
		The Committee requested that this revised offer goes back to the Executive at the first opportunity to allow them to review the changes.	
		The Committee further recognises the value of the Core Offer for schools and endorses the goals and intended outcomes of implementing the Core Offer whilst recognising the dilemma that has been caused by funding reductions to local authority budgets and inflationary pressures. The Committee highlights its ongoing concerns about how the transition will be funded, for both sides, and the potential funding gap.	
		The Committee requested that a response comes back to the next meeting in May 2023.	<b>Update to May '23 mtg</b>

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



## Scrutiny Committee - Children & Families Outcome Tracker 2023 - 24

Update on Task & Finish Groups		<p><u>Sufficiency of external placements</u></p> <p>The Committee considered the report which outlined the findings of the Task and Finish Group and supported the recommendations to the Executive member for Children and Families.</p> <p><u>Home to School Transport</u></p> <p>The Transport Review (Home to School &amp; SEND) will be complete by April and include the Task and Finish Group in deliberations. Richard Hall, who is undertaking the transport review will meet the Task and Finish group to discuss this and a meeting is being organised.</p>	<p><b>Completed</b></p> <p><b>Feedback on both to May '23 mtg</b></p>
Information items		NOTED	
<b>4 May 2023</b>			
LA Maintained Schools Core Offer	Amelia Walker	<p>Received an <a href="#">Update on LA maintained school core offer</a>, response from last meeting and 2023/24 budgets</p> <p>Went live on 1 April 2023.</p> <p>There is wider concern of position of school finances – have established 4 working parties, made up of school leaders, council leaders, to analyse budgets, understand wider picture / benchmarking information.</p> <p>Outlined focus of work for coming term.</p> <p>Discussed – governors, KPI's, next year's process, academisation, information on the four Relationship Managers, pressures on schools / budgets.</p> <p>The Committee noted the update and the new core offer <a href="#">information booklet</a></p> <p>Agreed would receive update in 6 months.</p>	<p><b>Completed</b></p> <p><b>Further update in 6 months' time (Nov '23 mtg)</b></p>
Sub group on education standards	Amelia Walker	<p>Discussed the proposed (sub group) <a href="#">task group on education standards</a></p> <p>Proposal for a sub group on education standards – not public meeting, focus on performance data and to report back to this Committee, in relation to strengths, trends and areas of concern. Also proposing to create an independent, complaints panel made up of governors from across the county (Stage 3).</p> <p>Membership 3 – 5 members, will be chaired by the Vice Chair – will seek volunteers and expressions of interest (will be open to all members).</p> <p>Interest in this work by the Institute for Government mentioned.</p> <p>The Committee supported the proposal.</p>	<p><b>Completed</b></p>

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



## Scrutiny Committee - Children & Families Outcome Tracker 2023 - 24

Sufficiency of external placements	Lead Member / Claire Winter	<p>Response from Executive to the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group, which were agreed by the Scrutiny Committee at the meeting on <a href="#">6 March 2023</a></p> <p>Cllr Munt, lead member thanked the Task and Finish Group for its work and report and advised that the Executive has seen the report and will have a deeper look / spend more time on this and some other matters which relate to education, children and families, in a specific meeting.</p> <p>Ms Winter provided an update on the recommendations - the Homes and Horizons project, part of which is to create both residential and foster homes for children with complex needs; recruitment of foster carers for the complex needs fostering scheme – that scheme is to take up to 20 young people with complex needs who believe could be moved from residential care to fostering; working to develop sufficiency of fostering and residential care for children in Somerset through own provision; still work with independent sector / local providers; placements in unregistered provision &amp; complex needs – highest priority children to move into the Homes and Horizons residential homes as soon as they are open; block contract places issues – being considered and use where appropriate; agree should refer to ‘placement that children are in’; national issues highlighted; workforce issues.</p> <p>Very happy to provide updates to Committee on progress on Homes and Horizons and provision.</p>	<b>Completed</b>
		The formal response from Executive will be received and considered by the Task and Finish Group and a review of the Task & Finish Group outcomes by the Committee should be agreed accordingly by the Committee and the Executive/Lead Member.	<b>On going</b>

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



## Scrutiny Committee - Children & Families Outcome Tracker 2023 - 24

Academisation / Education Finance	Amelia Walker	<p>Received <a href="#">report</a> and presentation at meeting – highlighting why changes are being proposed. The Council is seeking to move to a more transparent methodology for planning academisation. Paper is due to be considered by the Executive on 2 August 2023.</p> <p>The Committee had no negative comments on the report – do need to update the totals set out in the Table in Appendix 1 (Schools by phase and status).</p>	<b>Completed</b>
Homes and Horizons - update	Daniel Moncrieff	<p><a href="#">Presentation</a> received on homes and horizons strategic partnership.</p> <p>Congratulated all the team on the national award for the Children’s home partnership. Supported officers in their discussions with the DfE to allow good work to continue. Would like to hear about outcomes for young people (i.e. impact having on their lives), noting the role of the Corporate Parenting Board.</p>	<b>Completed</b>
Children’s Mental Health and Wellbeing in Somerset	Dr Tim Cockerill and colleagues	<p>Detailed <a href="#">Presentation</a> received, which included an update on the Trauma Informed Somerset practice model and implementation.</p> <p>Details on Regional Summit in autumn to be shared with Committee. Noted position re recruitment of coordinator and the system wide trauma informed training offer.</p>	<b>progress update in 6 months’ time</b>
Somerset Youth Justice Partnership Board Annual Plan	Helen MacDonald	<p>Received report and <a href="#">presentation</a> on the Somerset Youth Justice Partnership Board Plan 2023 - 2024</p> <p>Format of the plan is determined by the YJB – which the Committee found somewhat confusing – this comment will be reported back.</p> <p>Noted and accepted the report. The Plan was submitted to the National YJB on 30 June and needs to be signed off by Full Council (retrospectively) in accordance with Regulation 4 of the Local Authorities (England) Functions and Responsibilities Regulations 2000.</p>	<b>Completed</b>

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

## Scrutiny Committee - Children & Families Outcome Tracker 2023 - 24

Home to School Transport Task and Finish Group – interim update	Executive member	<p>Received a verbal update from Cllr Munt.</p> <p>The Transport Review has been completed by Edge Public Solutions, with a report provided to officers in May. Richard Hall has met with the task and finish group to discuss the report findings and recommendations. David Carter (Service Director Infrastructure and Transport) and the Service Director Inclusion are scheduled to discuss the review recommendations at the Council’s Transition, Transformation and Change Board on 18 July with a view to seeking approval to establishing a transformation programme to address the review recommendations over a two-to-three-year period.</p> <p>The Committee noted the update. Due to the imperative for change (delivering required savings and protection of the service from risk of failure), the Committee asked for the report to be shared with members at the earliest opportunity and for the Executive member to report back to the next meeting.</p>	<b>On going</b>
Information Items		NOTED.	

Page 38

*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)

Completed	Action complete and will be removed from tracker for next meeting
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?’

# Education Modelling Frame

Page 39

13<sup>th</sup> September 2023



**Somerset**  
Council

Agenda Item 7

# Introduction

In January 2023, Somerset Council began a discussion about education structures with schools in the Frome area.

Page  
40

It opened with a survey of school leaders to understand the impact of the current structures and what changes they might make and what benefits any changes would bring.

In March 2023, a report was sent to school leaders outlining the feedback provided through the survey.

This was then followed by a meeting at Selwood Academy which all 18 of Frome's schools attended along with representatives from the Diocese of Bath & Wells and the Regional Director's Office.

At this meeting, schools asked to explore some options that would allow Frome to become a 2-tier education area and to meet individually with officers on their school sites.



# Frome

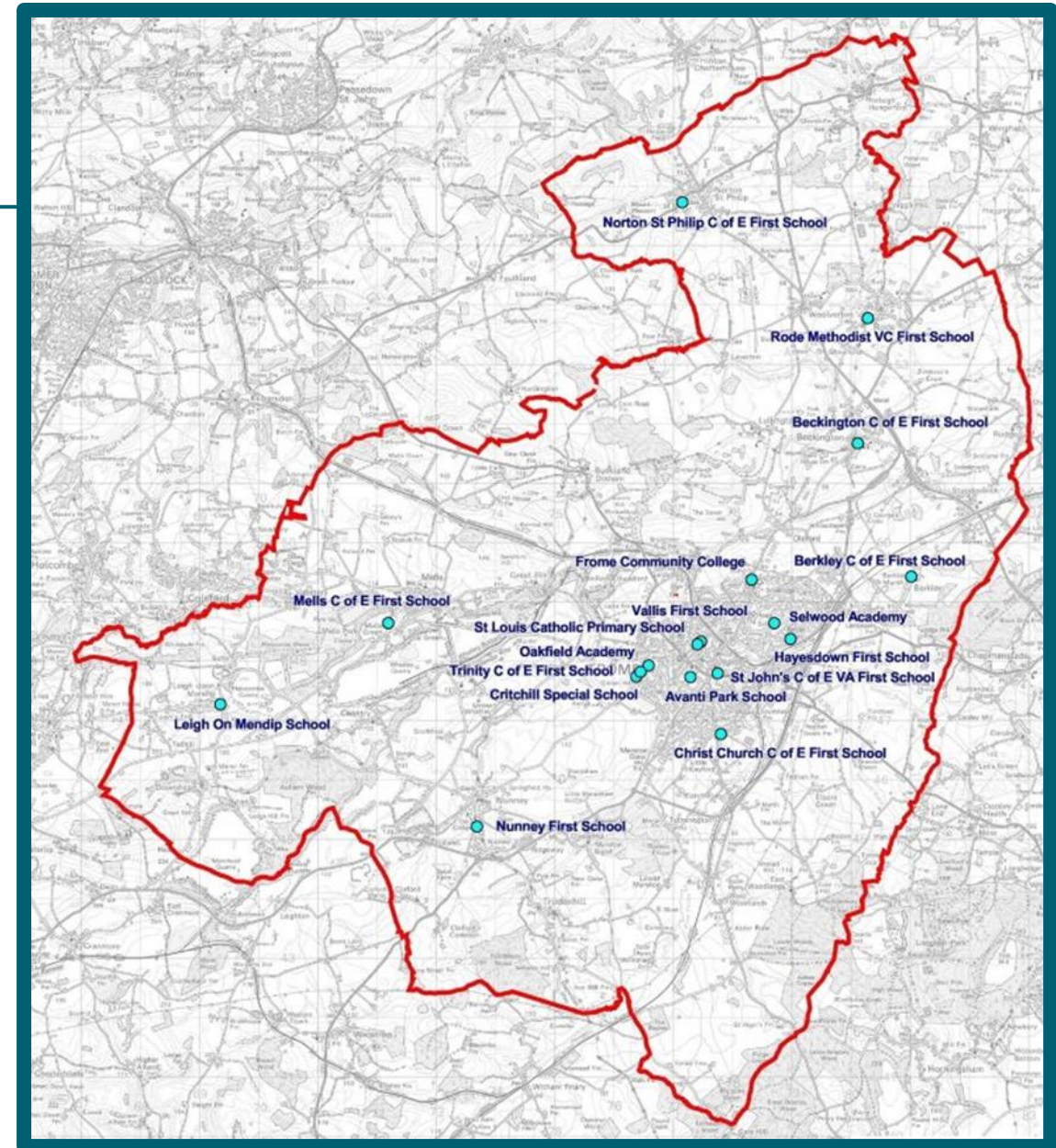
Frome is a complex education area.

There are 18 state-maintained schools in a 3-tier area:

- 1 x Upper School
- 2 x Middle School
- 2 x Primary School
- 1 x Primary / Middle School
- 11 x First Schools
- 1 x All-through Special School

10 are LA maintained while 8 are academies in 6 different Academy Trusts.

10 of the schools have religious articles, mostly Anglican, but also Methodist (2) and Catholic (1).



# Modelling & Visits

---

By May 2023, officers had prepared a number of 2-tier models and visited each of the 18 schools to discuss the modelling and other educational issues in Frome.

At the end of May 2023, another meeting was held at Selwood Academy to discuss the modelling and other areas of interest discussed during our visits to school sites.

While there was not a general consensus to adopt a 2-tier model in Frome, there was an appetite to progress discussions further, over an extended period of time, introduce other elements and invite other stakeholders to engage in the process.

At regular intervals, the 8 councillors representing the Frome were given updates on discussions and the likely direction of future work.

# Community Statement

---

*“Over the past few months some school leaders in Frome have questioned whether the school structure in Frome is working for everyone. In response to this, conversations have been taking place between school leaders in Frome and Somerset Council officers regarding the possibility of moving to a two-tier model of primary and secondary schools.*

Page 43  
*After individual visits at all Frome schools to hear the views of school leadership teams, the shared conclusion is that this conversation needs to involve a broader representation from Frome’s communities in order to ensure that any future proposals best serve the needs of Frome and its children and families. We are therefore looking to establish a steering group made up of a wider group of stakeholders in Autumn 2023 to continue these discussions further. No decisions have been taken and no changes will be made unless there is support from within the school system and community for change.*

*While Somerset Council has no immediate intention to propose any changes to the education system in Frome, local schools and academy trusts may exercise their statutory right to explore changes to individual settings. Where they choose to do so, they will be working with Somerset Council and the Regional Director’s Office to ensure that any proposals are in the best interest of Frome’s children and families.”*

21<sup>st</sup> June 2023

# Next Steps

---

In June 2023 officers began preparations for this extended piece of work.

A further survey was sent to school leaders asking them to confirm what subject areas they would like discussions to cover and which other stakeholders they would like to invite to participate.

A Steering Group will begin meeting in the Autumn. These will be in-person meetings held at a venue in Frome.

Subject areas are likely to include:

- Education Structures and Partnerships
- Post-16 Provision
- Early Years
- SEND and Vulnerable Learners

Frome Town Council is very keen to be involved in this work and has provisionally offered to host the Steering Group's meetings.

# Risk & Issues

---

In parallel to ongoing discussions, it is likely that schools will continue to consider their individual arrangements including formal partnerships, academisation and changes to their age ranges.

There is a risk that this will serve to add greater complexity to discussions in Frome in the short-term but, in the medium term, is likely to reduce the overall number of stakeholders, making wholesale structural change easier.

Changes that are currently known about:

- Selwood Academy (Middle) has formally consulted to change its age-range
- Frome Community College (Upper) has applied to become an academy and join the Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership Trust – potential conversion date is September 2024
- St Louis Primary School will become an academy in April 2024 and join the Dunstan Education Partnership
- Beckington, Berkley, Mells, Norton St Phillip, Rode and Trinity first schools have begun the academisation process with potential conversion dates in late 2024

# Questions

Page 46



---

[phil.curd@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:phil.curd@somerset.gov.uk)