

Somerset Council
Scrutiny Committee
Children’s & Families Scrutiny Committee – 10th February
2025



Reviewing Education Systems Governance
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Executive Lead Member: Cllr Heather Shearer
Division / Local Member:

1. Summary

- 1.1.** Over the past two years, relationships between educational organisations and leaders in Somerset have improved and matured, albeit from a very low base. The Department for Education has made it clear that it is a priority for this government to see better join up on the ground around children and families.
- 1.2.** The recent Joint Thematic Area Inspection on Serious Youth Violence raised some concerns and questions about the effectiveness of governance in this critical area. LA teams support a wide range of groups which vary widely in the extent to which they are action-focused and purposeful. The extent of reform being signalled nationally suggests there may be an increased driver for local decision-making in relation to children, families and schools – good governance supports good decision-making.
- 1.3.** This item closely relates to the priority of ‘A Fairer, Ambitious Somerset’ from the Somerset Council Plan (2023-2027).

“We need our children to get an excellent education and to aspire to achieve their goals in life. Education outcomes in Somerset are not good enough, especially for children from lower income homes or those with additional needs. All children need access to good schools, colleges, further education and higher education.”

2. Issues for consideration / Recommendations

- 2.1.** Children and Families Scrutiny is recommended to:
 - Take account of the briefing provided which gives a high-level overview of issues, in preparation for proposals coming to scrutiny for challenge prior to decision.
 - Provide challenge in relation to the current arrangements from an elected

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member and stakeholder perspective, particularly with regard to democratic involvement in education governance.

3. Background papers

3.1. Slide pack included with more detail in relation to this item.