

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday, 5 May 2022 at 6.00 pm in Addenbrooke House, Ironmasters Way, Telford, TF3 4NT

Present: Councillors I T W Fletcher, J Jones, A D McClements, K S Sahota and K T Tomlinson.
Co-optee: M Ward

Also Present: Councillor S A W Reynolds (Cabinet Member Children, Young People, and Families)

In Attendance: R Phillips (Service Delivery Manager: Legal & Democracy), K Robinson (Senior Democracy Officer (Scrutiny)), S Wellman (Director: Education & Skills)

Apologies: Councillors M Boylan, S Fikeis, L Fowler and B Wennington
Co-optees S Fikeis, L Fowler

29 Declarations of Interest

Prior to this item, an election of a Chair for the meeting was held. Councillor Kuldip Sahota was proposed. Upon being put to a vote, it was:

RESOLVED that – Councillor Kuldip Sahota act as Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

There were no declarations of interest.

30 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2021 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

31 Telford and Wrekin Safeguarding Partnership (TWSP) Annual Report 2020/21.

The Committee received the annual report of the Telford and Wrekin Safeguarding Partnership (TWSP).

The report was the last that would be produced in the format presented; the next would focus on safeguarding outcomes.

It had been a challenging year for the partnership but all partners had risen to the occasion to maintain effective safeguarding. In order to do so, separate children's and adults safeguarding boards had been re-established. It was

noted that safeguarding had to be more flexible, especially in the cases of those who did not meet statutory safeguarding thresholds.

Children's services were commended for their Ofsted achievement.

Following the presentation, Members posed a number of questions:

With the pandemic, was there any additional support needed for safeguarding or anything that had to be done differently?

People were being checked on in person and by phone to ensure that nobody dropped off the radar, a lot of work in particular was done to ensure children remained in education. The Borough had been keen to enable vulnerable children to continue to access in person education throughout the pandemic. There was a strong service for children missing education with a support team carrying out regular visits to identify and check on those missing school.

In terms of child mental health, capacity in provision remained a concern and there had been some Covid anxiety around returning to classrooms, which had led to some missing school. As a result of the pandemic, there had also been a rise in children entering Reception with speech and language issues.

What training was there for teachers to enable them to better support children after these tough years?

There were a number of providers supporting and training teachers in managing the complex needs of children. In schools, there were designated safeguarding leads, governors, and safeguarding boards who were well placed to recognise support issues and any need for action.

The report highlighted one case of the threshold for the mortality programme being met, however, the review for the case had not taken place. Had it taken place yet?

The review had taken place.

Were there areas that were particularly hard hit by the pandemic?

At the start of the pandemic, the executive of the Safeguarding Partnership had carried out two reviews of safeguarding effectiveness in the context of Covid. Both reviews concluded that despite the demands of the pandemic, safeguarding could be done properly. Technology in particular had enabled smarter working to face up to the challenge.

Did partners bring reports to partnership meeting or did partners sit and discuss issues?

It was a genuine partnership; all had a stake in safeguarding and in children's safety. The Board's strength was that its members all worked together and, typically, children were known to multiple agencies. This allowed information sharing and informed decision making.

Members received an update, on the School Streets working group recommendation, from the Director: Education & Skills.

Cabinet had commented on the ambitions of school streets aligning with Cabinet's priorities and recognised the considerable work of scrutiny in producing the recommendation report. Cabinet was keen to investigate the policy, engaging with schools and residents, before formally moving forward with it.

Schools had been under significant pressure as a result of Covid-19 and were only just recovering. In the interest of schools, it was thought that recovery should be allowed to continue, unabated by the pressures a new policy could pose. The engagement phase had begun and officers would assess costs, funding, feasibility for the initial pilot.

A discussion followed:

Had officers carried out any work on the eligibility criteria for the trial scheme?

This work was to be done but a number of factors would be investigated such as site suitability, school willingness, community buy-in, and operating options.

Members reaffirmed their support for the scheme, noting in particular the health benefits of an active lifestyle for both children and their parents. The environmental benefits of the scheme were also noted.

33 Chair's Update

Work programming for the new municipal year was underway and the new work programme would be presented at the first meeting of the Committee in the new year.

The meeting ended at 7.08 pm

Chairman:

Date: Tuesday, 27 September 2022