

Minutes

Name of meeting	POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES, EDUCATION AND SKILLS
Date and Time	THURSDAY 7 DECEMBER 2023 COMMENCING AT 5.00 PM
Venue	COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, NEWPORT, ISLE OF WIGHT
Present	Cllrs R Quigley (Chairman), V Churchman (Vice-Chairman), D Adams, R Downer and S Hendry
Also Present	VotingInattendanceRoleRepresentingList Catherine Boulter, Kev Brown and Lauren Wicks
Also Present (Virtual)	J Ball and S MacKechnie Stuart Ashley, Stephanie How, Natalie Smith and Melanie White
Apologies	Cllrs J Lever and T Outlaw

25. **Apologies and Changes in Membership (If Any)**

Cllr Tig Outlaw and Cllr Joe Lever sent their apologies.

26. **Minutes**

RESOLVED:

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2023 be approved.

27. **Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Stephen Hendry declared an interest in various matters on the agenda as the chair of governors at Holy Cross Catholic Primary School and as a governor at Queensgate Foundation Primary School.

28. **Public Question Time - 15 Minutes Maximum**

No public questions were received.

29. **Progress Update**

The chairman gave a verbal update of the progress against actions and outcomes from previous meetings. It was noted that the Chairman, on behalf of the committee, had written to the Minister about school transport and the response had been circulated to the committee.

RESOLVED:

THAT the progress report be noted.

30. **Mentoring in Schools**

The committee received a verbal presentation from the chair of OUS - an outreach program providing 1:1 mentoring to pupils in Sixth Forms across Hampshire since 2015. Information was shared and discussion took place about how the program had worked at mainland schools and how this would be transferred to schools on the Isle of Wight over the next 12 months. It was requested that the representative returns in 12 months to give the committee an update on progress. This was agreed.

RESOLVED:

THAT the presentation be received and noted.

31. **Children's Services Transition**

The committee received a verbal update from the Director of Children's Services on the end of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight partnership on 31 January 2024. It was reported that good progress had been made by officers on both sides and that the new Director of Children's Services had been appointed and would take up their post on 1 February 2024. The Education and Inclusion Service Manager has also been recruited. The post of Service Director for Children's Services was currently out for recruitment. The committee were advised that the results of the recent Ofsted inspection were due to be published on 15 December 2023 and suggested it be discussed at the next meeting. This was agreed. A discussion was had about what risks the committee were to be aware of and to closely monitor following the end of the Hampshire partnership.

RESOLVED:

THAT the update be noted.

32. **Performance & Budget**

The committee received a presentation update from the Isle of Wight's Service Manager Operations for Children's Services and Hampshire's Assistant Director for Education and Inclusion on the current position with regards to Q2 2023-2024. It was noted that demand for services continued to rise and that the costs of providing services is a significant pressure on the Council.

The biggest risks with the end of the Hampshire partnership were highlighted and discussed and this included that there would likely be an increase in the number of referrals from other professionals, that the number of Looked After Children could increase and this would further increase financial costs to the Council. It was also discussed that attendance and absence rates in schools need to continue to be addressed.

RESOLVED:

THAT the Performance Report be noted.

33. IW Safeguarding Children's Partnership Annual Report

The committee received the annual report from the Independent Chair of the Isle of Wight Safeguarding Partnership for 2022/23. This also included the priorities for IWSCP in 2023/24.

RESOLVED:

THAT the IOWSCP Annual Report be noted.

34. Annual Children in Care Report

The committee received the annual report for the first time and were advised by the Service Manager for Children in Care that this would be a key report for the committee to focus on moving forward. Positives and challenges were noted. It was requested that the committee receive a list of upcoming Children in Care events in order to attend. This was agreed.

RESOLVED:

THAT the Annual Children in Care Report be noted.

35. SACRE Annual Report 2022-23

The committee received the annual report from the professional adviser to the Isle of Wight SACRE. The committee was presented with how SACRE has worked with schools on the Isle of Wight over the last year. This report included the challenges facing religious education and collective worship in schools and what is being done to address these. This annual report is to be shared with Department for Education and the national SACRE organisation once approved and agreed.

RESOLVED:

THAT the Annual Report 2022-2023 from SACRE be noted.

36. Workplan

Consideration was given to the committee's workplan. The Chairman shared that a report on CAMHS and Special Schools was to be added to the workplan.

RESOLVED:

THAT the workplan be received and noted.

37. **Members' Question Time**

Cllr Downer asked an oral question in relation to the recent inquest into headteacher Ruth Perry's death and how OFSTED was being monitored. The Assistant Director for Education and Inclusion shared that OFSTED has agreed to use an independent source to investigate complaints and that their work is also subject to an annual review by the Skills Select Committee of the House of Commons. It was added that with the recent public scrutiny this would also feed into changes and amendments.

CHAIRMAN