



Minutes

Name of meeting	POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES, EDUCATION AND SKILLS
Date and Time	THURSDAY 1 SEPTEMBER 2022 COMMENCING AT 5.00 PM
Venue	COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, NEWPORT, ISLE OF WIGHT
Present	CLLrs R Quigley (Chairman) D Adams, D Andre, C Critchison, S. Hendry, J Medland, M Oliver, T Outlaw and Rob Sanders
Also Present	Carla Bradshaw, Peter Colenutt, Lizzie Grainger, Jayne Howarth, Ashley Jefferies, Jade Kennett, Sarah Philipsborn, Simon Richards Maggie Sanderson, Caroline Sice, Natalie Smith, Suzanne Smith Paul Thistlewood, Richard Vaughan and Melanie White
Also Present (Virtual)	Steve Crocker
Apologies	CLLrs R Downer, S Ellis and J Lever

12. **Minutes**

RESOLVED:

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 9 June 2022 be approved.

13. **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Hendry declared that he was a School Governor for Holy Cross and Queensgate Primary Schools.

Councillor Oliver declared that he was a School Governor for St George's School.

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

No public questions were received.

15. **Progress on outcomes and recommendations from previous meetings**

The Chairman advised that the Scrutiny Officer was chasing up any outstanding actions.

16. **School Place Planning**

Representatives of Headteachers from the Isle of Wight Primary Schools made a submission following the circulation of an open letter to the Committee which highlighted the issue of school place planning and its impact upon the education of children.

A representative of Primary Chairs of Governors then made a submission following the circulation of an open letter to the Committee on Pupil Place Planning and the impact of over-sufficiency of primary school places. It concluded that a more strategic long-term vision was needed from elected members.

The Assistant Director Strategic Development and Capital Delivery, Children's Services presented a report to the committee on School Places.

The report covered the background of the school system and the current situation regarding pupil place planning. The report looked at the methodology behind forecasting school places and how the Isle of Wight was broken down into more localised education planning areas for the purpose of school place planning.

The report specified that school place planning decisions could not be explicitly based around meeting parental preference as school's popularity changed over time and to follow such trends would ultimately lead to a lack of choice for parents and a longer term insufficiency of school places.

The Education White Paper currently contained the aspiration that all schools should be part of a multi-academy trust or planning to join a multi-academy trust, by 2030. The funding regime for schools in a multi-academy trust was however, to remain the same as for any other maintained school on the Isle of Wight.

The planning area review was detailed for both primary and secondary covering the Cowes, Cowes East, Newport, Ryde, Sandown, Shanklin and Ventnor and West Wight. It was explained that many of the primary schools had proactively reviewed their PANs and had made amendments to meet need.

The report concluded that a more radical reorganisation was needed to take place with school amalgamations and closures being part of the solution, and that Headteachers and Governor's had expressed their frustrations that the Council was over-relying on PAN reductions as the main strategy.

Questions were raised by Councillors regarding the over surplus of primary school places and the urgent need to address the issue that some schools may need to close.

It was acknowledged by the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Lifelong Skills, that continually reducing the PAN was not a long-term fix and that there needed to be a strategic approach to deal with the situation. The Cabinet Member

expressed her willingness to take the issue back to the Cabinet for further discussion.

RESOLVED:

THAT the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills be requested to submit the report on school place planning, together with the statements from Isle of Wight Primary Headteachers and Primary Chairs of Governors, to Cabinet for consideration and identification of options regarding the future provision of primary education on the Island.

17. **Children's Services Annual Report on Complaints and Representations**

The Annual Complaints Report was presented, and its purpose was to serve as the mechanism by which the Isle of Wight Council's Children's Services Department could be kept informed about the operation and effectiveness of its complaints procedure. The report covered the period from 01 April 2021 to 31 March 2022

The key findings of the report highlighted the number of representations and by how much they had increased. The trajectories of complaints were logged, whether they were statutory complaints, and the number that became formal complaints. The average time taken to investigate complaints was also noted, along with any increases in timeframes.

It was explained that improvements had been made by reducing the number of complaints that were escalated. It was explained that these reductions were enabled by actions taken without the need to rely on senior managers.

Five recommendations were made in the report for actioning by the Complaints Team within the Directorate and for the wider department to implement or monitor, as appropriate, during the 2022/23 reporting period.

A progress update was given on the 2020/21 and 2021/22 recommendations.

The Committee congratulated the Complaints Team on the handling of complaints during the year.

RESOLVED:

THAT the Annual Report on the Complaints and Representations 2021/22 be noted

18. **Schools White Paper - Opportunity for All - Strong Schools with Great Teachers for your Child**

A power point presentation was given by the County Education Manager, briefing the committee on the Government White paper which outlined the ways forward in opportunity for all, strengthening schools and teacher development.

The impetus behind improving teaching, included 500,000 teacher training opportunities by 2024 with a starting salary of £30,000

A longer average mainstream school week of a minimum of 32.5 hours was being proposed with support for schools to improve attendance, behaviour and wellbeing.

Additional support for some children was prominent in the white paper along with the establishment of a register for children not in school.

It was noted that the Isle of Wight was a leader in contact being made with home educating families.

The expectation for all schools to join, or have a plan to join, a multi-academy trust, featured in the white paper along with the strengthening of Local Authority powers in place planning, admissions, and championing the interests of children, especially vulnerable children.

The position of the Government on progressing elements of the White Paper was awaited following the changes in national political leadership.

RESOLVED:

- THAT the report be noted.

19. **Green Paper SEND review - Right Support, Right Place, Right Time**

The Green paper outlined the challenges facing Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and ways forward on how to address them. Consideration was given to a power point presentation highlighting the key issues contained with the consultation exercise. The consultation period for the paper closed in July and the Government's response to comments was awaited.

RESOLVED:

THAT the report be noted.

20. **Committee's Work Plan**

No additional items for inclusion in the workplan were identified.

21. **Members' Question Time**

There were no members questions

CHAIRMAN