



## PEOPLE OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

**Minutes of the meeting held on 29 September 2021**

**2.00 pm in the Shrewsbury/Oswestry Room, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 6ND**

**Responsible Officer:** Tim Ward

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### **Present**

#### Shropshire Councillors

Councillor Peggy Mullock (Chairman)

Councillors Claire Wild (Vice Chairman), Peter Broomhall, David Evans, Nat Green, Ruth Houghton, Hilary Luff and Kevin Pardy

### **12 Apologies and Substitutions**

Apologies were been received from Councillor Ed Bird (Substitute Roy Aldcroft).

### **13 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest

### **14 Minutes**

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meetings held on 11 August 2021 be approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

### **15 Public Question Time**

There were no questions from members of the public

### **16 Members' Question Time**

Questions had been received from Councillor Kevin Pardy regarding early years service, from Councillor Roger Evans regarding advice being provided on Covid in primary schools, and Councillor Richard Broomhall regarding the Stepping Stones project.

By way of supplementary question, Councillor Pardy queried whether there would be a reduction in early help workers due to the transfer of three staff members to the youth team, or whether those staff members would still work with younger children as well. The Executive Director of Children's Services advised that Shropshire Council has recruited three workers from the early help team, who are trained youth workers, into the detached youth service provision and clarified these were not early years workers. Those members of staff have been transferred to use their experience. The service has been restructured including resources, which has led to staff staying

within a profession they are trained in, whilst allowing whilst allowing the early help offer as per the proposed structure.

The Executive Director of Children's Services provided an update as to current guidance as of week commencing 27<sup>th</sup> September 2021, including the need to take a PCR test should a household contact test positive, the need to self isolate whilst awaiting results and the recording of Covid related absences in schools.

By way of supplementary question, Councillor Evans asked that the current advice which has been provided to schools is also circulated to all elected Members to enable them to lead from the forefront, following advice that has been given.

The Executive Director of Children's Services responded and advised that Shropshire Council were making dynamic changes according to the circumstances both locally and nationally. It has been agreed at a national level that a two-day circuit break to disrupt transmission can be considered if 30% of the class are confirmed positive through PCR tests or 15% of the school are confirmed positive through PCR tests. If either criteria is met, schools should start discussions with Shropshire Council's Director of Public Health and her team before decisions are made.

The Portfolio Holder for Children and Education congratulated officers for the excellent communication and wished to pass on her thanks to Steve Compton, Principal School Improvement Adviser, for providing current advice on a regular basis.

The Portfolio Holder for Children and Education provided an update on the Stepping Stones project in relation to the question raised by Councillor Broomhall.

Members were advised that a briefing on the Stepping Stones project had been scheduled for all elected Members in January next year.

Copies of the questions and responses may be found on the agenda page on the Council website.

## **17 School Place Planning**

Members received a report from the Service Delivery Manager for Business Support, Learning and Skills, Phil Wilson.

The Service Delivery Manager, Business Support Learning and Skills provided an update on the provision of school places across the county during the current plan period through to 2026 and the proposals to review provision following the adoption of the Local Plan in July 2022.

The Service Delivery Manager, Business Support Learning and Skills advised that the report covered school place planning in a range of aspects including local and national contexts, forecasting and data information sources, the catchment areas in relation to the admissions process, the impact of housing and how the place planning process was funded.

A range of engagement events had been held with key stakeholders in Shifnal, Oswestry, Market Drayton, Whitchurch and Shrewsbury.

Training and development sessions would be arranged for members around the admissions process with a subset of the presentation being connected to school place planning. It was hoped the training could be delivered to schools to give parents a better understanding of the process.

Members questioned the provision of recreational space, the admissions criteria and school transport provision for out of catchment children. Members were advised that recreational space was considered where possible where school expansions are taking place; depending on the footprint of the school. Members were further advised that the development session would provide further information on the admissions process and criteria, and that if children are unable to get a place at their catchment school, funding will be provided for transport to an out of catchment school.

Members noted the report.

**18 School Exclusions**

The relevant officer was unable to attend.

**RESOLVED:**

To defer the item until the next meeting of the committee.

**19 Work Programme**

Members received the report of the Scrutiny Officer which set out the proposed work programme for the People Overview Committee for the forthcoming municipal year.

Amongst topics suggested for addition to the programme were:

- Tuition Medical Behaviour Support Service
- Post 16 School Transport

**20 Date of Next Meeting**

Members were reminded that the next meeting of the People Overview Committee would be held on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2021 at 10.00am

Signed ..... (Chairman)

Date: .....