

PEOPLE OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2020

10.00 - 11.40 am 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), Roy Aldcroft, Rob Gittins, Christian Lea, Matt Lee, Elliott Lynch, Kevin Pardy, Julian Dean (Substitute) (substitute for Kevin Turley) and Roger Evans (Substitute) (substitute for David Vasmer)

43 Apologies and Substitutions

43.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cecilia Motley, Kevin Turley and David Vasmer and from Sian Lines (Hereford Diocese).

43.2 Cllr Julian Dean substituted for Cllr Turley and Cllr Roger Evans substituted for Cllr Vasmer

44 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

44.1 There were no declarations of interest made

45 Minutes

45.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2019 had been circulated

45.2 Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of the People Overview Committee held on 20 November 2019 be agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman

45.3 The minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2019 had been circulated.

45.4 Councillor Pardy commented that he had expressed concern regarding the effect the reduction in budgets had on partner organisations and that this was not reflected in the minutes

45.2 Resolved:

That subject to the above, the minutes of the meeting of the People Overview Committee held on 29 November 2019 be agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman

46 Public Question Time

46.1 There were no questions from members of the public

47 **Members' Question Time**

47.1 There were no questions from Members

48 **Shropshire Music Service**

48.1 Members received the report of the Manager of the Shropshire Music Service which provided information about the work of the Music Service.

48.2 Members were informed that the service offered a fully traded offer to all schools, offering tuition in 21 instruments to over 5,000 pupils in a range of formats including whole class tuition and in addition pupils were able to attend 18 different bands and ensembles playing music from all genres.

48.3 In response to a comment from a Member the Music Service Manager paid tribute to the work of Bob Wysome, who had passed away recently. He had been an integral part of the Music Service for many years and had left a lasting legacy. The Executive Director of Children's Services confirmed that she would be writing to his family on behalf of the Council.

48.4 A Member asked whether given pressure on the curriculum and funding cuts, schools were reducing opportunities for pupils. The Music Service Manager informed Members that recent changes in Ofsted criteria had led to many schools asking the service to carry out an audit as to how music featured within the school which had led to an increase in the use of the service at some schools.

48.5 A Member asked what provision the Service made to enable looked after children (LAC) to access their service. The Music Service Manager informed the meeting that they received funding from the LAC team which enabled LAC in year 4 to receive free instrument hire and tuition and in addition there was a 50% reduction in fees for other LAC and pupil premium could also be used.

48.6 A Member asked what additional funding the Service was able to access. The Service Manager informed Members that additional funding was received from the DfE to deliver the aims of the National Plan for Music and that this money enabled the Service and its partners to deliver the 4 core roles and the 3 additional roles contained within the plan.

48.7 In response to a question from a Member the Music Service Manager confirmed that there had been no reduction in the number of staff employed by the service.

48.8 A member asked that a list of events organised by the service be circulated to all members in order that they could promote the work of the service. The Service Manager agreed to do this.

48.9 **Resolved:** -

That the People Overview Committee

- Recognise and congratulate the Shropshire Music Service on the work that it does with the young people of Shropshire, especially in the early years setting.
- Will work to increase their awareness of the work of the Shropshire Music Service and to act as advocates for the service in schools, other settings and the wider Shropshire community.
- Will support the Shropshire Music Service by publicising and attending service events and opportunities

49 Budget

- 49.1 The Executive Director of Children's Services informed the meeting that there was currently a predicted overspend of £5,362,961 in the 2019/20 budget made up of a £3,759,660 overspend in Children's Social Care and £1,601,301 in Learning and Skills. She advised Members that there was a total budget of £53,32,070 for the 2020/21 financial year.
- 49.2 The Executive Director of Children's Services commented that it had been a challenge to produce a balanced budget, given the changing demographic and the growth in demand and costs.
- 49.3 A Member expressed concern regarding how the savings in children's social care would be achieved. The Executive Director of Children's Services stated that it was not sustainable just to react to demand and that it was clear that in order to reduce high costs it was important to reduce demand and that in order to do this it was necessary to redirect expenditure to support families to ensure that children did not need to enter care/children's social care interventions. The Executive Director confirmed new preventative approaches need to be undertaken.
- 49.3 A Member asked for an update on progress with the proposed new children's homes. The interim Assistant Director, Children's Social Care and Safeguarding advised the meeting that the first home would hopefully open by the end of February and was just awaiting the final Ofsted inspection. She informed Members that a second property had been purchased and was currently undergoing work to bring it up to the required standard, and that a third property had been identified and work was ongoing to purchase the property. The Executive Director of Children's Services commented that the development of the new homes would reduce the reliance on expensive out of county care, and that this along with the other preventative work being carried out should impact positively on the expenditure in children's social care.
- 49.4 A Member commented that the main crux of the problem was that there was not enough funding received from central government. The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services assured the meeting that the administration was continually

lobbying for more funding and that regular conversations were had with the county's MPs regarding this.

49.5 A Member asked what role adoption played. The interim Assistant Director, Children's Social Care and Safeguarding advised the meeting that adoption provided good permanent outcomes for some children but that it was only a small part of the picture.

49.6 A Member asked what impact the Digital Transformation Programme had had, especially the move to using Liquidlogic. The Executive Director of Children's Services commented that whilst there were only very limited cashable savings in the business case, the real advantage of Liquidlogic is the efficiency of the work and recording.

49.7 A Member commented that the costs of school transport were high and asked whether there was opportunity to look at different ways of providing transport to school. The Service Manager Business Support advised the meeting that officers were working with the passenger Transport team to look at this. The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services commented that the costs of transporting SEND pupils was high but that the introduction of SEND Hubs should reduce the costs as well as reducing the distances students had to travel.

49.8 The Chair thanked officers for attending the meeting.

50 Work Programme

50.1 Members received the report of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer, which set out the scrutiny work programme for the forthcoming year.

50.2 Members noted the content of the report and asked that the following items be added:

- School Ofsted Reports
- Pupil Place Planning
- Substance misuse amongst young people

50.3 The Scrutiny Officer suggested that the following items also be added:

- Early Intervention

51 Date of next meeting

51.1 Members were reminded that the next meeting of the People Overview Committee would be held on Wednesday 18 March 2019 at 10.00am

Signed (Chairman)

Date: