

## Minutes of the Cabinet

### County Hall

**Thursday, 30 March 2023, 10.00 am**

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**Present:**

Cllr Simon Geraghty (Chairman), Cllr Marc Bayliss, Cllr Adrian Hardman, Cllr Marcus Hart (Vice Chairman), Cllr Adam Kent, Cllr Karen May, Cllr Richard Morris, Cllr Tracey Onslow, Cllr Andy Roberts and Cllr Mike Rouse

**Also attended:**

Cllr Mel Allcott, Cllr Kyle Daisley and Cllr Steve Mackay

**2145 Apologies and Declarations of Interest**

There were no apologies.

Cllr Hart and Cllr Onslow notified the Cabinet that in connection to Item 6, they were both Non-Executive Directors of Worcestershire Children First Board.

**2146 Public Participation**

None

**2147 Confirmation of the Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed to be a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

**2148 Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services Overview and Scrutiny Report**

Cllr Steve Mackay, as Lead Member of the Task Group who produced the Scrutiny report, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, introduced the report. 15 recommendations had been made which aimed to help the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Mental Health Collaborative, the Health and Care Trust as well as outside bodies such as schools, GPs and the Voluntary Sector, to provide the best outcomes for children and adolescents.

Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Board (ICB) accepted six recommendations in full. Eight recommendations were accepted in part.

Comments were made about certain recommendations:

- a change of name to cover all tiers of mental health support rather than just the top tiers was seen as appropriate,
- although desirable, it appeared to be unlikely that an electronic system could be put in place to record a child's full journey, which all partners could access, due to cost and the administration required,
- further investment would be considered in Tier 2 to help meet unmet need,
- a review into mental health needs in schools was planned but was subject to national evaluation,
- the Mental Health Collaborative and the Health and Care Trust agreed to work together to extend the level of data collected beyond the statutory requirements,
- careful consideration would be given to providing Children who were entering care with a mental health assessment as well as a general health assessment, although there was some debate over whether treatment should wait until the child was in a settled placement or whether that would lead to unacceptable delays.

Only one recommendation was declined regarding the provision of a computerised system of information allowing shared access by partners, as it was deemed unrealistic with the investment and governance requirements across partners.

Cllr Daisley highlighted how important the recommendations were in improving mental health support to children in Worcestershire, especially concerning the name of the service. CAMHS was very specific and only covered tiers 3 and 4; it did not reflect an accurate view of mental health services across the County and also had some negative connotations, so a fresh name encompassing all support services was recommended. He also felt it was important that a young person should only have to tell their story once. Different providers offered different services in the various tiers, so if a young person did not meet the criteria for CAMHS, they would need to tell their story to other providers which could add to their distress.

Some schools and other referrers were stating they did not make referrals as they knew they would not meet the criteria for CAMHS. A new way of working was needed and a service such as offered in Solihull should be considered, which could build up trust in mental health services in the County.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Health and Wellbeing felt that Children's mental health was of the highest priority and confirmed it would be considered by the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Children and Young Peoples' Strategic Partnership to ensure a system wide collaborative approach would be taken. Discussion was also needed with strategic professionals. Work was already underway to improve support for Children and Young people and would consider the wider determinants of health. Liaison would take place with Herefordshire to match the ICB footprint as the ICB would be the 'change agents'.

The Cabinet Member for Children and Families believed the Scrutiny had become even more necessary following COVID and its strategies. He was grateful for the focus on mental health assessment for children entering care as their journey into the care system was bound to have been traumatic.

It was clarified that if young people explained their situation to CAMHS but did not meet the criteria they would be sent off to another provider and would have to tell their story again. It was important that there be a single point of access. It was noted that there was now a full complement of educational psychologists.

Cllr MacKay, Daisley and the Task Group members were thanked for their work along with Officers and all those who provided information and their personal experiences of the mental health system.

**RESOLVED that Cabinet:**

- (a) received the Scrutiny Report about Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, together with the responses from the Cabinet Members with Responsibility and the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Board; and**
- (b) noted the Scrutiny Report's findings and recommendations and adopted the response of the Cabinet Members with Responsibility as the way forward.**

## **2149 Household Support Fund**

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Communities explained that the Household Support Fund was good news for the residents of Worcestershire. Previously the Government had provided money in six monthly tranches but this time it was for twelve months and was around £7.9 million. The Department for Work and Pensions gave guidance on how the money should be allocated and it had been confirmed that for this round of funding food vouchers would continue through school holidays. Food bank funding was available for District Councils, Act on Energy were dealing with energy vouchers, while a further £1.8 million was being given to District Councils according to their deprivation figures to distribute locally. The grant was being used according to the legislation.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care felt that the District Councils were able to distribute funding to local people more effectively than the County Council and it was noted that people could benefit from funds from multiple categories. Training was taking place for staff working on the Adult Front door about dealing with enquiries and a Community Directory had been set up.

A Member from outside the Cabinet welcomed the fact that the funding was for twelve months and was pleased that the Equality Impact Assessment had been published but queried whether enough was being done to inform people with disabilities or whose first language was not English, about the fund. It was explained that the District Councils had more knowledge about their local populations so were able to target their hard to reach populations effectively.

**RESOLVED that Cabinet:**

- a) **Endorsed the approach to the use of the Household Support Fund (HSF) in 2023/24 as outlined in paragraph 12 of the agenda report; and**
- b) **Delegated the implementation of the delivery of the Household Support Fund including the allocation of any extension to the grant within the terms applicable to it, to the Strategic Director of People in consultation with the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Communities and in liaison with the Chief Finance Officer.**

## **2150 Worcestershire Children First Business Plan**

The Cabinet Member for Children and Families explained that the business plan ensured there was an integrated system with Children's social care and education. The County Council retained responsibility for safeguarding and children's social care and shared the same mission, vision and values as Worcestershire Children First, that Worcestershire should be a wonderful place for children to grow up, for children to be happy, healthy and safe and that children should be at the centre of the family and protected from harm. The business plan set out the strategies and ambition of the company and any key changes would be brought back to Cabinet.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Education explained that the plan had a keen focus on education and working with the County Council. There should be a good education for all, with measures being that results should be better than the national average at GCSE and A level; four out of five schools should remain as being rated good or better; over 90% getting their first preference of school and more than the national average being in education, employment or training.

Within the business plan the voice of parents and children was shown as important but more could be done in that area. It was also necessary to have suitable buildings, so it was good news that there would be three new schools in the County.

It was highlighted by Cabinet as well as other Members that sustaining the stability of staff, and recruitment and retention in general was key. Strong leadership within the Council and in schools was important.

**RESOLVED that Cabinet:**

- a) **noted the contractual performance update on Worcestershire Children First;**
- b) **approved Worcestershire Children First Business Plan 2023/24; and;**
- c) **noted the agreed contract sum for 2023/24 to WCF as set out in paragraph 22 and notes the indicative contract sum for 2024/25 and 2025/26 included in the Business Plan.**

Cabinet wished to pass on their thanks to Carole Cumino, Chairman of Worcestershire Association of Carers who was retiring, for the great work she had done for the County's 66,000 carers.

The meeting ended at 10.45am

Chairman .....