

Annual Report of the Education, Children and Families Select Committee 2017-18

1. The Select Committee replaced the Policy Development and Scrutiny (PDS) Committee in May 2016.
 - 1.1 We outlined the main changes in our 2016-17 report in the way which the Select Committee works as opposed to the former PDS Committee
 - 1.2 2017-18 saw the remit of the Select Committee widened to include Children and Families social care in line with expansion of the responsibilities of the Portfolio.
 - 1.3 A further innovation in 2017-18 was the expansion of the responsibilities of the Education Budget Sub-Committee under the chairmanship of the Vice Chairman of the Select Committee, Cllr Neil Reddin. The Sub-Committee was renamed in line with main committee change and now also has responsibility for Performance Monitoring. The membership was also widened to include co-opted members.
 - 1.4 Once again the final reports and recommendations of the Select Committee have been referred to Full Council for consideration and also provided to the relevant Executive committees so they can respond on recommendations within their remit. The Select Committee has subsequently published all responses along with its observations.
2. During the year the Committee has held four full inquiries and four mini sessions.
 - 2.1 The topic covered were:
 - i. Children's Services Landscape (June 2017)
 - ii. Child Mental Health Services (October 2017)
 - iii. Early Intervention and Troubled Families (January 2018)
 - iv. Early Years, Child Minding and the 30 Hours Challenge (February 2018)
 - 2.2 The four mini sessions;
 - i. Progress on implementing the Children's Services Improvement Plan (June 2017)
 - ii. Adult Education Reforms (June 2017)
 - iii. Youth Offending Service update (January 2018)
 - iv. Preventing Permanent Exclusion from School (February 2018)
 - 2.3 In addition the Portfolio Holder has attended each meeting and has been questioned extensively on his regular updates to the Select Committee.
 - 2.4 The Committee also held scrutiny sessions with the interim Director of Education Mrs Gillian Palmer and the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Education, Care and Health, Mr Ade Adetosoye.
 - 2.5 The Select Committee was delighted to receive a presentation from members of the Living in Care Council at its January 2018 meeting.

- 2.6 Under the new 'Call in' procedure for the Committee there was one request by the Chairman with regard to the Child Sexual Exploitation Support Services Contract. This was 'called in' prior to decision by the Portfolio Holder because it had not been subject to pre-scrutiny because of the timescale involved. At its meeting in September 2017 the Education, Children and Families Budget and Performance Monitoring Sub-Committee examined the contract and recommended that it be approved.
3. The Education, Children and Families Budget and Performance Monitoring Sub-committee met four times during the year.
4. A report evaluating the success or otherwise of the Select Committee experiment was published in April 2017. The conclusion was that the members of the Select Committee found the new way of working much more effective and interesting and enabled Members to delve into greater detail and scrutiny than under the previous system.
5. We were delighted that our report on Alternative Education was supplied to Lord Soley as part of his preparation for his private members' bill on reforming Home Education.
6. I would like to thank my Deputy Chairman Cllr Reddin for his support and chairmanship of Sub-Committee, all members of the Select Committee for their work in examining witnesses and their contributions to the final reports and to the staff of the Department; led by Ade Adetosoye, Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director (ECHS), Janet Baily, Director of Children's Social Care, former Director of Education Jane Bailey and Gillian Bailey, interim Director of Education. We thank Cllr Peter Fortune for his courteous response to our examination of his work as Portfolio Holder and his Executive Assistant Cllr Tom Philpott. Last but not least we thank our hard working and ever cheerful clerk Philippa Gibbs for excellent minutes produced in good time and for drafting the Select Committee's reports.

Cllr Nicholas Bennett, MA, JP
Chairman
Education, Children and Families Select Committee