

REPORT TO THE CHILDRENS AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S POLICY & SCRUTINY PANEL

DATE OF MEETING: 21ST JUNE 2018

**SUBJECT OF REPORT: NORTH SOMERSET PARENT CARERS WORKING
TOGETHER WORKPLAN 2018-19**

TOWN OR PARISH: ALL

**OFFICER/MEMBER PRESENTING: ALUN DAVIES, POLICY AND STRATEGY
DEVELOPMENT OFFICER**

KEY DECISION: NO

RECOMMENDATIONS

The panel is recommended to note and welcome the development of North Somerset Parents and Carers Working Together as the carer parent forum in North Somerset and their workplan for 2018-19.

1. SUMMARY OF REPORT

1.1 This report informs the panel on the establishment and work of North Somerset Parent Carers Working Together (NSPCWT). NSPCWT is the forum for carers and parents of Disabled children and young people and those with SEN in North Somerset. It also presents to the panel the NSPCWT workplan for 2018-19

2. POLICY

2.1 The SEND Code of Practise requires all local authorities to actively consult and engage with the carers and parents of Disabled children and young people and those with SEN. The Department for Education (DfE) provides annual funding to support a forum of carers and parents in each local authority area.

3. DETAILS

3.1 Co-production, consultation and engagement with Disabled children and young people and those with SEN and their carers and parents has been a key issue for both national and local government for several years. As noted above DfE has provided funding to be applied for annually by carers and parents to set-up and run forums in each local authority area. The role of the forums is to engage with carers and parents seeking their views on the services their children receive and reflect these to SEND providers in the area.

3.2 North Somerset has had a forum since the introduction of DfE funding. Due to the nature of the strains and pressures on volunteers, and particular those who care for

children and young people with SEND, the strength and effectiveness of the forum has waxed and waned.

3.3 The present leadership of the forum – now known as North Somerset Parents and Carers Working Together – has been in place since October 2017. From the outset the chair Anna Frary has been very clear that the role of the forum is to act as a “critical friend”. This means that the forum will challenge policies and practise that carers and parents have concerns with, but they will do this constructively and seek mutually-agreeable resolutions to difficulties. Political campaigning and lobbying will not be part of the approach taken.

3.4 The chair and vice-chair of NSPCWT have taken up places on the North Somerset SEND board and NSPCWT are represented on numerous other groups assisting with the development of SEND in North Somerset. They played an active and very positive part in the recent Local Joint Area Inspection.

3.5 Attached as appendix 1 is the NSPCWT workplan for 2018-19. It is being presented to the panel for information to make the panel aware of the forum’s priorities for 2018-19. The chair and vice-chair of the forum will be present at the meeting to speak to the report and answer any questions if the panel agree to suspend standing orders to allow them to do so.

4. CONSULTATION

N/A

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Costs

N/A

Funding

While the DfE requires local authorities and CCGs to support forums in their bid for funding, the council does not provide any direct funding for NSPCWT. However, officers within the P&C Directorate work closely with the forum to support their work, and where possible to facilitate meeting rooms and other resources which would otherwise be met from the forum’s very limited funding.

6. LEGAL POWERS AND IMPLICATIONS

N/A

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

N/A

8. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Disabled children and young people and those with SEN are defined as being covered by the protected characteristics of the Equalities Act 2010.

9. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Consultation and engagement with carers and parents of Disabled children and young people and those with SEN is an important element of the council's corporate intention to seek the views of the community of North Somerset. Co-production of new or changed services is required by the Children & Families Act 2014, as further detailed in the SEN Code of Practice, 2015.

10. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

N/A

11. AUTHOR

**ALUN DAVIES, STRATEGY & POLICY DEVELOPMENT OFFICER
PEOPLE & COMMUNITIES**

12. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – North Somerset Parent Carers Working Together Work Plan 2018/19