

People and Overview Scrutiny Committee

14th January 2026

Public Questions

Question from John Palmer

Re: Children's services reforms report on your agenda.

"(paragraph 1.2) "These reforms signal the largest changes within children's services in decades".

The intention for these reforms was announced February 2023, but it's taken three years for these detailed plans to come before this council.

It's a tribute to the determination, ambitions, energy and focused intent of the Labour Government that this is now moving nationally and locally, in stark contrast to the chaotic stasis of the anti-real people Tories and the cluelessness of the policy-devoid tumbleweed of the far right. As an observer, I am justifiably pointing this out, because I know scrutiny committee members are collectively stymied from coming at this in such straight talking (based on recent utterances).

Does the scrutiny committee chair agree that the report is full of impenetrable, insider jargon? Won't families seeking help, or being identified as needing help, appreciate much more clarity, clear language, tangibles about who, what, where, how, how soon, how often, how is the queue formed, who leads on communications, who decides, etc?

Because of this jargon, is the committee chair worried that achieving recommendation 3.3 in this report, "Seek to understand the reforms well enough so that you can champion and advocate....the changes that will be needed [across the council]" will be challenging?

Are staff not primarily employed as children's services qualified experts already getting in touch to ask for shares, summaries and the planned communications of these fresh goals?

Response from the Chairman, Councillor Andy Davies

These reforms are the largest in decades and were indeed announced in February 2023 after the review of Stable Homes Built on Love. However, the roll out has been undertaken in stages with pathfinders of different local authorities testing and learning what works before full roll out across the country.

The report is relaying a set of national reforms ahead of seeking cabinet support to implement them locally, if there is any specific jargon which is unclear please provide specific examples so that a glossary can be appended.

Staff working across Children's Services undertake a range of roles and have been part of developing the planned actions set out in the action plan. There is a plan underway to ensure that all staff working within the local authority are aware of the reforms and can start to build the actions into their service and team plans.