

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Tuesday, 14 March 2017

PRESENT

Cllr M A G Versallion (Chairman)
Cllr Mrs D B Gurney (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:	J Chatterley P A Duckett Mrs J Freeman P Hollick	Councillors:	A Ryan D Shelvey B Walker
Parental Co-optees:	Mr S Court Mrs G Deans Mrs E Rowlands		
Apologies for Absence:		Mrs D Main Mr D Morton	
	Cllrs	B Saunders	
Substitutes:	Cllrs	D Bowater	
Members in Attendance:	Cllrs R D Berry Cllr S Dixon Mrs A L Dodwell K Ferguson Mrs S A Goodchild Cllr Mrs C Hegley P Smith	Executive Member for Education and Skills Deputy Executive Member for Social Care and Housing Executive Member for Social Care and Housing	
Officers in Attendance:	Mrs S Harrison Ms K Hayward Ms J Piper Mrs R Preen Mrs S Tyler Mr V Wan	Director of Children's Services Head Teacher, Sandy Upper School Vulnerability Response Coordinator Scrutiny Policy Adviser Head of Child Poverty and Early Intervention Senior Education Officer (Planning)	
Public:	0		

CS/16/72. **Minutes**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 17 January 2017 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

CS/16/73. **Members' Interests**

None.

CS/16/74. **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

The Chairman raised concerns regarding a recent HMIC (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary) report regarding the performance of Bedfordshire police and the impact of those findings on effective partnership working and the support of vulnerable children.

CS/16/75. **Petitions**

None.

CS/16/76. **Questions, Statements or Deputations**

None.

CS/16/77. **Call-In**

None.

CS/16/78. **Requested Items**

None.

CS/16/79. **Executive Members' Updates**

The Executive Member for Social Care confirmed that the outcomes of a recent Looked after Children (LAC) and Care Leaver peer review would be delivered to the committee in due course and that the Children's Services Transformation Plan was progressing well with a report to be provided at a future meeting. The Children's Trust Board had recently been replaced with a leadership board which raised some concerns regarding effective engagement with the police and other partners.

The Executive Member for Education and Skills highlighted the disparity between those schools rated by OFSTED as good and outstanding and that of educational attainment, also confirming that a recently drafted letter had been shared with central government regarding additional funding for education.

The Director for Children's Services provided details of a recent staffing restructure within the directorate which would support improved collaborative

working with partners and a more flexible approach to the service. There had been no loss of staff capacity during the period of restructure as interim support was in place, with interviews for the post of Assistant Director of Transformation scheduled for 3 April 2017. A great deal of interest in the post had been expressed from a very strong field of applicants.

CS/16/80. **Education Outcomes 2016**

The Director for Children's Services delivered a report and presentation which highlighted the need for analysis in order to support improved educational outcomes across the region, any necessary interventions within the home and acknowledging that low attainment in some instances was not attributed to education in isolation.

In light of the presentation and report Members discussed the following in summary:-

- The need for young people to be educationally and vocationally resilient in the event of an economic downturn.
- A need to work with parents and carers in order to identify vulnerable children at an early stage, recognising the link between differing home and school environments and acknowledging that poverty was only one aspect of low educational attainment.
- The value of progress measures and ensuring a targeted approach.
- The impact of structural changes to schools on educational outcomes, ensuring lessons learned were applied in order to appropriately prepare and support pupils for future transition.
- Recognition of the positive impact of strong leadership, quality teaching, school governance, support and training and any barriers to achieving those outcomes.
- The need to liaise with childminders and the early years service in order to support the access of appropriate funding streams and ensure children were school ready.
- The barriers to appropriate special needs assessments and suitable support for parents.
- The need to support vocational students in order to meet the regional skills gap and the needs of employers.
- To determine the role of the Council in challenging individual schools in order to improve outcomes, whilst recognising the need for productive partnership working.
- That the Scrutiny function be effectively and appropriately utilised when assessing reasons behind low attainment and coasting schools.

RECOMMENDED:-

- **To explore the impact of additional directorate resource in determining the role of the Council in supporting school improvements and to analyse data in relation to officer capacity at a future meeting.**
- **That appropriate focus be given to technical level qualifications in order to meet employer need and the regional skills gap.**

- **To explore the mechanisms whereby the Committee extend an invitation to schools and cluster chairs, explore successes and good practice and take the role of critical friend in order to support improved educational outcomes.**
- **That clearer milestones and work streams be delivered at a future meeting, including cluster work with a focus on preventing permanent exclusions.**

CS/16/81. Progress and Attainment 8

The Head Teacher of Sandy Upper School delivered a presentation which set out changes to the national examination and progress structure within schools, with a focus on achievement and attainment in order to support the best life choices and long term outcomes for pupils. The need for robust leadership was vital in ensuring positive outcomes.

In light of the presentation Members discussed the following in summary:-

- The methodology used in tracking pupil's progress.
- Educational and individual subject requirements.
- The need for the Department of Education to take alternative learning requirements into account and not focus solely on academic modules and outcomes.
- How the Council could add value to the education system locally.

Recommended:-

1. **That the Committee welcomed the new methods in distinguishing pupil's progress and attainment.**
2. **That the Executive Member share the Committee's view with the Department of Education that the differing needs of students should be met with the appropriate support, including those students embarking on vocational and skills based subjects.**

CS/16/82. Commissioning of New School Places in Cranfield for September 2018

The Head of School Planning delivered a report regarding additional school places in Cranfield and confirmed that Ward Members had been consulted and were satisfied with the proposals.

RECOMMENDED that the Committee support the proposed changes and endorse the report to the Executive.

CS/16/83. Early Intervention and Family Resilience

This item was deferred to a future meeting.

CS/16/84. Work Programme 2016/17 & Executive Forward Plan

RECOMMENDED that the Committee Work Programme be agreed subject to the following amendments:-

- **Pupil Yield - September 2017.**

- **The Role of Technical Skills and Provision within Central Bedfordshire Schools – Date TBC.**
- **Individual and Cluster School Attainment - The role of OSC as Critical Friend - Date TBC**

CS/16/85. **National Working Group CSE Health-Check Review**

The Vulnerability Response Coordinator delivered a report highlighting key areas of focus for the service and noted that recent work with a new provider would deliver a multi agency training approach in order to foster collaborative partnership support to children at risk of and experiencing Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).

CS/16/86. **Exclusion of Press and Public**

RESOLVED to exclude the press and public from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that its consideration was likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

CS/16/87. **CSE Health Check Review**

RECOMMENDED:-

- **That the Committee support the partnership work being undertaken towards the prevention, identification and disruption of Child Sexual Exploitation in Central Bedfordshire.**
- **That the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee, responsible for the scrutiny of the Community Safety Partnership and the role of the police in supporting vulnerable children, scrutinise the recent Bedfordshire Police PEEL HMIC report at a future meeting.**

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 2.25 p.m.)

Chairman

Dated