

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in Committee Room 1 - The Council Offices, High Street North, Dunstable, on Tuesday, 23 May 2017

PRESENT

Cllr K Ferguson (Chairman)
Cllr D Shelvey (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:	J Chatterley P Hollick	Councillors:	A Ryan B Saunders
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Parental Co-optees: Mr S Court
Mrs G Deans
Mrs E Rowlands

Apologies for Absence:	Cllrs	Mrs D B Gurney Cllr M Liddiard B Walker Cllr S Watkins
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CofE Co-optee	Mrs D Main
RC Co-optee	Mr D Morton

Substitutes:	Cllrs	R D Berry
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Members in Attendance:	Cllrs	Cllr S Dixon	Executive Member for Education and Skills
		Mrs A L Dodwell	Deputy Executive Member for Social Care and Housing
		Cllr Mrs C Hegley	Executive Member for Social Care and Housing
		Mrs T Stock	Deputy Executive Member for Health

Officers in Attendance:	Mr G Jones	Deputy Director Safeguarding and Early Help
	Mrs R Preen	Scrutiny Policy Adviser
	Mrs S Tyler	Head of Child Poverty and Early Intervention
	Mr V Wan	Senior Education Officer (Planning)

Others in Attendance:	Sarah Wilson	Director, ELFT
	Graeme Lamb	Director, ELFT

Public: 1

CS/17/1. **Minutes**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 14 March 2017 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

CS/17/2. **Members' Interests**

Cllr Shelvey declared an interest in relation to item 11 as a director of the Bedfordshire Schools Trust (BEST).

CS/17/3. **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

The Chairman welcomed new Members to the Committee and highlighted priorities for the Work Programme for the forthcoming year.

CS/17/4. **Petitions**

None.

CS/17/5. **Questions, Statements or Deputations**

The Chairman confirmed that one member of the public had registered to speak who raised the following points in summary:-

- Concerns regarding the education provision in Sandy and the proposed merger between a lower and middle school, which in their opinion had not properly been consulted on with parents or followed due process.
- The need for a coordinated approach to the restructure of schools.
- That lessons learned from similar restructures ought to be considered and applied in order to mitigate future problems.

In response the Executive Member for Education and Skills thanked the speaker for their contribution and confirmed that the Council would be taking a more proactive and coordinated approach in the future and would act as a facilitator in the process. A recent meeting between the Diocese and other partners had been very proactive and all parties were willing to collaborate.

CS/17/6. **Call-In**

None.

CS/17/7. **Requested Items**

None.

CS/17/8. **Executive Members' Updates**

The Executive Member for Social Care and Housing advised the Committee of a scheduled Member briefing regarding the music service and that all Members

were invited to attend the meetings of the Corporate Parenting Panel in order to better understand the role of the Council in this regard.

The Executive Member for Education and Skills advised that the fairer funding formula would be presented to the Committee after the election due to the uncertainty around schools' funding. Challenges regarding the proposed restructure of schools were also outlined for Members. Some school estates were in need of investment, with ongoing challenges in relation to the recruitment and retention of teachers and the role of school governors within the educational system.

The Deputy Executive Member for Health advised the Committee of a recent visit to the drug and alcohol service. A health and well being programme was due to be introduced within schools, with a final meeting in July 2017 to coordinate the implementation of the scheme.

CS/17/9. **ELFT and Improved Mental Health Services for Children and Young People**

The Chairman welcomed representatives from the East London NHS Foundation Trust (ELFT) who delivered a presentation regarding the ongoing work of the Mental Health Team within Bedfordshire. The priorities and challenges were outlined in the context of child mental health within the wider education and health care system, with Members appraised of the work of the crisis intervention team. The Committee was advised that referral waiting times had reduced and the importance of a smooth transition to adult mental health services was reinforced, however there were still ongoing concerns with regards to children being placed out of county due to a lack of available beds.

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

- Reasons for the marked increase in child mental health referrals in recent years.
- Challenges regarding the lack of resource and overall funding for mental health with the need for early intervention and partnership working in order to support the service.
- That the Looked After Children team was working well alongside a dedicated team within the young carers service.
- The desire to see a more robust out of hours service.
- That additional data be provided with regards to real time transition and the support being offered to those moving into adult mental health services.

RECOMMENDED that a progress report be brought to a future meeting.

CS/17/10. **Proposed Temporary Expansion of Henlow Church of England Academy**

The Executive Member for Education and Skills outlined the complexities around the temporary expansion of Henlow Middle School, acknowledging the importance of being mindful of the longer term projections for the school and the efficient use of funds in the short to medium term.

In light of the report Members expressed concern at the pace in which building works would commence as a build programme was not yet underway but the

Head of Schools Planning provided assurances that the current provision could accommodate additional children with immediate effect.

RECOMMENDED that the Committee support the commencement of the use of capital expenditure as set out in the Executive report, subject to the granting of planning permissions under Part 3 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

CS/17/11. Early Intervention and Family Resilience

The Head of Child Poverty and Early Intervention delivered two presentations highlighting the work of the service and the use of early intervention within families.

In light of the information Members discussed the importance of appropriate assistance at the correctly identified stage in a family's development with ongoing support as necessary. Members were keen that training was offered to participants in order to foster a mentoring programme going forward.

NOTED the presentations.

CS/17/12. Children's Services Transformation Programme

The Deputy Director for Safeguarding and Early Help delivered a report which highlighted the ongoing journey of the Children's Transformation Programme, key timelines and milestones, reinforcing the need to ensure an effective and affordable long term solution, promoting safe and secure family units. Members were appraised of methods used to deliver reductions around care and custody costs and crisis trigger points which included drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence and school exclusions.

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

- The importance of outlining how the programme would be achieved, with measurable targets included within each progress report.
- The difference between the adult social care hubs and how these worked in relation to the needs of children, ensuring a joined up approach.

RECOMMENDED that the Committee champion the Transformation Programme with specific detail relating to measurable outcomes provided in future reports.

CS/17/13. Work Programme 2017/18 & Executive Forward Plan

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

- **22 June 2017 - Committee meeting cancelled, school performance to be discussed in an informal meeting with Head Teachers, Governors and Council officers.**
- **Review of the Children's Disability Provision – 11 July 2017**

- **Speech and Language Provision – 11 July 2017**
- **Educational Psychology Provision – 11 July 2017**
- **Pupil Yield – 11 July 2017**
- **Children with Disabilities Short Breaks and Efficiencies – 11 July 2017**
- **Information advice and guidance (careers service) – 12 September 2017**
- **Fairer Funding Formula for Schools – 12 September 2017**
- **SEND Vision and Strategy – 12 September 2017**
- **The Recruitment and Retention of Teachers – 12 September 2017**
- **To Review Council Policy - The Adoption of a Two Tier system – TBC**
- **Children and Deprivation – TBC**

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 12.30 p.m.)

Chairman

Dated