

## Central Bedfordshire Council

### CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Tuesday 11 September 2017

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#### Review of Children with Disabilities provision

Report of: Cllr Carole Hegley, Executive Member for Social Care and Housing  
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#### Purpose of this report

1. The demand for specialist provision for Children with Disabilities within Central Bedfordshire is increasing at the same time the provider market is reducing. This report provides an overview of the planned review of Children with Disabilities provision that will outline the Council's response to meeting increased needs within the financial envelope available.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to:

1. Support the planned review of Children with Disabilities provision.

#### Overview and Scrutiny Comments/Recommendations

None

#### Background

1. This report sets out the detail of the social care provision and the position regarding the needs of Children with Disabilities who may need accommodation in the near future.
2. The Children with Disabilities service area has recently implemented a number of key changes in response to key changes in legislation and guidance. This includes the Children and Families Act 2014, the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 0 – 25 years, the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards and the National Transforming Care agenda.
3. The Council has been successful in managing the demand for accommodation for Children with Disabilities through local provision and

remain committed to providing the best services close to home for children and their families.

4. The demand for specialist provision is increasing with demographic growth and the knowledge of local children who have increasing needs that cannot be met within their current provision. It should also be noted that the market place for Children with Disabilities provision locally is decreasing.

### **Current Provision**

5. The Children with Disabilities (CWD) Service provision is delivered through a hub and spoke model. The two hubs are based in Biggleswade and Dunstable/Houghton Regis.
6. The Biggleswade Hub has five long stay beds for Looked after Children (LAC) at the residential home called Maythorn, which also provides overnight and short break provision.
7. All of the children who live in long stay provision at Maythorn attend Ivel Valley School. Robust partnership arrangements with the school and support from specialist health and CAMH services allow for appropriate and timely interventions to meet the needs of the children and the staff who care for and teach them.
8. The Dunstable/Houghton Regis Hub – Kingfisher - works closely with Chiltern School, although unlike Biggleswade Hub, does not have the advantage of shared premises. This provision provides for up to four children at one time and does not provide residential accommodation.
9. Both hubs provide short break services which range from community based activities to overnight residential stays. The joint working model with the school and partners has resulted in reducing the number of disabled children going out of area by 50% since 2012.
10. The two homes are rated Good (Maythorn) and Outstanding (Kingfisher) by OFSTED - links to the full OFSTED reports are provided below
  - a. [Maythorn report](#)
  - b. [Kingfisher report](#)
11. The Maythorn and Kingfisher homes are currently full to capacity, therefore meeting the known growth in demand will involve looking for alternative solutions, including expensive out of county provision.
12. The services offered in partnership with the local area schools include drop in clinics, welfare benefits support, early years support, training for staff and parent carers and a range of short break provision. The short break provision includes social clubs and the 'Stay and Play' sessions which are popular with families of disabled children.

13. The CWD social care team work with approximately 250 children which equates to approximately 50% of the children classified as disabled in Central Bedfordshire. Further work is being undertaken to fully understand the needs of the wider population of disabled children who do not access social care input.

### **Council Priorities**

14. The proposals support the Council priorities;
- a. Improving education and skills
  - b. Protecting the vulnerable
  - c. Promoting wellbeing
  - d. Creating stronger communities

### **Corporate Implications**

15. A number of the children being offered services are looked after children for whom the Council has a Corporate Parenting responsibility.

### **Legal Implications**

16. Under s.20(1) The Local Authority has a duty to provide accommodation for any child in need within their area who appears to them to require accommodation as a result of;
- a) there being no person who has parental responsibility for him
  - b) his being lost or having been abandoned; or
  - c) the person who has been caring for him being prevented (whether or not permanently, and for whatever reason) from providing him with suitable accommodation or care.
17. Under Section 26(1) of the Children and Families Act 2014, the local authority and its partner commissioning bodies must make arrangements (joint commissioning arrangements) about the education, health and care provision to be secured for –
- a) Children and young people for the whom the authority is responsible who have special educational needs, and
  - b) Children and young people in the authority's area who have a disability.

### **Financial Implications**

18. If the Council is required to commission expensive Out of County placements when internal provision is fully utilised, this will present financial risks to the Council.
19. The provider market to meet the needs of Children with Disabilities is limited and where available is of high cost. This is unsustainable within the agreed pressures and efficiencies of the Medium Term Financial Plan.

## **Equalities Implications**

20. An Equalities Impact Assessment will be completed as part of this review.

## **Strategic Alignment and timescales**

21. The proposal to review CWD provision supports the principle of the Council's Special Educational Needs Vision of developing services in the local area to ensure that children and young people's needs are met locally.

22. Any proposals for future provision will be developed with colleagues from across the Council and partners, including those from Social Care and Housing, who are developing the 16 – 25 Strategy and the National Transforming Care Programme to ensure that the most complex children and young people have their holistic needs met through a cost effective joint agency model.

23. The CWD review will also be developed in line with the Council's Local Plan to review the supply and demand for wider provision.

24. The CWD review will be aligned with the school locality cluster plans and the School Organisation Plan and will be published by March 2018.

## **Conclusion and next Steps**

25. The CWD review will include detailed analysis of current provision compared to the known demand for services within Central Bedfordshire. The review will produce a detailed mapping of each child and project future demands for specialist services.

26. The final review will include consider other services, including transport and the access to health and leisure provision.

27. The Children's Service Directorate will champion a Pan-Bedfordshire approach to planning for the future needs of disabled children with complex needs. Discussions will also take place with colleagues in Milton Keynes who are in the footprint of the National Transforming Care Programme with the 3 Bedfordshire Councils. This includes specific reviews of services including the review of Autism pathways that is already underway.

28. Key partners will be engaged in ensuring that the joint agency duties as set out in the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2015 are met.

29. The review will provide recommendations about the way forward which will best meet Central Bedfordshire's Children with Disabilities current and future needs.

**Appendices**

30.None.

**Report previously considered**

31.Special Educational Needs and Disability Vision and Strategy.