

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in Room 15, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Tuesday, 29 June 2010

PRESENT

Cllr J Street (Chairman)
Cllr Mrs D B Gurney (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors: Mrs A Barker
P A Blaine
D Bowater
N B Costin
Dr R Egan
P Hollick
K Janes
A Shadbolt

Parental Co-optees: H Copley
D Landman

Apologies for Absence: Roman Catholic Co-optee: Mrs F Image
Church of England Co-optee: J Reynolds
Parent Co-optee: Mr B Sear

Members in Attendance: Cllr J G Jamieson

In Attendance: Mr A Rogers - Headteacher

Officers in Attendance: Mr B Carter
Mrs E Grant
Mrs S Hobbs
Ms K Peddie
Overview & Scrutiny Manager
Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Children's Services
Democratic Services Officer
Head of Policy & Strategy - Children's Services

CS/10/11 **Minutes**

RESOLVED

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 27 April 2010 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

Members were advised that the breakdown of the number of foster placements outside of the Central Bedfordshire area referred to in Minute no CS/10/8 would be circulated to all Members of the Committee.

CS/10/12 **Members' Interests**

(a) **Personal Interests:-**

None.

(b) **Personal and Prejudicial Interests:-**

None.

(c) **Any Political Whip in relation to items on the agenda:-**

None.

CS/10/13 **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

None.

CS/10/14 **Petitions**

No petitions were received from members of the public in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure as set out in Annex 2 of Part A4 of the Constitution.

CS/10/15 **Questions, Statements or Deputations**

No applications from members of the public were received in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure allowed for under Part A4 of the Constitution.

CS/10/16 **Call-In**

No matters were referred to the Committee for a decision in relation to call-in of a decision.

CS/10/17 **Requested Items**

No items were referred to the Committee for consideration at the request of a Member under Procedure Rule 3.1 of Part D2 of the Constitution.

CS/10/18 **Learning Transformation**

Members received a presentation from the Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Children's Services on transforming learning. The presentation took Members through:-

- the work undertaken so far;
- Legal and Statutory issues;
- Issues that had arisen out of letters or questions to the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Children's Services; and
- Lead Member leadership;

A copy of the presentation is attached at Appendix A.

Since the change in Government transforming learning had been changing daily, especially with the fast tracking of the Academies Bill. The first transforming learning review covering Dunstable and Houghton Regis was at a very early stage with the Transforming Learning Board gathering information and setting up working groups. The Transforming Learning Board was an Officer reference group and not a decision making body.

Members were advised of the legal and statutory issues especially around pre-determination. The Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Children's Services would report to the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January (provisional date to be confirmed) after considering all the options available and discussions with headteachers. Members would then be able to scrutinise the report and make any recommendations to the Executive, who would then make the final decision. Prior to this provisional date, the Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Children's Services gave an assurance to Members that verbal progress reports would be submitted to the Committee at alternate meetings.

Councillor Bowater reminded the meeting that the role of the scrutiny committee was to consider the whole of Central Bedfordshire.

Members thanked Adrian Rogers, Headteacher for attending the meeting.

RESOLVED

to receive a verbal progress report at alternate meetings of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

CS/10/19

Children and Young People's Plan: Making a Positive Contribution

Members considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Children's Services that provided Members with the progress made with the priorities within the Making a Positive Contribution aspect of the Children & Young People's Plan. Members were advised that the Making a Positive Contribution Delivery Group's four priorities were:-

- Priority 12 – Develop and promote children and young people's positive contribution to communities across Central Bedfordshire.
- Priority 13 – Reduce youth offending and anti-social behaviour.
- Priority 14 – Promote and provide activities and information for all children and young people and their families, ensuring that the hard to reach and those with disabilities can take part in mainstream activities.
- Priority 15 – Strengthen and improve relationships within families by encouraging positive parenting.

Members were advised that the Tell Us survey that had been undertaken to collect data on activities children and young people had shown that 69% of young people consulted participated in positive activities. The Council's target was 77.9% for this year. The Council was in the upper-middle quartile of the Council's statistical neighbours and this was seen as a good performance. The Government was stopping the Tell Us survey so it was unlikely that this performance data would be collected in future years. The data collected did not just reflect the activities run by the local authority, but also those run by other organisations.

Members were advised that Friday and weekend youth provision had been put in place in parts of Central Bedfordshire and this would be rolled out further in the coming months, finance permitting.

Members discussed the removal of funding by the Government to provide free swimming for the under 16 and over 60 year olds as this contributed to a range of priorities including reducing obesity, children and young people taking part in activities. The committee agreed to request the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee to review the issue and explore proposals for potential local funding of this initiative. This review could include discussions with partner organisations, such as NHS Bedfordshire, who is understood to have specific funding to tackle obesity.

During 2011 there would be financial constraints on the Children and Young People's Plan. The Youth Parliament had identified their priorities which would be circulated to Members. The Director advised that young peoples issues usually included transport, financial advice within schools, improved careers guidance, improved sexual health education in schools, positive images for young people and affordable access to the right positive activities.

RESOLVED

that notwithstanding the budget pressures that Officers write on behalf of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee to the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee requesting that they consider the funding for free swimming for the under 16 and over 60 year olds.

CS/10/20

Children and Young People's Plan - Be Healthy

Members considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Children's Services that provided Members with the progress made with the priorities within the Be Healthy aspect of the Children & Young People's Plan. Members were advised that the Be Healthy Delivery Group's five priorities were:-

- Priority 1 – Ensure a healthy start to life – including early access to antenatal care, reducing smoking and improving nutrition in pregnancy, promoting breastfeeding and increasing immunisation and vaccinations.
- Priority 2 – Ensure children and young people are able to make responsible decision in relation to drugs, alcohol and sexual health.
- Priority 3 – Promote, protect and treat the mental and emotional health of children and young people.
- Priority 4 – Support children and young people to lead healthy lifestyles including reducing smoking and childhood obesity and increasing physical activity and healthy eating.
- Priority 5 – Transform services for disabled children.

Members discussed the red performance indicator NI 56 obesity among primary school are children in Year 6. Members were advised that the Children's Trust had received and agreed an obesity recovery plan. School nurses had set days where the children were weighed in schools which increased the number of pupils being measured. There was also a role for encouraging children to have school dinners or a healthy lunchbox.

Members reiterated their concern over the removal of funding for free swimming for the under 16 and over 60 year olds as this might have an adverse impact on the number of children being obese. A suggestion was made that a letter be sent on behalf of the Committee to the local NHS enquiring if there were available funds to support the free swimming scheme.

With regard to short break places for disabled children, although Members were pleased to note the increase in places provided, they requested further information regarding the number of places available.

NOTED

the report.

CS/10/21

Task Force Update - Youth Facility Provision

Members received an oral update from the Chairman of the Youth Facility Provision and Youth Services in Central Bedfordshire Task Force. The Task Force had met on 3 occasions and had carried out some visits to 3 youth centres in Central Bedfordshire. In summary the Task Force agreed the following interim conclusions at their meeting on 16 June:-

- the Council needed to ensure that it made the best use of the property and assets that it had for providing youth services;
- the Council needed to ensure there was a wide range of universal services available in Central Bedfordshire, but not necessarily be provided by the Council; they could be provided in partnership or by other local organisations;
- the Council had made a great deal of progress in relation to targeted youth services for those who were not in education, employment or training (NEET), engage in anti-social behaviour or were teenage parents. It was important that the Council continued to develop new ways of working in those wards with the greatest need so as to make a difference for children and young people in the most effective way.

The Council were carrying out a great deal of positive work with a wide range of support and activities that were being made available to children and young people in Central Bedfordshire. The Chairman of the Task Force explained that the service had done a significant amount of work to support the development of apprenticeships and the use of these schemes, where appropriate, as well as promoting young people entering into jobs needed to be encouraged and good relations with the colleges maintained.

During the difficult economic situation it was clear that partnership working and support for other partners too effectively use the facilities that were already available in the best possible way. It was important that the Council ensured its targeted services were prioritised in those areas of greatest need.

Members were advised that a full report would be received by the Committee at its meeting on 14 September 2010.

NOTED

the verbal update.

CS/10/22 14 to 19 Commissioning

Members considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Children's Services that provided Members with information on national changes to the commissioning of education and training provision for 16-19 year-olds. On 1 April 2010 the funding for post-16 education and training passed from the Learning and Skills Council to local authorities.

A suggestion was made that the Committee receive a presentation from the Principal at Central Bedfordshire College. It was highlighted that Central Bedfordshire College was not the only provider of further education and training in Central Bedfordshire. Members were advised that the Council had only been managing this funding for two months and it was still too early to feedback any information.

The Children's Trust had an Economic Wellbeing Sub Group who were looking at young peoples skills and where they fit in the workplace. The Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee would receive the first annual report on 14 – 19 Commissioning at their meeting scheduled for 14 June 2011.

NOTED

the report.

CS/10/23 Work Programme 2010-11 and Executive Forward Plan

Members considered a report of the Overview and Scrutiny Manager which set out the details of the currently drafted Committee work programme and the latest Executive Forward Plan.

Members noted that the Quarter 1 budget information would be circulated to Members by email at the beginning of August 2010. The reserve meeting on 3 August 2010 would not be called unless an urgent item needed to be considered by the Committee.

Members made a request for further information at their next meeting on 14 September 2010 on the Council's policy for children excluded from school and the disaggregation of the service with Bedford Borough Council. Members were advised that negotiations had only just started with Officers at Bedford Borough Council, so only limited information would be available in September.

A Member also suggested the possibility of a Task Force review of school meals. The Chairman agreed to consider the matter further.

RESOLVED

to receive a brief report on the Council's policy for children excluded from school at the Committee meeting scheduled for the 14 September 2010.

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

Chairman

Dated



Transforming Learning

Edwina Grant

Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Children's
Services

29th June 2010

Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny



Purpose of the presentation

- To comment on the aspirations of the transforming learning work so far
- To advise Members of any legal and statutory issues
- To explain issues that have arisen out of letters or questions
- To refer to the Lead Member for any matters regarding policy development or political accountability



Work so far:

- Development of thinking in the light of current legislative direction and the emergent Trusts in Central Bedfordshire
- Guiding principles for the Vision
- First review at its very early stages in Dunstable and Houghton Regis
- Transforming Learning Board as reference group for operational activity



Legal and Statutory Issues

- Elected Members personal and prejudicial interests
- Principle of pre-determination
- Lead Member & DCS accountabilities:
 - To support schools and encourage them to play a part in the Children's Trust (LM & DCS)
 - To use powers to address underperformance quickly inc. the creation of interim Executive Boards and other alternative governance arrangements and where necessary, school closures (DCS)
 - Base legislation 1944 Act, secure efficient and effective education (Chief Education Officer - now DCS)
 - Academies Bill?



Issues that have arisen out of letters or questions

- Learning Transformation Board is an officer group and reference only, not a decision making body.
- The three phases are represented by election and will endure through all four phases of the review, subject to peer re-election
- Secondment of Headteacher will end - summer term
- Role of Chief Executive and Chair of School Forum
- Prerogative of the Lead Member to re-call the Member Reference Group and invite discussion at any time



Lead Member Leadership

- DCS required to organise a fair process and to bring a report with the options to Executive
- All the options and the pros and cons will be brought to Scrutiny – January ? – although timescales are challenging
- DCS’s duty to make recommendation to Members
- Lead Member’s duty to take this through Executive – pre-determination particularly applies to Lead Member through the process