

## CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Thursday, 9 July 2015

### PRESENT

Cllr Mrs A Barker (Chairman)

Councillors:	K Ferguson Mrs J Freeman P Hollick	Councillors:	D McVicar A Ryan
Parental Co-optees:	Mr S Court Mrs G Deans Mrs E Rowlands		
Church of England Co-optee:	Mr D Morton		
Roman Catholic Co-optee:			
Apologies for Absence:	Cllrs	P A Duckett Mrs F Image T Stock G Tubb B Walker	
Substitutes:	Cllrs	D Bowater (In place of G Tubb) J Chatterley (In place of P A Duckett) P Smith (In place of T Stock)	
Members in Attendance:	Cllrs	R D Berry  Mrs A L Dodwell  C Hegley  B Saunders D Shelvey M A G Versallion	Deputy Executive Member for Social Care and Housing Executive Member for Social Care and Housing  Executive Member for Education and skills
Officers in Attendance:	Mrs P Everitt  Miss H Redding	Scrutiny Policy Adviser  Assistant Director School Improvement	

**CS/15/15. Minutes**

That the minutes of the meeting of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 15 June 2015 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to the following changes.

Cllr Stock as an ex-governor of Sandy Upper School and Stephen Court as a governor of Ivel Valley School, which has satellite classes collocated with both the Lawns Nursery and Biggleswade Academy.

**CS/15/16. Members' Interests**

None.

**CS/15/17. Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

The Chairman announced she had attended a CHUMS event and had been interviewed as part of the Domestic Abuse strategy work.

**CS/15/18. Petitions**

None.

**CS/15/19. Questions, Statements or Deputations**

None.

**CS/15/20. Call-In**

None.

**CS/15/21. Requested Items**

None.

**CS/15/22. Executive Member Update**

The Executive Member for Social Care and Housing announced she had attended her first meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

On behalf of the Executive Member for Health, the Chairman announced the Committee would receive a presentation on the new duties for the Council relating to Children's Health in August.

The Executive Member for Education and Skills announced the following activities he had undertaken:-

- A number of schools had been visited.
- Attendance at a skills event. The Executive Member advised there had been low attendance by young adults and this would be an area of focus to increase the numbers.

- That Bedford Borough Council had announced it would support schools that wished to switch to the two tier system. It was unclear what immediate affect this change would have on Central Bedfordshire schools.

In light of the update a Member asked what advice would be given to schools affected by the Borough's decision. The Executive Member agreed to keep the Committee and schools informed when full details were available.

### CS/15/23. **Partnership Vision For Education 2015-19**

The Executive Member for Education and Skills introduced a report that set out the revised Partnership Vision for Education. There had been significant changes from the original vision from 2010 which was revised in 2012, and it reflected the changed educational context with a large number of schools now academies. An agreed joint working arrangement to develop successful approaches to learning was emerging. Seven principles and six strands of work had been developed with partners from the original vision and Members were invited to comment on these and intended outcomes outlined in the paper.

The Committee noted the questions submitted by the Vice-chairman and these would be addressed outside of the Committee meeting.

The Committee commented and discussed the following:-

- Concern that the Vision emphasis remained on GCSE and 'A' level attainment and did not reflect vocational attainment. Members present felt the Vision would be enhanced by exploring everyone's ability and attainment. A Member also proposed that a College for Skills and Learning would be appropriate and put skills and learning on a level playing field with academic success. In response the Assistant Director School Improvement advised the skills agenda was embedded within the document and that workstream five was intended to develop the skills agenda. The Youth Parliament had also identified support for the work readiness agenda needing a focus. Headteachers seek a balance of academic and vocational achievement. The Executive Member for Education and Skills advised that new assessment arrangements from the Department of Education would address the skills based attainment and details would be submitted to this Committee. The new assessment arrangements had already been considered by this committee but it was recognised that there were a number of new members.
- The Co-opted Member (Church of England Diocese) expressed his disappointment that the Diocese had not been involved and wished to be included and referred to in the engagement process. Concern was raised as to whether there was an issue with leadership and governance within schools and whether the use of Ofsted outcomes was appropriate. The importance of succession management was considered a vital part of school and governorship planning. In response the Assistant Director School Improvement explained succession planning was an important area and featured in section 1 (Leadership) and section 2 (improving outcomes). It was agreed the wording will be reviewed to strengthen this message. The overarching principle was to raise the quality of leadership, teaching and learning and therefore the improvement in results.

- Whether the approach taken by some schools to implement a contract with parents to ensure 'school readiness' could be extended to a work readiness for leavers? The Assistant Director School Improvement agreed the whole pathway was important and officers would look at the most successful schemes used by schools within that workstream area.
- What influence the Council would have on struggling schools to incorporate the key principles outlined in the Vision. The Assistant Director School Improvement advised that the document should be owned by all partners, however, the Council had an overarching strategic lead role to make it happen. The Executive Member for Education and Skills explained that a launch event was planned and all parties would be invited and asked to sign up to the Vision. It was noted that the Department for Education's Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) had a challenging role to challenge and support underperforming academies. The Assistant Director School Improvement advised that there were regular discussions between the Local Authority and the RSC.
- Concern was raised regarding the expectation on school governors to challenge Head Teachers. There was a perception that governors lacked the skills and self confidence as well as recruiting sufficient governors in schools. The Assistant Director School Improvement advised that the Governor training Programme was well received, but was aware of this issue in some schools. One of the actions identified to support this was that Council staff could be invited to stand as school governors. This has been successful where implemented as additional governors.
- The need to encourage more people to become school governors (not just council employees or parents) particularly those with transferrable skills from the business world who would bring a professional input to school governance.
- That central government be encouraged to revise legislation to better reflect new and emerging models of school leadership.
- That a governors' role and ability to challenge performance data should be extended to give support and encouragement to improve performance.
- That reference to mental health and wellbeing and the CAMHS role within the Vision be enhanced and mainstream headteachers with responsibilities for embedded Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) units in their schools are referenced along with special school leaders and SNAP.
- Whether more should be done to include parents in the Vision, many of whom continued to be confused by the school system. The Executive Member for Education and Skills advised that in his experience parents were concerned about a child's experience in school rather than governance and other arrangements. The Assistant Director School Improvement advised that succession management was very important and there were many examples of schools working together to ensure continuity in school life for a child.

## **RECOMMENDED**

- 1. To include comments in the Partnership Vision for Education relating to Special Education Needs and include mainstream headteachers with responsibility for ASD.**

2. That officers reflect on the duty/role of parents in the different elements of the Partnership Vision for Education.
3. That the new assessment arrangements be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.
4. The revised document be shared with Members of the Executive.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 2.10 p.m.)

Chairman .....

Dated .....