

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, 6 September 2016

PRESENT

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

Councillors:	J Chatterley Mrs J Freeman A Ryan	Councillors:	B Saunders D Shelvey
Parental Co-optees:	Mr S Court Mrs G Deans Mrs E Rowlands		
Church of England Co-optee:	Mr D Morton		
Apologies for Absence:	Cllrs P A Duckett P Hollick Mrs D Main B Walker		
			Mrs D Main - Roman Catholic Co-optee
Substitutes:	Cllrs R D Berry D Bowater		
Members in Attendance:	Cllrs S Dixon Mrs A L Dodwell Mrs C Hegley M R Jones P Smith		Executive Member for Education and Skills Deputy Executive Member for Social Care and Housing Executive Member for Social Care and Housing Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Health
Officers in Attendance:	Mrs P Everitt Mr S Mitchelmore Miss H Redding		Scrutiny Policy Adviser Assistant Director, Adult Social Care Assistant Director School Improvement
Others in Attendance:	Mrs K Green		Parent Carer and Engagement Officer
Public:	0		

CS/16/16. **Minutes**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 21 June 2016 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

CS/16/17. **Members' Interests**

The following Members declared an interest:-

- Cllr D Bowater - a Board Member of SEPT.
- Cllr D Gurney - a Governor at Everton Lower School
- Mrs G Deans - a Governor at Sandy Upper and parent of children at St Swithuns School, Sandy
- Mr S Court - a parent of a special needs child attending a special school.
- Cllr M Versallion a parent of children using the music service.

CS/16/18. **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

The Chairman announced that the Regional School's Commissioner had accepted an invitation to attend the November meeting of the Committee.

CS/16/19. **Petitions**

None.

CS/16/20. **Questions, Statements or Deputations**

None.

CS/16/21. **Call-In**

None.

CS/16/22. **Requested Items**

None.

CS/16/23. **Executive Members' Updates**

The Executive Member for Social Care and Housing announced the opening of a new Care Leavers Hub and drop-in centre in Houghton Regis. Representatives of Children in Care had presented their new pledge at the Corporate Parenting Panel meeting. The Executive Members also advised that Member budget process drop-in sessions would be made available to those who wished to attend.

The Executive Member for Education and Skills advised the education locality workshops were helping to shape the future of learning for children in Central

Bedfordshire. The workshops would continue to be held with schools only at this stage, however, outcomes would be shared with the Committee.

The Executive Member announced the unverified A Level and GCSE results. Early indications are that A Level and equivalent outcomes had remained similar to last year's level. There has been a reported national decline in the number of children that had taken up a University place, but we do not yet know the pattern in Central Bedfordshire. School reported data indicates GCSE results A* - C risen by 4% which was in contrast to the national picture where results are reported to have gone down. The Committee congratulated schools on the improved GCSE results.

The Executive Member for Health announced the Better Care Fund submission had been approved and the Social Care Health and Housing OSC would consider a report on the Re-procurement of 0-19 years Children's Services and Memorandum of Understanding at their meeting on 20 September, 2016. The Executive Member also announced the planned merger of South Essex Partnership Trust (SEPT) and North Essex Partnership Trust.

CS/16/24. **Schools Trading 2017/18**

The Head of Finance introduced a report that outlined the proposed traded services to schools and Academies for non statutory services in 2017/18. The Executive Member for Education and Skills advised that learning from the locality workshops from across the region would help inform the appropriate services required by schools. A customer focussed Schools Trading document would be updated accordingly.

Concern regarding the high cost of recruiting teaching staff was raised and whether additional recruitment services could be provided to schools? The Executive Member confirmed this was a key area of work being developed in the Locality Workshops.

A written response would be circulated to the Committee on:

- The cost of fees charged for schools admissions appeals and how this impacted on successful Academies.
- Additional detail be provided on the charges based on published admission numbers for schools.

The Head of Finance would circulate details as they are announced of the Government's proposals regarding a fairer funding formula for schools and the demise of the Education Services Grant.

It was agreed that officers would seek to provide timelines and economy of scale on completion of the assessment of school need of services process. The Head of Finance would provide a list of those new services to be offered to schools and the planned completion date for next year's booklet.

Recommended that the Head of Finance provide additional information to the Committee on:-

- 1. The cost of fees charged for the schools admissions appeals. Additional detail be provided on the charges based on published admission numbers for schools.**
- 2. Details of the government consultation regarding a fairer funding formula and its impact on the Dedicated Schools Grant be circulated.**
- 3. That a commitment be made to conduct an assessment on the services needed by schools with timings for completion, from council officers.**

CS/16/25. Consultation to change the school age range of Everton Lower to enable it to extend to Year 5 and Year 6 pupils

The Executive Member for Education and Skills introduced a report that outlined the proposal for Everton Lower School to extend its age range to Year 5 and Year 6 pupils and, subject to the approval of the Executive, a consultation process would be started. The Assistant Director advised that schools in the locality had been included in discussions regarding Everton's proposals, and other schools proposals in the local area to consult on proposals to change their age ranges. Year 7 pupils would have the choice of attending middle school in Central Bedfordshire or secondary schools across the boarder in Cambridgeshire (subject to places being available). Sandy Upper School is also proposing to consult on extending its age range down to a Year 7 point of admission. It was noted that the changes to the school age in Bedford Borough would have an effect in the area too.

Members were in support of the proposal to provide information for parents on the school admission section of the Council website in addition to local meetings to be arranged in the area. Officers would ensure support was available for all local schools affected by the changes.

RECOMMENDED

- 1. Detailed information on school options for pupils be provided to parents in the Everton locality. Parent information and advice on school options be detailed on the School's Admissions web pages.**
- 2. That officers facilitate and coordinate the proposed changes in age range and undertake to mitigate any repercussions to neighbouring schools in the vicinity where possible.**
- 3. That subject to the above, the Committee support the proposal to initiate a consultation to extend the age range at Everton Lower School.**

CS/16/26. Shared Vision (Education, Health and Social Care) for Children and Young People (0-25) from Central Bedfordshire with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

The Executive Member for Social Care and Housing introduced the Shared Vision for Children and Young People with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) that had been co-produced with parent representatives, mainstream and special schools and services providers and representatives of the Special Needs Action Panel (SNAP). The vision was the culmination of a significant amount of collective work and implementation of these plans was key to support children and young people in achieving the best they can.

Members welcomed the shared vision document and commended the good work that was clearly evident. Members discussed the current provision of services that varied across the district and proposed that the vision seek to offer equality of services across Central Bedfordshire where it was required. The Assistant Director advised that officers continued to develop the provision of services within the current work streams and would incorporate a stronger message in the Vision document.

There was a concern that detail on the future service provision was missing from the document and should include some indication of what the landscape of provision could look like in 5 years and 10 years time. The Assistant Director would include a paragraph in the cover report to cover this aspect.

Recommended

- **that the Vision incorporates a stronger message around consistency of services across Central Bedfordshire.**
- **that colocation of services should be where this is in the best interests of the child and family.**
- **that a paragraph on context and future landscape of provision to be included in the report.**
- **the Committee welcomed the SEND vision and the new ways of working with parent groups.**

CS/16/27. Fees & Charges 2017

The Head of Finance introduced a report that detailed the proposed charges for Fees and Charges for the Directorate in 2017, that recommended an increase of 1%. A benchmarking exercise had been undertaken to compare costs with other Councils and to ensure costs were on a par.

In light of the report a Member requested further details regarding the charge to Kingsland. A written response would be provided by the Head of Finance to the Committee.

Following a debate regarding fees charged for the Music Service, the Head of Finance advised the charges related to the regional hub work were subsidised as they are part funded by the Arts Council Grant.

RECOMMENDED

Noted the report.

CS/16/28. Quarter 1 (April to June) 2016/17 Performance Report

The Assistant Director School Improvement introduced the quarter one performance (April to June 2016) for the Directorate. The report incorporated some new measures following the implementation of the new five year plan 2015-2020.

Whilst it was noted the percentage of young people 16-18 in education, employment or training was good, a Member requested that an additional indicator that captured the details of young people 19-21 in this category. The Assistant Director advised that destination data was not currently captured, however, it was proposed to look into how this could be achieved.

Noted the report.

CS/16/29. **Work Programme 2016/17 & Executive Forward Plan**

NOTED the current draft work programme for the Committee that would be updated reviewed by the Chairman and Members of the Committee in light of a recent survey.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 12.00 p.m.)

Chairman

Dated