

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, 17 January 2017

PRESENT

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

Councillors:	J Chatterley Mrs J Freeman P Hollick	Councillors:	A Ryan B Saunders D Shelvey
Parental Co-optees:	Mr S Court Mrs G Deans Mrs E Rowlands		
Church of England Co-optee: Roman Catholic Co-optee:	Mr D Morton		
Apologies for Absence:	Cllrs	P A Duckett B Walker	
Substitutes:	Cllrs	R D Berry	
Members in Attendance:	Cllrs	Mrs A L Dodwell K Ferguson C C Gomm Mrs S A Goodchild Cllr Mrs C Hegley J G Jamieson	Deputy Executive Member for Social Care and Housing Executive Member for Social Care and Housing Leader of the Council and Chairman of the Executive
Officers in Attendance:	Mr D Galvin Mrs S Harrison Mrs R Preen Miss H Redding Mr V Wan		Head of Financial Performance Director of Children's Services Scrutiny Policy Adviser Assistant Director School Improvement Senior Education Officer (Planning)
Others in Attendance:	0		

Public: 0

CS/16/54. **Minutes**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 22 November 2016 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to the addition of Cllr Dodwell and removal of Mr D Morton from the attendance list of the previous meeting.

CS/16/55. **Members' Interests**

Mrs G Deans, Parent Governor Co-optee declared a non pecuniary interest as a parent and governor of two schools listed within items 11 and 12.

Mr D Morton declared a non pecuniary interest as two schools listed within item 12 were Church of England denomination.

CS/16/56. **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

None.

CS/16/57. **Petitions**

None.

CS/16/58. **Questions, Statements or Deputations**

None.

CS/16/59. **Call-In**

None.

CS/16/60. **Requested Items**

None.

CS/16/61. **Executive Members' Updates**

The Executive Member for Social Care and Housing highlighted the success of recent Member budget briefings and the calendar of engagements held across the region.

The Executive Member for Education and Skills outlined the findings of a recent task force relating to school's parking. Members were advised that liaison was underway with the Department of Education regarding proposed changes to school structure and that pupil yield was being reassessed due to a suspected increase in numbers.

CS/16/62. **Key Stage 5 Verbal Update**

The Assistant Director of Children's services delivered a verbal update on Key Stage 5 (KS5) progress and outcomes and reassured the Committee that technical subjects delivered at KS5 supported the vision that young people were work ready when leaving education.

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

- Confirmation that KS5 progress was reflected in the Vision for Education.
- Concerns regarding the ongoing viability of 6th form places and the role of the local authority in supporting schools to sustain and deliver the KS5 curriculum.
- The SEMLEP East of England review of further education provision which did not include 6th forms, would provide a wider and more comprehensive overview of data in relation to KS5 progress. The committee noted the review's objective of rationalizing further education provision in the region.

RECOMMENDED that KS5 validated results be included within a report to be delivered to the Committee in March 2017.

CS/16/63. **Proposal to Change of Age Range for Shillington Lower School**

The Executive Member for Education and Skills introduced a report which sought support for the commencement of a statutory consultation required to change the age range of Shillington Lower School. Members were advised of the importance of integrating early years provision in order to maximise children's chances of being school ready.

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

- That a written response be provided to the Committee regarding the necessary qualifications of nursery staff within the new structure.
- The need to avoid a gap in service between the closure of pre schools and opening of new provision during future restructures.
- That schools carry out due financial diligence, and ensure a sound financial model before implementing future restructures.

RECOMMENDED that the Committee support the proposed changes and that the Executive ensure that a focus be placed on the financial implications of future structural changes to schools.

CS/16/64. **Proposal to Change the Age Range at Robert Peel, St Swithuns VC and John Donne CofE Lower Schools**

The Executive Member for Education and Skills introduced a report seeking support for the commencement of a statutory consultation for proposed alterations for Robert Peel Foundation Lower School, Sandy, St Swithuns VC Lower School, Sandy and John Donne C of E Lower School, Blunham. Members were advised that officers were liaising closely with Head Teachers

and the Regional Schools Commissioner regarding the proposals and that the process was robust with a commitment to improve outcomes.

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

- The need to ensure lessons learned from similar changes several years prior in the south of the region were addressed.
- The importance of close liaison and communication with parents in light of the Council's duty to deliver a coordinated approach to the changes.
- Concerns regarding educational outcomes in Houghton Regis and Dunstable.
- The need for all schools to provide strong leadership and effective governance, that they deliver the same vision and maintain educational standards, notwithstanding the obvious challenges.

RECOMMENDED that the Committee support the proposed changes and endorse the report to the Executive, recognising the need to ensure a coordinated approach led by the Authority in order to effectively communicate with all partners and address parental concerns.

CS/16/65.

Refresh of the Partnership Vision for Education

The Assistant Director for Children's Services delivered a report setting out work to refresh the Partnership Vision for Education and the development and emerging priorities of school clusters, highlighting the need for every cluster to implement changes in order to improve educational attainment. Members were advised of the ongoing challenges around recruitment and retention of teaching staff and were asked to consider areas of focus which could be included for consideration by the Executive.

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

- Support for a Member reference group to provide feedback and advice on the vision outside of formal meetings.
- That improving outcomes and maintaining and improving educational standards was the responsibility of schools, with support from and in partnership with the local authority.
- The need to support parents, schools and governors with the analysis of data and ensure access to quality information sharing.
- The need to ensure terminology was appropriate for all audiences and understandable from a non teaching perspective.
- The disparity in Ofsted ratings and educational attainment.

RECOMMENDED:-

- 1. That the Committee endorse the Vision to the Executive and that an updated version be delivered to the Committee in July 2017.**
- 2. That reference be made within the document to the All Age Skills Strategy in order to address measures the Council is taking in relation to the vocational skills gap within the region.**

3. That the Minutes of schools cluster meetings be provided to appropriate Committee and Ward Members.

CS/16/66. **Annual Customer Service Feedback**

The Director of Children's Services introduced the Annual Customer Service Feedback report which highlighted the measures taken to address, mitigate and learn from complaints, ensuring that any staff training requirements were met. Members were advised that a reduction in agency staff had led to service improvements and that overall, complaints were decreasing.

NOTED the report

RECOMMENDED that other local authority benchmarking data be shared with the Committee.

CS/16/67. **Draft Budget & Medium Term Financial plan 2017/18 – 2020/21**

The Head of Financial Performance delivered a report highlighting financial pressures, proposed efficiency savings and public consultation timelines in relation to the Draft Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). Members' attention was drawn to appendices F and G which detailed the primary statutory provisions relevant to the services provided by each directorate and the Chief Finance Officer's assessment of Council Reserves. Members were reminded of the importance of their understanding of each of these elements so that when making recommendations they were doing so on a fully informed basis.

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

- That efficiency savings in relation to children's centres were a key element of locality working and that any changes must meet the needs of a particular area.
- That there were no immediate plans to further reduce funding for respite care. The council had a commitment from the 2015/16 MTFP to ensure efficiencies in this area and was actively working through these with partners and parents.
- That early intervention and close partnership working was essential in reducing need later on in a child's life.
- The need to ensure an effective and efficient procurement process.
- The need for a challenging, efficient and attainable budget.

RECOMMENDED:-

- 1. That the Committee acknowledge the financial challenges and proposed efficiencies presented, broadly supporting the Draft Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan.**
- 2. That the Executive consider increasing Council Tax by 3% for the Adult Care precept for two years with a 0% increase in the third year.**
- 3. That the Executive seek the opportunity to secure and ring fence additional funding for Children's Services.**

CS/16/68. **Draft Capital Programme 2017/18 – 2020/21**

The Head of Financial Performance delivered a report outlining proposals to the 4 year Capital Programme and the timeline for public consultation. Members were advised that their recommendations would form part of the final report, which was due to be considered by the Executive on 7 February 2017.

RECOMMENDED that the Committee support the Capital programme and endorse the report to the Executive.

CS/16/69. **Period 6 (Quarter 2) – 2016/17 Revenue Budget Monitoring**

The Head of Financial Performance delivered a presentation detailing the financial position of the Directorate along with areas of underspend, overspend and outstanding debt for Quarter 2. Members were advised that areas of slippage would be deferred until the next financial year and reassured that all statutory provisions had been provided for, with any delays in Section 106 funding to be allocated at the appropriate time.

NOTED the report and the ongoing underspend in revenue budget.

CS/16/70. **Quarter 2 Performance Monitoring Report**

The Director of Children’s Services introduced a report detailing the performance position for the Directorate at Quarter 2.

NOTED the report.

CS/16/71. **Work Programme 2016/17 & Executive Forward Plan**

AGREED the Committee Work Programme subject to the following amendments:-

- **Validated Exam Results to include Key Stage 5 – March 2017**
- **Early Intervention and Family Resilience – March 2017**
- **Education Psychology Provision – May 2017**
- **Community Speech and Language Provision – May 2017**
- **ELFT and Improved Mental Health Services for Children – May 2017**
- **Children’s Services Transformation Programme – May 2017**
- **Information Advice and Guidance (Careers Service) – July 2017**
- **SEND Vision and Strategy – July 2017**
- **Homes for Keyworkers (Teachers) – July 2017**
- **Review of Children’s Disability Provision – July 2017**
- **The Viability of 6th Form Provision – July 2017**

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 1.20 p.m.)

Chairman

Dated