

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, 12 September 2017

PRESENT

Cllr K Ferguson (Chairman)

Councillors:	J Chatterley Mrs D B Gurney P Hollick	Councillors:	Cllr M Liddiard B Saunders S Watkins
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	D Shelvey A Ryan B Walker Mrs D Main	
Substitutes:	Cllrs	R D Berry T Swain	
Members in Attendance:	Cllrs	Cllr S Dixon	Executive Member for Education and Skills
		Mrs A L Dodwell	Deputy Executive Member for Social Care and Housing
		Mrs S A Goodchild	
		Mrs C Hegley	Executive Member for Social Care and Housing and Lead Member for Children's Services
		B J Spurr	Executive Member for Health and Chairman of the Health and Wellbeing Board
		Mrs T Stock	Deputy Executive Member for Health

Officers in Attendance:	K Harvey	Head of Services for Disabled Children
	Mr G Jones	Deputy Director Safeguarding and Early Help
	Mrs R Preen	Scrutiny Policy Adviser
	Mrs S Tyler	Head of Child Poverty and Early Intervention
Others in Attendance:	Mrs K Allen	Head of Children and Maternity Services Redesign, BCCG
Public:	0	

CS/17/25. **Minutes**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 11 July 2017 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

CS/17/26. **Members' Interests**

Parent Co-optee Steve Court declared an interest in item 10 as the Chair of Governors at a special school and also as a parent of a child with special educational needs.

CS/17/27. **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

The Chairman informed the Committee that in order to accommodate external contributors to the meeting, item 12, the Speech and Language Provision presentation would be delivered as the first agenda item.

CS/17/28. **Petitions**

None.

CS/17/29. **Questions, Statements or Deputations**

None.

CS/17/30. **Call-In**

None.

CS/17/31. **Requested Items**

None.

CS/17/32. **Executive Members' Updates**

The Executive Member for Social Care, Health and Housing updated the Committee on the outcomes of a recent OFSTED inspection and delivered a video clip which detailed the experiences of children and young people within the social care system in Central Bedfordshire. The Committee congratulated the Executive Member and the directorate on the positive outcome of the inspection and the direction of travel for the service.

The Executive Member for Education highlighted the positive recent examination results across the region despite the changes to attainment and progress measures nationally. Validated results would be made available to the Committee in early 2018. Funding reserves had been allocated for additional resources within the school improvement team, the work of the recently appointed task force would help support future improvements to the service. The Executive Member agreed to circulate exam results for statistical neighbours for comparison purposes once it had been made publicly available.

The Executive Member for Public Health highlighted the need to work robustly with partners in order to erase the stigma around mental health for children and young people. An initiative to address these problems would be delivered at a future Council meeting and all Members were encouraged to attend.

CS/17/33. **Speech and Language Provision**

The Head of Early Intervention and Prevention, along with the Head of Children and Maternity Services Redesign, Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (BCCG) delivered a presentation outlining the importance of early intervention and working closely with parents to support those children affected by speech and language difficulties. Members were advised of the criteria for intervention and areas of high demand within the region.

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

- Whether the upsurge in the use of technology and mobile devices contributed to an increase in some parents not communicating effectively with their children.
- That there was no direct correlation between children who experienced speech and language difficulties and English as a second language with most long term problems a result of physical challenges.
- Concerns that the progress of those children who had undergone intervention was not tracked.
- The importance of effectively upskilling parents.
- The benefits of a multidisciplinary approach and effectively integrated therapists within children's centres.
- The importance of ensuring a resilient and future proofed service, minimising the need for multiple assessments by managing handovers effectively.
- Whether speech and language difficulties affected pupil attainment in the long term.

RECOMMENDED:-

- 1. Given that the recently appointed task force would be considering the impact of speech and language difficulties on pupil attainment as part of their investigation, that the information be shared with those members for consideration.**
- 2. That data be provided to the Committee once the recommissioning of the contract was finalised, to include numbers of children accessing the service, performance data and the allocation of funds.**
- 3. That measures be introduced in order to track the progress of children receiving intervention, with data to include demographics and the age ranges of children to be provided at a future meeting.**

CS/17/34. **Special Educational Needs and Disability Vision and Strategy**

The Head of Children with Disabilities Services delivered a presentation which outlined the ongoing progress of the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) vision. Members were advised that each plan was outcome focussed, with key areas driven by the needs of children accessing the service.

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

- Members sought confirmation that in addition to short breaks, there were other support packages available to parent carers.
- That future reports contain data in relation to the numbers of children requiring assessment, intervention, the associated costs and the anticipated rise in future demand due to population increases.
- How varying budgets would be managed by parents and families, including the direct payment model, allowing for flexibility of use.
- Concerns that very little data in relation to education was included within the report.
- The importance of sharing information with school governing bodies.
- That special schools did not fall within the same category as mainstream schools and so could not effectively demonstrate need when it came to future schools planning.
- The importance of the effective use of the capital budget, funding for transport provision and to address the significant increase in exclusions, particularly in very young children.
- The need to promote the SEND vision to all schools in order to meet the need of all children requiring intervention.

RECOMMENDED

- 1. That future iterations of the SEND vision include robust measures of information sharing with mainstream schools.**

2. That information regarding exclusions be explored at a future meeting.
3. That measures include the ability to track children and young people leaving the education system in order to assess the effectiveness of the SEND vision.
4. That information relating to the numbers of Looked After Children (LAC) with SEND be provided at a future meeting.

CS/17/35. **Review of the Children's Disability Provision**

The Head of Children with Disabilities Services introduced the report, setting out details of the current social care provision and the position regarding the increasing demand of Children with Disabilities requiring accommodation in the near future.

(Councillor Chatterley left the meeting at 13:11)

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

That the profile of each child be assessed in order to determine the best package to meet their individual needs.

- The need to work proactively with parents, acknowledging that most parents would prefer local accommodation provision.
- The importance of considering the authority's ability to attract out of county children with additional capital provision and effective financial planning.
- The need for alternative provision within the home when appropriate which met the needs of the child.

RECOMMENDED that the planned review be supported, with the next development stage to be delivered in March 2018 and to include details of geographic location of provision.

The Committee formally congratulated the Head of Children with Disabilities for his recent Queen's Honours.

CS/17/36. **Development of the Children and Young People's Plan for Central Bedfordshire**

The Assistant Director for Children's Services delivered a report which outlined simplified arrangements in relation to the plan and detailed those commitments agreed between the local authority and its strategic partners.

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

- Whether those priorities listed were appropriate and in support of the young people of Central Bedfordshire.
- The need for all partners and parents/carers of children to be cognizant of their responsibilities, with a clearer focus on that which the Council was obligated to do.
- The importance of ensuring clarity around data presentation.
- That the plan was a different model to that of the historic Children's Trust.

RECOMMENDED:-

1. **That the directorate consider including the impact and prevention of bullying within the priorities.**
2. **That future iterations of the plan include more detail with regards to the responsibilities of partners as well as Central Bedfordshire Council.**
3. **That the individual priorities be brought before the committee in their planning stages in order to track progress and influence development.**
4. **To include the nine-month health review as part of the first 1000 days of a child's life.**

CS/17/37. **Work Programme 2017/18 & Executive Forward Plan**

That the Committee Work Programme be agreed subject to the following amendments:-

- **OFSTED Inspection Report and Draft Action Plan – 21 November 2017**
- **The Travel Assistance Policy - January 2018**
- **Children's Mental Health – January/March 2018**
- **Validated exam results - March 2018**
- **The individual elements of the Children and Young People's Development Plan – TBC**

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 2.05 p.m.)

Chairman

Dated