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**Meeting:** Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Date:** 14 September 2010

**Subject:** Children and Young People's Plan: Overview and Scrutiny Comments

**Report of:** Cllr Anita Lewis, Portfolio Holder for Children's Services

**Summary:** This report provides the previous comments of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee in relation to the Every Child Matters outcome areas. The purpose of the report is to provide Members with an opportunity to inform the refresh of the Children and Young People's Plan.

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**Advising Officer:** Edwina Grant, Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Children's Services

**Contact Officer:** Bernard Carter, Overview and Scrutiny Manager (0300 300 8000)

**Public/Exempt:** Public

**Wards Affected:** All

#### **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

**Council Priorities:**

None

**Financial:**

None

**Legal:**

None

**Risk Management:**

None

**Staffing (including Trades Unions):**

None

**Equalities/Human Rights:**

None

**Community Safety:**

None

**Sustainability:**

none

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

- 1. That the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers the report and recommends to the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services any comments it feels should be taken into consideration with regard to the refresh of the Children and Young People's Plan.**

**Background**

1. At its meeting on 11 August 2009 the former Children, Families and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee scrutinised the Priorities for the Children and Young People's Plan for Central Bedfordshire. The Committee raised comments and agreed recommendations in relation to the draft plan that were submitted to the Executive prior to the approval of the plan.
2. At the meeting the Committee also agreed to continue to scrutinise the work of each of the Every Child Matters Outcome Delivery Groups. The Committee agreed to review each priority area in turn with a view to providing comments and recommendations that would be presented to officers as part of the refresh of the Children and Young People's Plan.
3. The Priority areas were added to the work programme and were considered by the Committee as follows:-

<b>Outcome Area:</b>	<b>Date of Committee Meeting</b>
Enjoy and Achieve	5 January 2010
Achieve Economic Well-Being	30 March 2010
Staying Safe	27 April 2010
Making a Positive Contribution	29 June 2010
Be Healthy	29 June 2010

4. On each occasion the Committee received a report detailing the strategic actions that had been undertaken, the relevant priorities contained in the Children and Young People's Plan and progress in relation to the delivery of the outcome area.
5. This report details the recommendations and comments of the Committee with regard to each of the outcome areas and draws attention to some of the points raised by the Committee.

## Enjoy and Achieve

6. Members received a report (Minute CFL/09/69 refers) that outlined the current position in relation to standards in Central Bedfordshire's schools and provided an overview of the progress made with the priorities within the Enjoy and Achieve Plan.
7. The Committee raised the following comments:-
  - that there needed to be more extensive debate regarding the manner in which improvement in school results might be achieved. It was commented that the report did not propose many actions for improving school performance.
  - the importance of communication between the Council and schools as a means of enhancing trust and the level of cooperation between partners, and the importance of effective challenge of poor leadership and governance in order to develop improvements in the school system
  - the importance of being able to challenge schools effectively on performance and using data to develop principles that will lead to transformation
  - Members were disappointed with the current standards in schools and were keen to see improvements in performance.
8. The Committee resolved to '*note*' the report. In addition to noting the report the Committee requested the presentation of a further report on the education vision for Central Bedfordshire. The Committee stated that they would make further comments regarding this outcome area during their consideration of the education vision. With regards to the report on the education vision Members raised the following comments:-
  - Members raised concerns regarding the number of transition points in schools and the negative effect that this might have on levels of attainment. The number of transition points between schools needed to be reduced where possible and this should be a key principle for the educational vision.
  - Members discussed the differences between Trusts and Federations. Members were advised that it was a school's decision to become a member of a Trust. If a school became part of a trust the school and land would be handed over to the Trust. If the Trust was no longer in existence these assets would be handed back to the Council. There were opportunities for schools to work in partnership, which could provide collaborative benefits to schools, but a view was presented that there needed to be a fuller debate around the development of trusts, federations and partnerships and their potential benefits.
  - Members also raised the 2-tier and 3-tier education system and the education of children in the 0-19 age range to ensure that there is a 'one-phase' approach to learning.

9. In light of these comments Members may like to consider recommending to the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services that the Children and Young People's Plan should prioritise actions for improving school performance. The Committee might also recommend that the Plan proposes specific actions for enhancing trust and cooperation between the Council and schools in order to promote a more effective means of challenge and accountability.

### **Achieve Economic Well-Being**

10. Members received a report (Minute CFL/09/20 refers) that set out an overview of the progress made with the priorities within the Achieve Economic Well Being Plan. Members discussed the three priorities of the Achieve Economic Well Being Plan and in particular:-
  - debated the provisions for excluded children including the provision of an in-house service within upper schools to assist those children who might be excluded. The Retreat in Sandy Upper School to manage children's behavioural problems was an example of what could be done within schools;
  - further details were sought on the Sandy Pinnacle. A Member requested that information be provided regarding activities underway in this area;
  - Discussed the layout of the report and how the information was presented to Members including where the data source came from and the date of collection to enable this data to be used as a benchmark in the future; and
  - suggested that Central Bedfordshire monitor the progress of a new Studio School, that was part of Barnfield College in Luton that was working towards enterprise training as it may be a possible option in the future.
11. The Committee resolved to '*note*' the progress made with the priorities in the Achieve Economic Well Being Plan.
12. In light of these comments Members may like to consider recommending to the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services that the Children and Young People's Plan should include an action to develop an in-house service within upper schools to assist excluded children. The Committee might also ask how the Children and Young People's Plan will promote the consideration of other examples of best practice in other local authority areas so that the Council can reflect these in their own working practices.

### **Staying Safe**

13. Members considered a report (Minute CS/10/9 refers) regarding the priorities within the Stay Safe aspect of the Children and Young People's Plan. Members raised the following comments:-

- Members commented that the report had insufficient information on the outcomes and performance to enable in-depth scrutiny. Members requested that in future the progress reports on the Children and Young People's Plan needed to contain detailed information.
- A comment was made about the efficiencies and effectiveness of the current structure of all the different Boards and Delivery Groups.

14. The Committee resolved to '*note*' the report

### **Making a Positive Contribution**

15. Members considered a report (Minute CS/10/19 refers) regarding the priorities within the Making a Positive Contribution aspect of the Children & Young People's Plan. Members were also advised that the Tell Us survey had been undertaken to collect data on positive activities undertaken by children and young people
16. 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 and 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.
17. The Committee 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.

### **Be Healthy**

18. The Committee considered a report (Minute CS/10/20 refers) that provided Members with the progress made with the priorities within the Be Healthy aspect of the Children & Young People's Plan. Members discussed the following:-
- the red performance indicator NI 56 obesity among primary school children in Year 6. 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.
  - 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.
19. The Committee resolved to '*note*' the report

20. In light of these comments Members may like to consider recommending to the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services that the Children and Young People's Plan should include specific actions, developed with the NHS, aimed at addressing performance in relation to NI 56.

### **Conclusions and Way Forward**

21. The Committee are asked to consider the comments that have been raised in their previous meetings relating to the Every Child Matters outcome delivery areas as detailed in this report. Members will be aware that officers have responded to questions relating to these matters in previous meetings and the purpose of this report is not to discuss these issues again.
22. Members are asked to raise any specific comments that they would like taken into account regarding priorities for the Children and Young People's Plan 2011/12.

**Background Papers:** n/a

**Location of papers:** n/a