

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in Room 15, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Tuesday, 25 January 2011

PRESENT

Cllr J Street (Chairman)

Councillors: Mrs A Barker Dr R Egan
P A Blaine P Hollick
D Bowater

Parental Co-optees: Mrs H Copley
D Landman

Church of England Co-optee: Mrs F Image
Roman Catholic Co-optee: J Reynolds

Apologies for Absence: Cllrs Mrs D B Gurney (Vice-Chairman
N B Costin
K Janes
A Shadbolt

Mr B Sear

Substitutes: Cllr J G Jamieson (In place of Cllr A Shadbolt)

Members in Attendance: Cllrs P N Aldis
Mrs A M Lewis, Portfolio Holder Children's Services
Mrs C Turner, Assistant to the Portfolio Holder
Children's Services,

Officers in Attendance: Mr B Carter Overview & Scrutiny Manager
Mrs M Clampitt Committee Services Officer
Mr R Ellis Director of Customer and Shared Services
Mrs S Gibson Interim Assistant Director, Learning and Strategic Commissioning
Mr R Parsons Head of School Organisation and Capital Planning
Ms K Peddie Head of Policy & Strategy - Children's Services

CS/10/79 Minutes**RESOLVED**

that the minutes of the meeting of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 21 December 2010 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to the correct attendance being shown.

CS/10/80 Members' Interests**(a) Personal Interests:-**

Name	Item No.	Personal Interest:-
Mrs H Copley, Parent Co-optee	Item 13	Her daughter had violin lessons.
Cllr P Hollick	Item 13	Vice-President of the Friends of Bedfordshire Youth Music

(b) Personal and Prejudicial Interests:-

There were no declarations made.

(c) Any Political Whip in relation to items on the agenda:-

There were no declarations made.

CS/10/81 Chairman's Announcements and Communications

The Chairman informed the Committee that under Committee Procedure Rule CM16 the order of business would be varied as follows:-

Item 9 – Portfolio Holder Update
Item 13 – Fees and Charges
Item 16 – Traded Services with Schools
Item 14 – Capital Programme

The remainder of the agenda to be considered in order.

CS/10/82 Petitions

No petitions were received from members of the public in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure as set out in Annex 2 of Part A4 of the Constitution.

CS/10/83 Questions, Statements or Deputations

The Chairman confirmed that no questions, statements or deputations from members of the public had been received in accordance with Public Participation Procedure as set out in Annex 1 of Part A4 of the Constitution.

CS/10/84 Call-In

No decisions from the Executive were referred to the Committee for review in accordance with Procedure Rule 10.10 of Part D2.

CS/10/85 Requested Items

No items were referred to the Committee for consideration at the request of a Member under Procedure Rule 3.1 of Part D2 of the Constitution.

CS/10/86 Portfolio Holder Update

The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services thanked the Committee for attending the Safeguarding Children seminar held the previous week at Priory House.

The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services informed the Committee that the Tithe Farm Lower School capital project would no longer proceed as funding from Central Government had been withdrawn. The Head Teacher had been informed of the situation. The ward member for Houghton Regis requested detailed information regarding the issue.

CS/10/87 Fees & Charges

The Committee considered the report which outlined the proposed Fees and Charges for the 2011/12 municipal year. It was noted that a proposed 5% increase was to be made to all fees and charges except where circumstances dictated a different approach.

Members were informed that the authority was still awaiting a decision from central government regarding the receipt of Music Standards Fund grant for 2011/12. As a result the proposed fees for the music service were by necessity based on two scenarios. Scenario A assumed receipt of Music Standards Fund grant at a level commensurate with 2010/11 and Scenario B assumed no such grant.

Members noted this position but recommended that should such a grant be received in 2011/12, the Executive considers using it to channel concessions to those users of the service on lower incomes rather than reducing fees for all service users.

RECOMMENDED to the Executive

- 1. that the Executive considers using the Music Standards Fund grant in 2011/12, if received, to channel concessions to those users of the service on lower incomes.**
- 2. that all other proposals be endorsed.**

CS/10/88

Traded Services with Schools

The Committee received a presentation from the Director of Customer and Central Services which provided an overview of work currently underway to identify the true cost to the Council for providing certain discretionary traded services to Schools.

The Director of Customer and Central Services set out the national context relevant to traded services with schools and explained the pricing framework the authority was now working to, which included the principle of full cost recovery. Work was continuing to benchmark our charges with other authorities and three examples were given to the Committee covering Human Resources, Bursary and Payroll.

The Director of Customer and Central Services informed the Committee that consideration was also being given to levying an additional 5% over and above full cost recovery to provide a buffer against reducing uptake

The Committee acknowledged the challenges the council was facing regarding provision of services to schools and endorsed the principle of full cost recovery. The OSC was also positive about levying an additional 5% over and above full cost recovery to provide a buffer against reducing uptake although concerns were expressed that Schools would struggle to meet these increased charges.

RESOLVED

that the presentation be noted.

CS/10/89

Capital Programme

The Committee considered the 11 January 2011 Executive report for the Capital Programme 2011/12 to 2014/15.

Members considered those elements of the revised capital programme for 2011/12 to 2014/15 relating to Children's Services and apart from seeking clarification and further information on a number of specific items, were content to note it.

RESOLVED

that the report be noted.

CS/10/90 Commissioning of PRU/Exclusions

The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services provided an update that following discussions with the Monitoring Officer it would not be possible for the Committee to consider this item as the tender process was ongoing. The successful tender would be announced at the 15 February Executive and a briefing note would be brought to the March Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

CS/10/91 Children and Young People's Plan: New Plan for 2011/12

The Committee received and considered the report which outlined the draft priorities and consultation results regarding the new Children and Young People's Plan for 2011/12.

The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services reminded the Committee that the original plan had been launched 18 months ago and whilst the Government had confirmed that there was now no requirement to have a Children and Young People's Plan, Central Bedfordshire Council wished to maintain a plan because of its success.

It was noted that the changes which had been requested by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as detailed in the report on page 3 had been incorporated into the new plan.

The Children's Trust Board had 4 priorities which were monitored quarterly:-

- Priority 1 Helping children and young people achieve more and transforming our relationship with schools
- Priority 2 protecting children and keeping them safe
- Priority 3 reducing child poverty and the effects for those living in poverty and improve early intervention and prevention
- Priority 4 targeting the most deprived area and vulnerable groups to improve children's emotional and physical health

The Committee agreed with the plan in principle but asked that Officers provide additional information in relation to Objective 5: Reduce youth offending and anti-social behaviour. The Committee asked that SMART targets be used to identify how they planned to achieve the reductions indicated in the plan and what success would look like. Also it was requested that the plan be reviewed to ensure that apparent inconsistencies were removed.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the report be noted; and**
- 2. that Objective 5 in the Plan be revised to include SMART targets prior to submission to the Executive.**

CS/10/92 Child Poverty Strategy

The Committee received and considered the report which set out the Council's draft Child poverty strategy following consideration of child poverty at the October Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting. It was noted that the suggestions made by the Committee at the meeting held on 19 October 2010 had been incorporated into the Strategy.

The Officers were asked to arrange for Members of the Council to view the DVD, which had been shown to the Committee at the October meeting, prior to consideration of the Strategy at the Executive meeting in March 2011.

It was noted that there appeared to be a contradiction between the government's targets and the strategy in relation to the threshold for eliminating child poverty. The strategy needs to provide further clarification of the target dates for reaching the percentages stated.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the objectives and the priorities contained in the strategy be noted.**
- 2. that the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted the Child Poverty Strategy would be subject to a consultation with the Children's Trust and then submitted to the Executive in March 2011 for agreement.**

CS/10/93 Revised 16-19 Transport Policy

The Committee received and considered a revised 16-19 Transport Policy and report which now incorporated Members suggestions made at the October meeting and also provided further information to illustrate that students living anywhere in Central Bedfordshire had access to a college within a distance of 15 miles. This information was provided at Appendix B to the report.

It was noted that the consultation survey had been carried out prior to the notification from Central Government of the proposed removal of the EMA.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the additional information requested at the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 19 October 2010 be noted.**
- 2. that the draft Post 16 Transport Policy be endorsed.**

CS/10/94 2010 Annual Assessment of Children's Services

The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services confirmed that the Directorate was pleased with the OFSTED report and the "travelling in the right direction" statement. It was noted that the Council could not have moved to a "good" rating due to the poor performance of some of the middle schools.

The Committee was content with the report but asked for assurance that the improvements listed on page 4 of the OFSTED report would be implemented. It was noted that the Council was undertaking reviews of school places in four tranches and the results for the Dunstable and Houghton Regis area would be considered at the meeting to be held on 1 March 2010, as agreed at the December meeting.

The key areas for future development as listed in the report were:-

- Improve secondary (middle and upper) and post-16 provision so that more are good or better]
- Ensure more children make the expected two levels progress by the age of 11
- Increase the number of young people from low-income families who gain qualifications at the age of 19.

RESOLVED

that the report be noted.

CS/10/95 Work Programme 2010 - 2011 & Executive Forward Plan

Members considered the report of the Chief Executive which provided details of the current committee work programme and the latest Executive Forward Plan.

Members requested that a review of the budget and the implications for the directorate be brought to the 1 March 2011 meeting.

RESOLVED

that the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme be noted.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 1.50 p.m.)

Chairman

Dated