

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held at Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Tuesday, 1 March 2011

PRESENT

Cllr J Street (Chairman)
Cllr Mrs D B Gurney (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:	Mrs A Barker	Councillors:	Dr R Egan
	P A Blaine		P Hollick
	D Bowater		K Janes
	N B Costin		A Shadbolt

Parental Co-optees: Mrs H Copley
D Landman

Roman Catholic Co-optee: Mr J Reynolds

Apologies for Absence: Mrs F Image, Church of England Co-optee
Mr B Sear, Parent Co-optee

Members in Attendance: Cllrs J G Jamieson
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
	Mrs E Grant	Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Children's Services
	Mr S Morrow	School Improvement Officer
	Mr R Parsons	Head of School Organisation and Capital Planning
	Mr B Pearson	Head of Joint Strategic Commissioning

CS/10/96 **Minutes**

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meeting of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 25 January 2011 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

CS/10/97 Members' Interests**(a) Personal Interests:-**

There were no declarations made.

(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/10/98 Chairman's Announcements and Communications

The Chairman had no announcements or communications.

CS/10/99 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/10/100 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/10/101 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/10/102 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/10/103 Portfolio Holder Update

The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services provided the Committee with the following information:-

- The Council had received a grant from the Henley Review which would be within 10% of the grant received last year. The fees would still be adjusted but by a lesser amount. It was noted that a report was to be considered at the Executive on 15 March which would contain the new fee levels. It was confirmed that the increase would be marginally under 70%.
- PRU – it was noted that the process was continuing with the tenders having been awarded and the confirmatory interviews to be held by Friday 4 March 2011. Once the interviews had been concluded, the decision would be made public.
- An overview of achievements during the municipal year in Children's Services.
- An acknowledgement of the hard work School Governors undertook on behalf of schools in Central Bedfordshire.
- Details regarding two bids made by educational establishments within Central Bedfordshire to create University Technical Colleges (UTCs). One bid in particular from Central Bedfordshire College, proposing a site in Houghton Regis, was the subject of further discussion and Members agreed to invite the Principal of Central Bedfordshire College to a future Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee to discuss the UTC should the college be successful.

CS/10/104 **Overview of Budget for Children's Services**

The Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Children's Services gave three presentations, which covered the following areas:-

- a brief update on the impact of the budget settlement both nationally and locally:-

Members agreed to receive a report towards the end of the calendar year covering residential care for disabled children. This was already on the officer's workplan for an Executive report.

- update on the youth commission:-

Members agreed to receive a presentation at their next meeting covering a possible performance data set for child poverty and early intervention.

- the impact of the Education Bill on the Dunstable and Houghton Regis Review

A copy of the presentation slides are attached to these minutes at **Appendix A**.

CS/10/105

Outcomes of the Review of Transforming Teaching and Learning in Dunstable and Houghton Regis

The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services informed the Committee that the purpose of the meeting today was to consider the information provided and agree in principle options going forward. A more detailed report exploring agreed options would then be presented at the 24 May 2011 meeting prior to Executive consideration of the report at its meeting on 31 May 2011. The Committee acknowledged the start of the review process and were pleased to learn that there would be more opportunity for consultation.

Officers provided an overview of the in-depth analysis which had been carried out to create the four options which were in front of the Committee for consideration today.

Option 1:- a continuation of the current 3 tier model but with schools formally engaged in hard federations, Academy chains and/or trusts:-

The Committee discussed in some detail the advantages and disadvantages of staying with the 3 tier system currently in place. The main concern for this option was the overwhelming need to ensure higher outcomes and results compared to recent years. It was noted that the results of federations had varied in Central Bedfordshire however it was felt that given time and clear guidance this system could work well.

The Committee agreed to consider Options 2 – 4 at the same time as there was small differences between the Options as detailed below:-

Option 2 – two tier 5 – 11 and 11 – 19 (close all Middle Schools):-

Officers informed the Committee that the costs indicated within the report did not include any funds to improve the existing conditions of the sites. The Committee felt that Option 2 was an unrealistic option and did not consider it any further.

Option 3 – two tier 5 – 11 and 11 – 19 Secondary Schools (close all Middle schools) – each secondary operating across 3 sites (ie existing upper and two former middle school sites).

The Committee expressed concerns at the schools being spread out over the sites and how the students would access the various sites. Whilst it was acknowledged that large schools were not always a bad idea, leadership can be problematical. The Committee did not feel that this was the best way forward but should not be ignored completely.

Option 4 – two tier 5-11 and 11-19 (close all Middle Schools) limiting each Secondary in size to its existing capacity.

The Committee felt that this would be an advantageous option going forward but were also realistic about the financial implications. The Committee noted that the whole consultation and implementation process would not be

completed for some considerable time yet and that by then it was hoped the Council would be in a better financial position. The Committee felt that the Council should consider this Option as its preferred option going forward, together with Option 1.

The Committee therefore agreed to recommend in principle and for further consideration Options 1 and 4, subject to finances being available, otherwise option 3 should be considered instead of option 4. The Committee noted that further analysis of these preferred options would be brought to the 24 May 2011 meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee prior to Executive consideration on 31 May 2011.

Cllr Dr R Egan proposed an amendment to only consider Option 4 but this was not supported.

RESOLVED

1. **that the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted the progress of the Dunstable and Houghton Regis review.**
2. **that Options 1 and 4 be agreed in principle (subject to finances being available, otherwise Options 1 and 3) for further consideration at the 24 May 2011 Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee to allow for comment to be referred for Executive's consideration on 31 May 2011.**

CS/10/106

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 agreed that a presentation on performance and data measures for Child Poverty & Early Intervention be brought to the 29 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 1.30 p.m.)

Chairman

Dated