
Meeting: Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date: 6 September 2011
Subject: Review of Disabled Children's Services
Report of: Cllr Mark Versallion, Executive Member for Children's Services.
Summary: This report outlines the detail of the independent review of services for children with disabilities which will take place in Autumn 2011 with a view to a report to Executive in January 2012. Scrutiny are asked to comment on the content of the review and to consider setting up a Task and Finish Group to meet and comment during the course of the review.

Advising Officer: Edwina Grant, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Children's Services.
Contact Officer: Catherine Parry, Assistant Director Children's Services Operations.
Public/Exempt: Public.
Wards Affected: All.
Function of: Council.

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

The provision of facilities for disabled children is a core statutory duty for the Council.

Council Priorities:

This report presented supports Priority 2 of Central Bedfordshire's Strategic Plan 2009-2011, Educating, Protecting and Providing Opportunities for Children and Young People. The information also supports the delivery of the Children and Young People's Plan priorities, Priority 2 Protecting Children and keeping them safe and Priority 1 increased educational achievement.

Financial:

The budget for provision for disabled children in the Council is £4.3m + £890k from the Early Intervention Grant. This review is about quality and benchmarking. Whilst efficiencies might be found during the course of the review, it is also likely that areas may be found that require improvement. There is no financial efficiency target set for this review.

Legal:

The legal framework is laid out in The Children Act 1989, Children and Young Persons Act 2008 and new Care Planning and Regulations implemented nationally in April 2011 (“Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers”). The Break for Carers for Disabled Children regulations 2011 also came into force on the 1 April 2011 and the Council will publish a statement for carers on the website by the due date of 1st October 2011.

Risk Management:

There are no new risk management implications arising from the report.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

There are no new staffing implications arising from this report. The current resources deployed enable the service to deliver all of its statutory responsibilities. However, in year budget pressures are identified as a risk.

Equalities/Human Rights:

The review will take account of the need to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment.

Community Safety:

There are no new community safety implications arising from this report.

Sustainability:

There are no new sustainability implications arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATION

1. **that the Over View and Scrutiny Committee**
 - (a) **Comment on the brief for the review of disabled children’s services**
 - (b) **Agree that a Task and Finish Group of Scrutiny be constituted to meet during October and November 2011 to inform the report for the Scrutiny Committee in December 2011, prior to the Executive report in January 2012.**

Background

1. The current provision for disabled children has not been reviewed since Central Bedfordshire Council was set up on 1 April 2009.
2. The current service to disabled children comprises facilities and budget share that was relevant to the disaggregation of the legacy Council, Bedfordshire County Council.
3. It is now timely to review the service and the review framework is set out in Appendix A.

4. Attached as an appendix to the review document, i.e. Appendix 1, is the criteria that a Council would need to meet for the statutory Lead Member Children's Services, i.e. the Executive Member for Children's Services to feel confident to sign the "Every Disabled Child Matters Local Authority Disabled Children's Charter". At the end of the review and the implementation plan, it is hoped that evidence will have been collated to show that each of the criteria have been met.
5. Section 5 of the regulations of the Break for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011 came in force on 1 April 2011. This requires a consultation which is currently on-going on the Council's website and a statement of the offer to be placed on the website by 1 October 2011. This work will run concurrently with the review.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Review of Disabled Children's Services Framework 2011