

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, 20 January 2015

PRESENT

Cllr Mrs A Barker (Chairman)
Cllr N B Costin (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:	D Bowater Mrs G Clarke Mrs B Coleman Mrs R J Drinkwater	Councillors:	P Hollick D McVicar R B Pepworth M A G Versallion
Parental Co-optees:	Mr J Chapman Mr S Court		
Church of England Co-optee: Roman Catholic Co-optee:	Mr D Morton		
Apologies for Absence:	Cllrs	P A Duckett Mr T Hodey Mrs F Image	
Members in Attendance:	Cllrs	A L Dodwell C C Gomm Mrs S A Goodchild J G Jamieson D Jones B Saunders	Deputy Executive Member for Children's Services and Community Services Leader of the Council and Chairman of the Executive
Officers in Attendance:	Ms A Coleman Mrs C Collins Mrs P Everitt Mrs J Keyte Mrs K Oellermann	Service Development Manager Family Support Team Manager Scrutiny Policy Adviser Head of Community Safety Assistant Director - Commissioning & Partnerships	
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CS/14/58. Minutes of Previous Meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 11 November 2014 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

The Assistant Director, Children's Services referred to item CS/14/51 – Annual Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) and reported that Bedford Borough had ended the Safeguarding Children's Board Partnership following a review of the service. The Committee was also advised the Department for Education had issued a consultation document that would provide input into a 'working together guide' that profiled the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). The Council would respond to the consultation to inform this piece of work.

CS/14/59. Members' Interests

Cllr A Barker declared an interest as she was a Member of the Corporate Adoption Panel.

CS/14/60. Chairman's Announcements and Communications

The Chairman welcomed Cllr Mrs Bev Coleman to her first meeting of the Committee.

CS/14/61. Petitions

None.

CS/14/62. Questions, Statements or Deputations

None.

CS/14/63. Call-In

None.

CS/14/64. Requested Items

None.

CS/14/65. Executive Member Update

The Executive Member for Children's Services provided the Committee with an update on the following:-

- Attendance at meetings to finalise proposals contained in the draft Budget.
- Attendance at a meeting to discuss the Education Vision refresh.
- Attendance at a regional Portfolio Holder meeting in Cambridge.

A Member requested an update on the progress made by Sandy Upper School in its ambition to achieve academy status. The Executive Member reported

that the Council continued to support the School in its endeavours and would continue to update the Committee on progress.

CS/14/66. **Draft Budget 2015/16 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2014-2018**

The Executive Member introduced a report that outlined the Council's draft Budget for 2015/16, Medium Term Financial Plan and Capital Programme which had been presented to the Executive on 13 January 2015. The report also set out the efficiencies and pressures faced by the directorate.

In light of the report and the further clarification provided by the Executive Member the Committee discussed the following issues in detail:-

- Whether a £253k pressure relating to the new market rate supplement scheme (CSP 1501) for 2015/16 should be a continued pressure in future years. In response the Executive Member advised that with the success of the Social Worker Academy and the good progress made to retain social workers within the directorate, he was confident this was a realistic forecast. In addition the Committee was informed that careful monitoring of vacancies would continue in this volatile market. A Member raised concerns regarding the high number of agency social workers employed by the Council and the need to support social workers whose profession continues to be hounded by the media. The Assistant Director, Children's Services advised that the Directorate had been successful in reducing the number of temporary social worker staff, some of whom had been with the Council for a number of years. The Council had also featured in an LGA best practice article for its work in this area and would continue to raise awareness of the excellent results achieved by its social workers.
- Whether the new responsibility for the commissioning of 0-5 year old children's public health services could be funded by the increase to the public health grant. The Executive Member commented that meetings to negotiate funding continued to be held to ensure this service would be fully met by the transferred fund.
- Whether the pressures predicted in the Executive report were expected to change significantly during the year. The Executive Member commented that close monitoring of the pressures would be maintained throughout the year.
- That all ward members engaged in negotiations for Section 106 monies in their area be requested to support the direction of fund provision to Education and specifically new school places to fund the deficit of £2m. The Executive Member for Children's Services advised he would continue to lobby the Secretary of State about this particular gap in funding.

RECOMMENDED that the Council's draft Budget for 2015/16, Medium Term Financial Plan and Capital Programme 2015/16 – 2018/19 be endorsed.

CS/14/67. **Q2 Budget Report**

The Executive Member introduced the Quarter 2 budget report for Children's Services for the months of July, August and September 2014.

NOTED the report.**CS/14/68. Q2 Performance Report**

The Executive Members for Children's Services introduced the Quarter 2 performance report. Of particular note was the improved performance in the number of older children that had been adopted.

NOTED the report and requested national benchmarked data be included in future performance reports on an annual basis.

CS/14/69. The Jay report and Child Sexual Exploitation

The Assistant Director Children's Services delivered a presentation on the implications for the Council on the findings of the Jay Report on Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Rotherham. The Report had raised the profile of issues known to the Council and a review of service had been made. Officers supported the 3 multi-agency Pan-Bedfordshire Panel and workshops had been held to promote awareness and best practice for all key stakeholders in dealing with CSE.

The Team Manager, Biggleswade Family Support Team gave the Committee details of two case studies where the school had reported their concerns of possible CSE to the Pan Bedfordshire Panel and victims had been helped by the Family Support Team.

In light of the presentation and further clarification provided by the Executive Member and the Assistant Director Children's Services, the Committee commented on and discussed the following:-

- That signs of CSE had similarities to those of domestic abuse and additional awareness training to recognise offenders as well as advice on how to identify vulnerable children was required. Specialised training was of vital importance to all Schools, the Police and officers. The Assistant Director, Children's Services referred to a training video called 'Chelsea's Choice' that had been used in schools to raise awareness of teachers and school children to help them recognise a CSE situation. A link to this training video would be circulated to the Committee.
- That advice leaflets on how to report suspicions of CSE activity be circulated to the Committee and all Members of the Council when completed.
- That the findings from an officer CSE Task and Finish Group be reported to the Committee.
- Additional CSE training be rolled out to School Governors. Officers would look into the option of an on-line course and a Governor Essentials article.

Noted the presentation.

CS/14/70. Domestic Abuse Update

The Head of Community Safety gave a verbal update on the nine recommendations agreed by the Committee in February 2013. The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) Strategic Assessment Identified Priorities for 2015-16 report, due to be considered by the Sustainable Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 22 January 2015, reported domestic abuse to be an emerging priority of the CSP. A link to the CSP report would be circulated to the Committee

Noted the presentation.

CS/14/71. Children and Young People's Plan Refresh

The Executive Member for Children's Services introduced the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) 2013-15 refresh and updated Members on the approach taken and issues identified for consideration and comment.

The Committee made the following comments and suggestions to be included in the Plan:-

- That a specific section be included in the Plan to raise the profile of Special Education Needs.
- Concern that the number of children in year 6, 8 and 10 with low self esteem had increased and that national league tables indicated a poor rating for the Council. The Assistant Director Commissioning and Partnerships advised that more schools would be encouraged to take part in the Health Related Behaviour and Perceptions survey to ensure the measures and actions identified were adequate.

A Member requested that information on targets outlined in the Performance Report and the Children and Young People's Plan annual report be submitted to the Committee and coincide with performance monitoring information that included statistical neighbour and national benchmarking data.

RECOMMENDED

- **A section on Special Educational Needs be included in the Children and Young People's Plan.**
- **A performance measure on children's self esteem be included in the Children and Young People's Plan.**
- **National benchmarking comparison be introduced in a future performance report.**

CS/14/72. Work Programme 2014/15 & Executive Forward Plan

The Committee considered the current draft work programme and agreed the Chairman in consultation with the Director of Children's Services would refresh the priorities in the current work programme.

RECOMMENDED that the work programme be approved subject to prioritisation by the Chairman and Director of Children's Services.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 1.35 p.m.)

Chairman

Dated