

Minutes

Cabinet

Date: 22 July 2019

Venue: Mezzanine Rooms 1 & 2, County Hall, Aylesbury

Time: Time Not Specified to Time Not Specified

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr M Tett (in the Chair).

Mr W Chapple OBE, Mr J Chilver, Mrs A Cranmer, Ms L Hazell, Mr M Shaw, Mr W Whyte and Mr G Williams

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Ms R Bennett, Mr R Ambrose, Ms H Norman-Thorpe, Ms R Shimmin, Mr R Nash, Mr D Drawmer, Mrs K Jackson and Ms T Ironmonger

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were none. Cllr Chapple arrived late to the meeting.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

3 MINUTES

RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2019 were **AGREED** as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

4 HOT TOPICS

Cabinet Member for Children's Services announced that the Judicial Review on the Early Help review had been dismissed on all grounds. The full press release could be found [here](#). The Honourable Mrs Justice Andrews DBE was satisfied that the Council had carried out a fair Consultation before it had made the Decision; it took the responses properly into account, and it complied with all its relevant statutory duties.

Mr Whyte confirmed that the summer timetable would be released on 22 July for existing centres and the new Family Support Service would be implemented from September 2019. Mr Whyte congratulated the team and legal colleagues on their hard work and stated that the reform of the service would bring better intervention for children.

5 QUESTION TIME

There were none.

6 FORWARD PLAN FOR CABINET AND CABINET MEMBERS

RESOLVED: Cabinet NOTED the report.

7 CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS

RESOLVED: Cabinet NOTED the report.

8 SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME & INQUIRY WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED: Cabinet NOTED the report.

9 CHILDREN SERVICES UPDATE

Mr R Nash, Service Director Children's Social Care and Mr G Drawmer, Head of Achievement and Learning attended the meeting in order to answer Member questions.

Mr W Whyte, Cabinet Member for Children's Services introduced the report stating that it was a joint update across Education and Social Care; covering national and local issues. The following points were highlighted:

- Mr Whyte highlighted the Peer Review as part of the South East sector led improvement programme; which had led to meeting with colleagues from around the south east with useful feedback.
- Mrs Cranmer, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills highlighted some of the good news stories which included teacher recruitment and retention and changes to inspection framework; teaching to the curriculum rather than to test. Mr Tett, Leader highlighted that Cabinet would have a key interest in the development of the framework to ensure best outcomes for children across the county.
- Mr Tett highlighted the data regarding treatment for cannabis and the upward trend from 2007 to 2008 stating that the information was not current. It was confirmed that the data had come from Public Health and was the latest available.
- Mr Whyte drew Cabinet's attention to the Ofsted Monitoring visit letter in appendix 1 of the report pack.

Mr Nash highlighted the following points from the report in relation to social care:

- A recent study into 'Improving safeguarding responses to gang violence and criminal exploitation' which highlighted the number of young people exposed to gang violence. The update report also set out what the children's services partnership had done to ensure a more coordinated approach to tackle the exploitation of children and serious youth violence.
- The national policy 'workforce that works for all children' highlighted the importance of the right people working across children's services and for them to be supported to forge effective relationships.
- The published findings of the National evaluation of the Troubled Families Programme 2015 to 2020, highlighted where the County Council were in achieving its aims.
- Placements of Looked After Children (LAC) and the strong progress in the area. There had been a cost avoidance of £5m and the placement of children as close to home as possible where appropriate.
- The service had just undergone their third Ofsted visit which ran over two days and focused on the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), assessment teams and child protection processes. Mr Nash stated that Ofsted's findings were fair and accurate and

there was a good commentary on progress to date and further improvement to be made. Mr Nash stated that the feedback reflected the hard work of first and second line managers and social workers and that of those staff spoken to during the visit enjoyed working in Bucks and felt supported by their managers.

- Mr Nash referenced the recent progress report on the improvement in Bucks Children's Services that had been submitted to the Department for Education (DfE) by the Improvement Advisor for Bucks, Mr John Coughlan (Chief Executive, Hampshire County Council). The report noted the new Heads of Services which were of a high calibre and were settling in well. Mr Coughlan stated that progress was as well as could be expected under the circumstances.
- Mr Nash highlighted the high level action plan that was a live document, monitored regularly and was independently scrutinised.
- Recruitment challenges were a national issue in the context of recruiting social workers. There were daily and weekly actions in place to address.

Mr Drawmer highlighted the following points from the report in relation to education:

- It was being reported that recruitment and retention in schools was becoming easier due to the time of year. The Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy were being used to improve progress.
- Changes to the education inspection Framework – the changes will see inspections consider whether schools were teaching a 'broad and rich learning' and not narrowing the curriculum or 'teaching to the test'. It was noted that work was ongoing with head teachers to be able to plan for its implementation in September 2019.
- Elective home education had seen an increase of 19% (640) which was in line with national trends.
- From September 2020 a new subject would be taught 'Health Education'. There would be statutory guidance and officers were working directly with schools to prepare and promote.
- School Inspections – In Bucks 91.5% of pupils attend a 'Good' or 'Outstanding' school, compared to 85% nationally.
- Special Educational Needs and Disability had seen a number of improvements since the new Head of Service had been in place.

Cabinet raised and discussed the following points:

- Mr G Williams had recently visited the new children's home in Aylesbury and commented on how it felt like a home with a real family spirit. The strategy had pay dividends keeping children closer to home.
- It was highlighted that Bucks recruitment turnover in social care was still above average. Mr Nash stated that 25% turnover had been driven by the recent changes made and this would start to reduce. Due to reduction in caseloads and recent publication of monitoring letter would make Bucks a more attractive place to work to the market.
- The monitoring letter had set out that not all interventions were effective and assurances were given that the area was being addressed and would identify opportunities to improve.
- Mr Shaw gave his congratulations to the service on the improvements made and gave an example of a recent good news story.
- Lin Hazel raised the issue of the high number of children that were being home educated and the worry that these children were not monitored closely enough after the initial visit. Mr Drawmer confirmed that visits were followed up on a yearly basis and that moving forward there would be guidance developed to review more closely and consider how that would be resourced. Cabinet had a concern that the service was losing sight of those children home educated and asked for an overview to be shared with them that highlighted the current process of review, how often and percentage of

reviews completed, what was driving the 19% increase and if there were specific characteristics of those children home educated.

ACTION: Mr Drawmer

- Mr Chilver highlighted the issue of communicating the new Early Help model to partners and that it was critical the Council liaised with partners to assist with early intervention. Mr Nash stated that there were ongoing conversations with schools and that the MASH had an open day which invited school staff to attend to understand the various pathways and processes. Mr Whyte highlighted that the Early Help strategy was a partnership document and there would be a busy few months ahead informing key stakeholders. Following a question from Mr Williams, Mr Nash also stated that it was important to get the right partners to the strategy meetings.
- Mr Tett questioned the change in the education inspection framework and what this meant. Mr Drawmer confirmed that inspections would move from 1 day to 2 to allow them to still focus on Maths and English but to allow time for a wider focus of subjects. Outcomes would still be reported in performance tables.
- Recruitment in Wycombe was highlighted as a particular problem in the report and Mr Nash stated that this was due to cost of living, transport and time getting to work and other employees in the locality. Partners within the same area were also experiencing the same problem.
- Mr Tett asked how the Council might improve the number of care leavers that went on to attend university. Mr Whyte stated that the Council had a high ambition for care leavers and that Bucks regularly outperformed its neighbours. However given the complexity of some of those care leavers, university was not always the right setting. Other options to get care leavers into the most appropriate alternative education which would still lead to them creating a future that may not have been on their agenda before should also be considered. The policy had also been changed so that there was now a facility with previous foster carers so that the individual could go home to them in the holidays for familiar support.
- It was asked what work was being done to address the high number of children and young people associated with, or exposed to, gangs. Mr Nash stated that work was ongoing with the Youth Justice Service and the Police to understand the current picture. The Council were actively involved in developing approaches to identify and support those children and young people.
- Mrs Cranmer confirmed that a large number of those home educated were pre GCSE so would suggest stress of exams caused some to withdraw. Mrs Cranmer also confirmed that a yearly visit was now the rule.

RESOLVED: Cabinet NOTED (a) the national, regional and local developments across Children's Services, and (b) the programme of work taking place to further improve Children's Services in Buckinghamshire.

10 ADULT SERVICES UPDATE

Ms K Jackson, Service Director (ASC Operations) attended the meeting in order to answer Member questions.

Lin Hazell, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing introduced the report and highlighted the following points:

- The report was a six month update which gave an overview of key issues and ongoing work in the service.
- There were still funding issues and the service continued to wait for the publication of the Green Paper which had been delayed for the fifth time.
- The report highlighted the NHS long term plan and how the additional government funding would be used over the next 5 years and the national priorities set.
- There continued to be workforce challenges and issues with recruitment of staff.

- The Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) scheme was being replaced by Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS). The DoLS system would run alongside the LPS for up to a year to ensure those people subject to DoLS would be transferred to the new scheme in a managed way.
- Buckinghamshire Health and Social Care System – the Council were in the process of finalising children’s and adult social care data for sharing with health colleagues called My Care Record. This was an integrated system with health colleagues.
- The County Council and Buckinghamshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) had restructured their Integrated Commissioning team which would operate in the new Bucks Integrated Care Partnership (ICP).
- It had been confirmed that The Better Care Fund would continue into 2019-20 although the final allocations had not been confirmed by June 2019.

Ms Jackson highlighted the following points from the report:

- Better Care Fund targets had been set and that Buckinghamshire system performed better than the average in their group and second best performing in its CIPFA group.
- There were a large number of issues around the publication of the Green Paper with Buckinghamshire having a large number of self-funders and how the Council would support them when costs come back into the Council. Social Care Directors were looking at the issue across the South East.
- The Better Lives Transformation Programme had had a positive impact on front door services within its first year of the two year programme.
- Community Capacity – an online map of community assets had gone live. This enabled residents to find activities, groups and facilities in their local area.
- Improving the Front Door – launched to improve the experience of those people who contact the Council for advice on care.
- Regaining Independence – part of the Better Lives strategy and worked alongside colleagues in health and children’s.
- A number of consultations had been carried out as part of the transformation programme which included Thrift Farm and Short Breaks Residential Service which were both a key part of the programme and linked into the NHS long term plan.
- The Dignity in Care awards had taken place which celebrated best practice in the county.
- The Safeguarding Adults Board continued to process a number of Safeguarding Adults Reviews, the most recent having had the final report presented and signed off and recommendations from the report to be developed into an action plan.
- Staff were being supported in adopting a strengths-based approach to social care practice.
- The replacement for the current case management system used by adult social care would be awarded by the end of July.

Cabinet raised and discussed the following points:

- Mr Tett highlighted that the service supported some of the most vulnerable sections of the community and the pressures would continue into the new council.
- Mr Williams asked if the new council provided further opportunities to influence more development requirements. Mrs Jackson confirmed that there were three market position statements which provided some real opportunities for the new council.
- Mr Chilver highlighted the digital improvements that had been made to help facilitate online self-help. Digital improvements would deliver a better service for residents while also making savings.
- Mr Chilver asked the capacity and resources needed with the change in DoLS service. Mrs Jackson confirmed that it would be part of the existing process and prioritisation would need to be carried out.

- Mr Williams questioned the level of the issue for the Council of self-funders. Mrs Jackson stated that a lot of self-funders chose to move into care homes. The Council continued to work with providers to bring rates in line with council rates to try to minimise those that had to be moved.
- Mrs Cranmer requested a breakdown of the Prevention Matters budget and the evaluation of spend.

ACTION: Mrs Jackson

- Mr Tett asked what was being done to help achieve the challenging targets set for Buckinghamshire for delayed transfers of care. Mrs Jackson stated that there were a number of initiatives in place to help support the area including a joint approach across health and social care, learning from other parts of the country, work on reablement, extending offers to those returning home and new crisis support.
- Mr Tett asked for clarification as to the delay in the allocation of the Better Care Fund (BCF) and why there had been a reduction. Mr Ambrose, Director of Finance and Procurement stated that the improved BCF was agreed as part of the four year settlement and went down in 2019/20 based on overall funding for authorities. Mr Ambrose also confirmed that the BCF would finish in 2020 but assumptions were being made that it would continue. Before the amount was announced it had been calculated based on previous amount with an inflation increase.
- Cabinet raised their concern in the delay of the Green Paper and hoped that the new government would reconfirm it was imminent.
- Mr Tett asked how well Buckinghamshire young people were prepared for adulthood and how well children's services were worked with adult social care. Mrs Jackson confirmed that there was a huge amount of partnership work taking place. Directors met on a regular basis and they were also currently looking at co-locating some staff.

RESOLVED: Cabinet NOTED i) The key national legislative changes relating to adult social care is facing and the uncertainty arising from delays of the Green Paper and ii) The latest developments in relation to the adult social care transformation programme.

11 Q1 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

Mr Tett, Leader introduced the Q1 Budget Monitoring Report and highlighted the importance of overseeing the budget as they moved into the new unitary authority.

Mr Chilver, Cabinet Member for Resources highlighted the following points:

- There was a net underspend of £100k at the end of the year which largely related to the Planning and Environment portfolio and is due to an increase in the agricultural estate rental income following a rent review.
- There was a forecast Capital variance of £1.9m which equated to 2% of annual overall capital budget. This mainly related to two items, Education and Transportation. The Education variance was an underspend rather than slippage and related to good project management of the new St Michael's school in Aylesbury. The Transportation slippage related to contingency costs included in the budget that had not yet been incurred.
- There had been progress on reducing outstanding debt from £18m to £11m and this had happened since the debt task and finish group had been formed.
- Buckinghamshire County Council were in a strong position moving into the new authority.

Cabinet raised and discussed the following points:

- Mr Tett questioned why the rent review in agricultural estate had not been foreseen. Mr Chapple stated that rents were constantly being reviewed and can take time to agree.

- Mr Whyte highlighted the issue of national challenges in recruiting permanent staff resulting in additional costs of agency staff. Mr Whyte stated that they were working closely with HR colleagues to look to increase permanent staff.
- Mr Chilver highlighted the £300k variance on capital in Resources due to an IT project that was put on hold due to moving into the new unitary authority.
- Mr Chilver stated that any underspends would be put back into the corporate budget.
- Mr Tett highlighted the importance of keeping a close eye on budgets as any deviation would impact other services as councils moved into the new authority.

Cabinet thanked all staff involved across all services.

RESOLVED: Cabinet NOTED the current forecast outturn for the 2019/20 financial year.

12 DPHAR (DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH ANNUAL REPORT) 2019

Ms Ironmonger, Assistant Director of Public Health attended the meeting on behalf of the Director of Public Health to present the Annual Report which focused on alcoholism.

Mr G Williams, Cabinet Member Community Engagement and Public Health highlighted the following points:

- The Director of Public Health was a joint appointment with the NHS.
- Alcohol was the third leading risk factor behind death and disabilities.
- 1 in 4 adults drank above national guidelines
- The report looked at the impact of this and particular areas that were affected most.
- 1 in 4 of those who had received alcohol treatment had children in the home. 22% of children in need had a parent receiving treatment and Bucks were 25% higher than the national average of accidents relating to alcohol.
- The report set out a series of recommendations that also needed to be shared with partners before an action plan was agreed.

Ms T Ironmonger highlighted the following points:

- People may not realise the wider impacts of alcohol and the resulting physical and mental health problems.
- It was suggested that while most people had a concept of alcohol units it was often difficult to work out.
- The report recognised the wide spectrum of factors that were driving alcohol use.
- The report provided more information for residents should they need it.
- A multi-agency action plan would be developed.

Cabinet raised and discussed the following points:

- Mrs Cranmer asked what the timeframes were for the initiatives. Ms Ironmonger stated that there were points in the year that influenced drinking patterns e.g. Summer and Christmas and that some initiatives would take more time to implement than others.
- Mr Tett questioned the resource implications and if it would be funded from existing budgets and Ms Ironmonger confirmed that it would be.
- Cabinet discussed the development of the action plan with partners and how this would then be monitored to ensure that outcomes had been met. Ms Ironmonger confirmed that the action plan would be development with partners which would come out of a workshop that would be held.
- Mr Tett requested that previous year reports and what they had achieved should be shared with Cabinet to ensure that outcomes were being met, as there was some concern that the action plans were not monitored or reviewed after a year.

After a discussion in a closed session Mr Tett thanked Ms Ironmonger and colleagues across Public Health for the work on the Annual Report.

RESOLVED: Cabinet NOTED and ENDORSED the Director of Public Health Annual Report.

13 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

That the press and public be excluded for the following item which is exempt by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972 because it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

14 DPHAR (DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH ANNUAL REPORT) 2019

15 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

9 September 2019.

**MARTIN TETT
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**