



Minutes

EDUCATION, SKILLS AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE EDUCATION, SKILLS AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 9 DECEMBER 2014, IN MEZZANINE ROOM 2, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY, COMMENCING AT 10.08 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 12.30 PM.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Margaret Aston, John Chilver, Dev Dhillon (Vice-Chairman), Phil Gomm, Paul Irwin, Valerie Letheren (Chairman), Wendy Mallen, Mark Shaw, Robin Stuchbury, David Watson and Katrina Wood

CO-OPTED MEMBERS PRESENT

David Babb and Michael Moore

GUESTS PRESENT

Mike Appleyard, Lin Hazell and Andrew Howard

OFFICERS PRESENT

Louise Bartos, Michael Brent, April Brett, Kevin Burrell, Michael Carr, Carol Douch, David Johnston, Ed Mallam, Chris Munday, Jane O'Grady and Kate Rumboll

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Monique Nowers.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

3 MINUTES



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



The minutes of the meetings held on 14 October and 4 November 2014 were agreed as a correct record.

4 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were none.

5 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman reported that she had attended a course on Chairing skills at Edgbaston, which had reinforced skills she already had. The Chairman and some other members of the Committee had also attended The Academy Show.

6 COMMITTEE MEMBER UPDATES

Committee members had enjoyed their visit to The Academy Show at the NEC. A member commented that he felt the session on Bullying had been very useful and he admired the Welsh Rugby Player who led the session for speaking out on this subject. The Pupil Premium session was over-subscribed but a lot of the information shared echoed the work the Committee had done in this area earlier in the year. Members found it very useful to see the wide variety of companies who offer support to children of all ages.

7 IMPROVING CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

The Chairman welcomed Lin Hazell, Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Mr David Johnston, Strategic Director – Children and Young People to the meeting. Lin Hazell was congratulated on her appointment as Cabinet Member and the Chairman thanked Lin and the management team for the revised letter that had been produced in response to the Committee's letter to Cabinet, with recommendations for the Ofsted Improvement Plan.

The Chairman invited members' questions as follows:

Please are you able to update us on the current status of the Council and BSCB Improvement Plans?

We have had great support from the Council in terms of the additional resources now being invested for improved outcomes for children. The new Chair of the BSCB, Fran Gosling-Thomas has been appointed and David Johnston would be meeting her later today to discuss the Improvement Plan. He was aware that she had already taken action to make the BSCB Improvement Plan more focussed.

The Department of Education have appointed Red Quadrant to support the Improvement Plan – Red Quadrant have worked with BCC previously and they would be within the department for the whole of this week and next. They would interview a wide range of staff and partners to get the background to where Children's Services is, how it got there and where improvements have been made so far. BCC must work closely with Ofsted and the Department of Education to demonstrate improvement and reassure the minister. The first Improvement Board meeting will be held in January. The Director of Children's Services at Cambridgeshire had offered to join the Board and Essex County Council had also offered a Senior Manager to take part. The Director of Children Services at Northamptonshire had also invited BCC to visit after their re-inspection which was due in the New Year.

Please can you update the Committee on the key workstreams?

We have six workstreams based on the strands from the Ofsted Improvement Plan and five have met to date. The Improving Leadership, Governance and Partnership workstream had not met yet as there was a need to secure the right membership – this would include the Chairman of Corporate Parenting, Chairman of Health and Wellbeing Board, the Chief

Executive and the Chairman of BSCB. We need to ensure that Looked After Children and vulnerable children generally are kept at the top of everyone's agenda.

Since the Ofsted Inspection report was published there have already been improvements; the funding arrangements for the BSCB are being firmed up, a Corporate Parenting seminar has been delivered to members and senior officers, the Cabinet Task and Finish Group report has been published and acted upon, an Independent Consultant, Ann Goldsmith had been engaged to offer challenge and a Partnership Workshop was held in November on the new Threshold Document.

Work was already underway on the Improving Social Work Practice workstream and this week new minimum standards of practice had been published, a copy of which could be made available to the Committee. With regards to maintaining a stable workforce, some arrangements had been put in place for retention payments and an improved recruitment package to help BCC become an employer of choice in the South East. The First Response team was now resourced more robustly and the newly introduced Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) was working well. Ofsted criticised the Early Help offer in Bucks for not being well co-ordinated and this was being worked on. It was important to support children on the edge of care and keep them with their families where appropriate. BCC were also considering working with Coram, a national Adoption Agency, to improve work in this area.

Since mid-September the Placement Panel had analysed those Looked After Children placed at some distance from home to consider if they could be moved closer to Bucks or even if it would be safe for them to return to the family home. ICT systems were also being reviewed to ensure a more co-ordinated approach.

The Chairman thanked Mr Johnston for this overview and asked if the Committee could be given the dates of the workstream meetings, as members of the Committee would like to attend as part of their Inquiry research.

Action: David Johnston

I have been approached by a number of foster carers with complaints. In this letter you indicate that there has been a good uptake for fostering – what level is this at currently and what are you doing to address foster carer's complaints?

Firstly we are trying to ensure that anyone enquiring about Fostering receives a quick response and by doing this now 50% of those initial enquiries wish to proceed. Overall however we are achieving a 7% conversion rate – some local authorities have a higher conversion rate than this although some independent fostering agencies have conversion rates of 2%. We would ideally like to increase the conversion rate to 10-12%.

We need to support the Fostering Teams with recruitment and ongoing support to foster carers. If foster carers were subject to allegations the new IT systems may help with the recording of information. Currently Bucks have approximately 200 Foster Carer places but this is less than other local authorities. Steve Tanner is focussing on targeted recruitment activity to boost these numbers. Allegations against foster carers can be very distressing. BCC needs to protect children but we must also be careful not to alienate foster carers who are such a valuable resource. Mr Johnston indicated that he would be happy to discuss this issue with the member outside of the meeting.

The Chairman indicated that the Committee would like to look into Fostering Recruitment and the Recruitment and Retention of Staff in more depth for their Inquiry. David Johnston advised that the Improvement Board would meet each month and the Department of Education representative sitting on the Board would report back at the end of February and thereafter at the end of each quarter. David had suggested that the Board should consider two workstreams in depth at each meeting.

BCC have approved a lot of additional money to help to improve Children's Services – why have you not approached Wiltshire to share their experiences as they have managed to make improvements without spending vast amounts of money?

The £4.8million that has been put into the baseline budget for Children's Services is to cover the historical shortfall and a further £2.7million has been invested in the Improvement Plan. We would be happy to work with Wiltshire, although Cambridgeshire who we met with last week had also turned their Children's Services around with limited resources.

What do you feel is the underlying cause of repeat referrals to Social Care and what can be done about this?

As we had a significant increase in the overall number of referrals, this may have led to staff dealing with cases quickly rather than thoroughly and therefore cases were referred again. Secondly the old Threshold Document was not clear enough and therefore partners referred to Social Care and then if their concerns persisted they would re-refer them. The repeat referral rate was 34% last year and was now 28-29% - this improvement was partly due to the introduction of the MASH and also the extra resources in the First Response team.

The Chairman thanked Lin Hazell and David Johnston for their contributions and suggested that the item on Children's Internet Safety should be held over to the January meeting. This was an important issue and the Committee were working on their recommendations. Lin Hazell suggested that it would be useful for the Corporate Parenting Panel to have an opportunity to input into the report if this could be accommodated without delaying its publication.

8 CHILDREN'S INTERNET SAFETY INQUIRY

This item was deferred to the January 2015 meeting

9 THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LEARNING TRUST PERFORMANCE REVIEW

The Chairman advised the Committee that Mr Raza Khan, Chief Executive and Mrs Amanda Taylor-Hopkins, Director of Education at the Bucks Learning Trust (BLT) had given apologies for the meeting. However the BLT was well-represented by Ms Kate Rumboll, Director of Standards and Intervention, Mr Kevin Burrell, Strategic Intervention Manager and Mr Michael Brent, Director of Finance and Resources, who the Chairman welcomed to the meeting.

Ms Kate Rumboll, Director of Standards and Intervention explained that whilst BLT results for their first year were pleasing, staff were not complacent and remained committed to improving standards and outcomes for children and young people. Ms Rumboll also highlighted that schools wanted a variety of School Improvement support from a broad range of individuals for example, recent headteachers, experienced school inspectors and experienced classroom practitioners. BLT had brokered support from specialist experts, introduced school to school support and courses to Improve the Improvers. Amanda Taylor-Hopkins attended HMCI conferences and South East reference groups where best practice was shared.

BLT had also strengthened relationships with key stakeholders such as the Bucks Association of Secondary Heads (BASH), Primary Liaison Officers, Special Schools, the Federation of Small Schools (FOSS) and local authority officers.

The Chairman thanked Ms Rumboll for this introduction and invited members' questions as follows:

How well has the BLT met its performance expectations so far?

We have performed well especially in the Primary sector – there has been an increase in the number of Primary Schools achieving Good or Outstanding – rising from 78% to 85% currently. Early Years is also an improving picture with 20 providers moving up to a Good

rating. There had also been a significant improvement in the Foundation Stage profile rising from 55% to 64% and the BLT's focussed work on Narrowing the Gap had reduced the gap from 33% to 29%. Governance remained a strength with 94% of schools in Bucks taking clerking, advice and support services.

Secondary schools have not been performing so well and this has been the Cabinet Member's priority – would you like to comment on this?

The Trust was fully aware that a number of schools still needed to attain a rating of Good or above. BLT had strengthened its team and was working very closely with schools. There were a number of schools currently rated as Requiring Improvement which are on a positive trajectory and are likely to achieve Good when they were next inspected.

Aside from Upper Schools' performance, are there any other areas where you have not met your targets?

Phonics continues to be a priority and also Key Stage 2 Writing.

I think it would be useful to see BCC data for previous years included in the report as currently it only shows 2013 compared to 2014. It would also be useful to see the accounts alongside this report.

I have circulated the accounts for you today and we will return in January to answer questions specifically on the accounts, which have been published according to the Charities Commission's regulations. Mr Chris Munday commented that longer term data would be available via the annual Standards Report.

Is the BLT working effectively with local authority officers on a day to day basis?

We meet every month to discuss any issues that may arise. BLT have also been involved in the Self Evaluation Form which is being prepared for the School Improvement inspection and we meet with the Primary Liaison Officers and Sarah Holding, School Relationship Manager.

I spoke to Amanda Taylor-Hopkins at our last meeting about a school in my area which is in special measures and she suggested that she was having difficulties getting into the school, but the Chair of Governors has told me that he would be happy to meet with BLT, can you give me an update on this please?

We are meeting with this Academy in January 2015. I cannot comment on the reasons for the delay but I know that a meeting has now been set up. Mr Chris Munday commented that the school was actually in the requires improvement category rather than special measures.

How does BLT sees it responsibilities in the future to elected members who have to represent constituents' interests, particularly in the way the Trust spends local authority funds?

We are always happy to talk to members and to work with you, we have an elected member on the BLT Board.

A member commented that it would be nice to be alerted to schools in difficulty in their area, as the local member is not always a governor at every school in their area as they perhaps were in the past.

You have referred to relationships and communication in your report, how long will it be before communication is improved?

We have established a lot of good relationships now and secondary schools are being more open with us, but there is always more work to do. The BLT is sending out a half termly newsletter to schools as they want to know what we are doing. Of course relationships are key to our work.

What action do you see as key in improving Safeguarding in Early years and if a school lacks good safeguarding at what point is it their responsibility to bring this to the attention of the local authority?

Safeguarding is very important and schools have good support from BCC in this area. Schools can speak to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) if they need advice and support. BLT would always act on any information we had if there was a safeguarding issue.

The foreword to the report written by Raza Khan, your CEO, states that ‘Education is the most powerful tool we have for creating a fair and decent society.’ This sounds like social engineering – surely schools should be focussing on education above all.

I think that Raza was commenting on the education gap between our most disadvantaged children and the rest and that we want all children to achieve their very best.

Yes but creating a fair and decent society is surely for a child’s family or church to lead, rather than school?

BLT’s focus is learning but we recognise that schools operate in a context with diverse challenges and we must support teachers and leaders as they work with pupils, parents and families.

I believe that your Teaching Excellence Programme began in September 2014, please can you tell us a bit more about that?

Yes, we are using the Thomas Hickman model, where an experienced leader works alongside the existing school leadership team, ‘doing with’ rather than ‘doing for’. Excellent classroom practitioners or leaders are seconded into a school and they coach staff and team teach in order to develop practice. Clear protocols are put in place and we draw up a contract with the school. Very positive feedback has been received so far and a full evaluation of the programme will be undertaken in future.

Please can you tell us why we are only just receiving a copy of the BLT’s accounts?

The accounts are now published with Companies House. BLT filed for a one month extension and the accounts were filed on November 7th, so this was the next meeting of your Committee. The accounts are also about to be published on the Charities Commission’s website. Going forward the Committee will receive more financial data from BLT and Michael Brent, Director of Finance and Resources would attend the January meeting of the Committee to take questions on the Accounts.

The Chairman thanked all the representatives of the BLT for attending the meeting and invited Mr Chris Munday, Service Director, Learning, Prevention and Skills to comment on the BLT’s first year, in his capacity as the commissioner of the service. Mr Munday commented that the BLT was only just over a year old and in that time the performance of schools in Bucks had been maintained and in the Primary sector improved. There were still areas of concern such as Phonics, Gaps especially at Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 2 writing, but BLT were working on these areas. Relationships with schools were still evolving and there had been some confusion over roles in the early stages. The local authority would be conducting a large school survey which would give an insight into the understanding of the BLT’s role now.

With regard to member engagement, Mr Munday was aware that BLT sent out emails regarding Ofsted inspection results to members and perhaps they could consider extending this service to improve communications with members. Mr Munday was pleased to report that BLT had demonstrated determination and he believed that staff were working hard and creatively to drive improvements for children and young people.

The Chairman welcomed Lin Hazell, Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Mr David Johnston, Strategic Director – Children and Young People, Ms Carol Douch, Head of Children's Quality Standards and Performance to the meeting and explained that the Committee would first consider the Children's Services section of the Quarter 2 Performance Monitoring Report, before moving on to the Education and Skills section.

The Chairman invited member's questions as follows:

Are these Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) inclusive of the key targets for improvement included in the Ofsted Improvement Plan and if not, why not?

These KPIs were set prior to the Ofsted inspection, but performance will be included in our Improvement Plan. We are looking at different ways of measuring our activity and more importantly, our outcomes. The new performance framework will be reported to the Improvement Board and also this Committee.

A member asked for an explanation of the overall budget figures outlined on p72 of the agenda papers. Mr Chris Munday explained that this report was for Quarter 2, so prior to the increased funding which was put into Children's Social Care following the Ofsted inspection.

It is quite difficult to link up the information in this report with the Improvement Plan and ideally they need to be considered together.

Lin Hazell acknowledged this and advised that this would be looked at to ensure more consistent reporting going forward.

How confident are we that the figures for assessments carried out within 45 days will continue to improve?

We have seen improvements already, largely due to the reconfiguration of the First Response team. We would always expect that a small percentage of assessments will run late as families may not make themselves available.

What are the reasons for a lack of progress with Looked After Children (LAC) achieving permanence?

Previously we have concentrated on securing the legal status of these LAC as the Government reduced the timescale to 26 weeks. BCC now meet the 26 week court deadlines but the delays are occurring after this stage due to issues with recruiting adopters and matching effectively. This is an area of focus now and as I mentioned earlier we are looking into working with Corum.

The Chairman thanked Lin Hazell, Mr David Johnston and Ms Carol Douch for their contribution and welcomed Mr Mike Appleyard, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, Mr Chris Munday, Service Director, Education, Skills and Prevention and Mr Ed Mallam, Head of Children's Partnerships to the meeting.

Mr Appleyard highlighted that the Education and Skills section of the report showed all Green Stars meaning that performance was on target, although there was some information missing on page 85 and 86 of the agenda pack, as these figures were not yet available. He conceded that there might be some red results among these figures but it was not appropriate to comment at this stage.

Mr Appleyard was pleased to report that Phonics and Narrowing the Gap work was being undertaken with some energy and he was happy to see that improvements were being made in most areas. He also reiterated that he would like to see some targets relating to children and young people's non-academic achievements, such as community work or Duke of Edinburgh awards as these should also be celebrated. The Youth Parliament had recommended that schools need to prepare young people more for the life of work and adulthood. Mr Appleyard had arranged for the Local Economic Partnership (LEP) and several Chief Executives from

across the County to support the Youth Parliament when they presented their views to a meeting of the Bucks Association of Secondary Heads (BASH). Their presentation had been well-received.

Mr Appleyard advised that Children's Centres would be retendered in 2015 and he hoped this would lead to improved engagement with their local communities. He was also very happy to report that the Chesham Project had resulted in six of the twelve single mothers involved gaining paid employment.

The Chairman commended Mr Appleyard's portfolio on these achievements. She highlighted that she was aware that despite the Committee's work on Narrowing the Gap, the number of students in Bucks claiming Pupil Premium was still not as high as it could be. Mr Appleyard reported that he was aware of this issue and it would be useful if families in need could be identified by other means, rather than relying on whether they claim free school meals(FSM) or not, as often although they were entitled, families chose not to ask for FSM as they perceived this to be 'charity'. The Chairman commented that a school bursar in Slough had suggested looking at housing benefits claims as a determinant for Pupil Premium instead.

The Chairman invited member's questions as follows:

At the last meeting I asked the BLT for information on their work with Dyslexic children but the Committee have not received anything, please could Mr Appleyard follow this up with them?

I will but can I suggest that if you want to ask a question on a specific issue you should give BLT advance notice of this, so they can be prepared.

I note that Children's Social Care have a helpful narrative on their section of the report which is missing on yours – it might be useful to incorporate this in the Education section. Also I note that your targets were often the same as last year or sometimes lower than 2013 – would you like to comment on this?

Some targets need to be lower, as lower equates to better performance. It is challenging to set targets which are realistic but also stretching. With regards to the request for narrative, this performance report goes to Cabinet and the requirement is only to include a narrative if the performance rating is 'Red'.

The Chairman thanked Mr Appleyard, Mr Munday and Mr Mallam for attending the meeting.

11 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

The Chairman welcomed Ms Louise Bartos, SEN Service Delivery Manager, Mr Chris Munday, Service Director, Education, Skills and Prevention and Mr Andrew Howard who represented FACT Bucks to the meeting. Louise Bartos gave a PowerPoint presentation on changes being introduced to SEN Provision in Bucks as a result of the Children and Families Act 2014. The following main points were noted:

- SEN Statements would be replaced by Education Healthcare Plans (EHC) and Schools would no longer run School Action or School Action Plus.
- Provision could be in place up to the age of 25 under the new legislation – previously support stopped at 19 years of age.
- Assessments for an EHC Plan had to be completed within a 20 week timescale. The process was very child focussed and looked at Education, Health and Care needs, although Education had to be identified as the primary need.
- There were two key decision making points – firstly whether to assess or not and then whether an EHC Plan was appropriate or not.
- At any point in the process, if the local authority refuse they have to hold a Way Forward meeting to explain to the family why the local authority (LA) are saying no and

to sign post them to other support. The LA would also talk with the child's educational setting to provide advice on how to support the child.

- If the decision is to put an EHC Plan into place, then the LA must consult with the education setting to ensure that they can deliver the plan effectively.
- There had been a 103% increase in requests for assessments in the first six weeks of the new academic year. It was anticipated that it could take up to three and a half years to convert SEN statements to EHC Plans.

The Chairman thanked Louise Bartos for the presentation and invited members' questions as follows:

How do you account for the 103% increase in requests for assessments?

We believe that some schools had held back their requests until September so that it would be dealt with under the new system.

Is there any appeal process available to parents under the new system?

Yes, the SEN Tribunal can still be used for appeal but you can only request an appeal on the Education aspect of the EHC Plan.

If parents can present additional information then a reassessment could take place, but it is hoped that recommendations made at the Way Forward meeting should be implemented first before any further assessment is requested.

Andrew Howard commented that parents are happier with the new process as the child is at the centre and the questions now are not geared to what the child cannot do but what they ultimately want to achieve by the time they turn 18.

What will replace School Action and School Action Plus?

There will be graduated SEN support provided by the LA.

Do the powers in the 2014 Act replace previous legislation?

We cannot now process any referrals under the Education Act 1996. It is important to recognise that a key difference between an SEN statement and an EHC Plan is that a child with an EHC Plan could request a personal budget and the support in an EHC Plan would be outlined very specifically.

What is the average age to recognise if a child has special educational needs? What if parents do not bring their child forward for an assessment but others involved with the child feel that they might have an issue?

A professional could call the SEN team for advice and in fact under the new system anyone can bring forward concerns about a child, it doesn't necessarily have to be their parents. For example, a young person over 16 years of age can request their own assessment and Health professionals, such as health visitors, speech and language or physiotherapists or a social worker could all request an assessment.

Do you have enough capacity in the team to manage this change?

Government have allocated some additional resources which has enabled us to appoint some interim staff for the next few years. An MTP request has been put in for additional resources as the government grant for two years will not be adequate.

How do personal budgets work?

Parents can request a personal budget but this is not guaranteed and the LA have to have due respect to budgetary constraints. Personal budgets allow more flexibility.

What additional money will be required to resource these changes?

It is hard to say until we have a clearer picture of how many children will move across to an EHC Plan. The government have indicated that less children will be eligible under this new system but we have not seen any evidence of that yet.

The Chairman thanked Ms Bartos, Mr Munday and Mr Howard for attending the meeting.

12 CHILDREN'S HEALTH COMMISSIONING

The Chairman welcomed Mrs Jane O'Grady, Director of Public Health and Ms April Brett, Public Health Principal to the meeting. The Committee had received the Director's report on Children's Health Commissioning and the Chairman invited member's questions as follows:

Is it anticipated that the capacity will be in place to meet demand for this service under the new structures?

A national formula has been applied which shows how many health visitors are needed to meet demand. Bucks already had enough health visitors to meet this demand.

Will Children and Young People be better represented at the Health and Wellbeing Board going forward?

Early Years and Young People is now a focus. Public Health have presented a report on Children and Young People to the Health and Wellbeing Board and a Children and Young People's strategy was being developed.

Nutrition in Schools has been a key issue and with more people using food banks, are we doing enough to monitor the nutrition levels of our children?

A week ago we held a Health Eating Strategy Workshop with partners, schools and foodbanks covering the whole range from Birth through to Older People. This workshop will now inform further strands of work for the Public Health team. All children entering Reception have their height and weight measured, which allows overweight or underweight children to be identified and referred to the School Nurse. Health Visitors have contact with children from Birth to the age of five, so they are able to consider the wellbeing of the child and their family and advise on food, finances, mental health issues etc.

April Brett reported that Child Poverty work was being undertaken and Public Health feed into this. She also reminded members that Health Visitors are a universal service available to all.

What is BCC responsible for and what is the Healthcare Trust responsible for – I understand that the Health Visitors are still employed by Health.

This is representative of the direction of travel of BCC – we are commissioning services rather than providing them ourselves. Currently NHS England commission health visiting services but now we have a better opportunity by becoming the commissioner – for example this will improve links with School Nurses which we also commission. Health Visitors and School Nurses remain employed by Bucks NHS. We will also promote joint working with Children's Services and Children Centres.

I represent a deprived and diverse area of Bucks but malnutrition in children can also be seen in middle class families too.

As I said Health Visitors are a universal service. They will intensify their approach where needed and can signpost parents on to other services. There is also a Family Nurse Partnership programme which can offer more intense support. Poor maternal mental health will be identified by Health Visitors too. Health Visitor support will be proportionate to an individual's needs.

How can you help to educate older children on nutrition and taking responsibility for making their own healthier choices?

Children and Young People's public health work is underpinned by focus groups. We also run emotional resilience courses to help young people make healthier choices and take less risks.

Will you have sufficient budget for the Health Visitor service?

We will hear very soon what the grant allocation will be and there is a four week period in which to make comments before the final allocation is confirmed in January 2015.

And are we prepared for making a response?

Yes, I have been monitoring the budget very closely in readiness for this process.

What if there is an overspend – will BCC have to make up the shortfall?

We know the contract value of what NHS England has. We provided feedback nationally that we wanted the 'Sequins' money included in the allocation – this is the money given to services if they reach the standards of service delivery required. Other areas of the UK have not been happy with their allocation – ultimately BCC could refuse to take on the service if the grant allocation was not sufficient.

Would Public Health be able to put together a Community Task Group in each member's division? Do you think it would be useful to have Community Champions?

We can look at what communities can do for themselves around the Health Visitor but only in a limited way. In the first year we need to embed the Health Visitors with a slightly different practice as our priority. We welcome community engagement but we need to be realistic.

Is the budget of circa £6million sufficient for what you would like to do?

Currently the budget is £5.8million. It is sufficient for what we are currently doing but there is no slack if we ran into problems. But there are still negotiations to go through. We have asked for benchmarking against other areas and this will become part of the Needs Based Grant arrangements.

In Bucks we are currently receiving less than our grant allocation for our Public Health Grant. To achieve our grant we need the national funding picture to increase so this is unlikely in the short term.

Whilst school meals can be nutritious it is important that parents also provide healthy food at home – how can we manage this?

How can we reach every family in Bucks? We have to encourage young people themselves in school. Young People in our focus groups suggest targeting parents by cooking in school and then young people take home good meals to their parents. The Headteacher from Haddenham School gave an inspirational talk at the Health Eating Workshop last week.

I think it would be a good idea for BCC to start a community project encouraging youngsters to grow their own food. This would be community led, green and BCC could provide free seeds. There is an active transition movement around Buckingham which I am sure would support this.

I will put Sarah Mills in touch with you to discuss this idea. Of course schools in the more urban areas of High Wycombe and Aylesbury don't have space at school to grow vegetables themselves, but maybe local members can suggest some innovative solutions to this. A member suggested using allotment sites as an alternative.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Jane O'Grady and Ms April Brett for attending the meeting.

13 SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Chairman reminded members that the Committee needed to identify two or three areas to investigate in depth for their Improving Children's Social Care Inquiry and proposed the

following – Foster Carers, Recruitment and Retention of Social Workers and Out of County Placements.

RESOLVED

That the Improving Children’s Social Care Inquiry should look in depth at Foster Carers, Recruitment and Retention of Social Workers and Out of County Placements.

14 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note the next meeting of the Education, Skills and Children’s Services Select Committee on Tuesday 27th January 2015 at 10am in Mezzanine Room 2, County Hall, Aylesbury.

CHAIRMAN