



Buckinghamshire County Council
Select Committee
Children's Social Care and Learning

Minutes

CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE AND LEARNING SELECT COMMITTEE

Minutes from the meeting held on Tuesday 23 February 2016, in Mezzanine Room 2, County Hall, Aylesbury, commencing at 10.30 am and concluding at 12.30 pm.

This meeting was webcast. To review the detailed discussions that took place, please see the webcast which can be found at <http://www.buckscc.public-i.tv/>
The webcasts are retained on this website for 6 months. Recordings of any previous meetings beyond this can be requested (contact: democracy@buckscc.gov.uk)

MEMBERS PRESENT

Margaret Aston, Patricia Birchley, Janet Blake, Phil Gomm, Paul Irwin, Valerie Letheren (Chairman), Robin Stuchbury, David Watson and Katrina Wood

CO-OPTED MEMBERS PRESENT

David Babb

GUESTS PRESENT

Chris Adams, Lin Hazell and Zahir Mohammed

OFFICERS PRESENT

David Johnston and Yvette Thomas

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Dev Dhillon, Wendy Mallen and Michael Moore.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 3rd November 2015 were agreed as an accurate record.

4 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no questions from the public.

5 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman thanked the Committee & Governance Adviser for his support as this was his last formal meeting before going on secondment.

The Chairman gave her update, which included:

- Mention of the Local Government Association Peer Review and the Department for Education audit
- Presentation of the Preventing CSE Inquiry to Cabinet in January
- Attendance at the Cyber-Safety Conference which had been organised as a result of a Select Committee recommendation
- The Chairman had visited a Child in Need Social Work Team, the First Response team in High Wycombe and the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub

She gave her thanks to the staff members that had met with her on those visits.

6 COMMITTEE MEMBER UPDATES

Ms Wood had visited the MASH and a Child in Need Team.

Mrs. Aston had attended a session on universal care for children and babies.

Mr Gomm had attended the MASH and had attended a visit to a foster family with a social worker. He had also met several foster parents in addition to this.

Mr. Stuchbury had been on visits with social workers and had been visiting academies.

The Members extended their thanks to staff members for spending time with them.

7 CABINET MEMBER UPDATES

7A CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE & LEARNING

Ms Hazell stated that the majority of her update would be covered in the forthcoming agenda items of today's meeting. Children's Services were still awaiting the letter from the Secretary of State which would indicate the level of intervention from the Department for Education in Buckinghamshire Children's Services.

Ms Hazell made the following points in relation to the budget settlement for the Children's Social Care & Learning Business Unit:

- It is a demand-led service
- Resources available are tight
- Demand is rising

7B CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION & SKILLS

Mr Mohammed gave his update:

- Adult Learning Ofsted inspection resulted in a 'Good' rating
- An audit plan for the Buckinghamshire Learning Trust (BLT) is now in place
- Regular meetings are taking place between Buckinghamshire County Council Members and Officers and BLT
- There is a forecast overspend on home to school transport
- Money needs to be saved on Children's Centres plan and the plan is not to close any but instead to remodel
- The Youth Counselling service is to be reinstated

Members addressed questions around funding, recording of financial information and governance of BLT.

8 PREVENT AGENDA

The Children's Policy & Equality Manager, Yvette Thomas, presented the report and made the following points:

- Prevent is part of government's counter-terrorism strategy
- It is the only with pre-criminal element and covers young people and vulnerable adults
- Prevent was first introduced in 2008/9 and involved some work with head teachers. It is now very much back on the agenda due to national and global events
- The work with schools involves training key individuals such as the Designated Safeguarding Leads within each
- Approximately 50% of the educational establishments in Buckinghamshire have been covered so far

Members covered the following points in their questions:

- The extra resources given to High Wycombe as higher tier Prevent area
- 'Train the trainer' and how it is being used to maximise the limited resource available to devote to the Prevent agenda

- The small amount of government funding made available to the Buckinghamshire local authorities to support work on the Prevent agenda
- The proximity to London and the impact of that on Prevent
- The interface of the Channel Panel and other bodies such as MASH and the Swan Unit
- The similarities between radicalisation and other safeguarding issues
- Online radicalisation and what can be done to address it

SEE PAPERS/WEBCAST FOR CONTENT

9 DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE & LEARNING BUSINESS UNIT UNDER THE FUTURE SHAPE PROGRAMME

Ms Hazell introduced the agenda item by stating that Children's Services is now going into phase 2 which incorporates the Future Shape Programme. There had been an agreement not to move so quickly on children's services in recognition of the fact that the improvement journey needed to progress.

Members discussed the following issues with the Cabinet Members and the Managing Director for Children's Social Care & Learning:

- The type of work undertaken by children's services and that social care clients could not be considered as customers
- The work on school improvement and the income it generates
- The rationale for bringing together learning and social care within a single business unit
- The use of preventative measures to avoid the need for higher tariff services later on
- The implementation of staff ideas and work with the Innovation Team
- Increases in the number of children with special educational needs and disabilities and the response of the Future Shape programme to that
- Where income is currently generated by the Business Unit and where further income might be generated
- Governance of the Buckinghamshire Learning Trust

SEE PAPERS/WEBCAST FOR CONTENT

10 UPDATE ON CHILDREN'S SERVICES IMPROVEMENT

Ms Hazell introduced the item and described to the Committee a year of very intense scrutiny, which had included visits from Ofsted and peer support/challenge from Essex and Cambridgeshire County Councils. There had also been the Local Government Association peer review and an audit commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE). This was alongside monthly meetings of the Improvement Board, visits to the Select Committee, Regulatory & Audit Committee and Cabinet.

There had been very significant efforts to improve which had resulted in improvements in getting children into secure family environments. Work continued on the recording system. Supervision and support for staff had been enhanced. The DfE audit had found that the cases

investigated by them were safe, with no cases referred back for immediate action. Schools, police and health organisations have helped enormously.

Members explored the following issues with the Cabinet Member and Managing Director for Children's Social Care & Learning:

- What constituted a good Children's Service and how long it would take to get there
- Making improvements sustainable
- Performance management of staff and ways in which staff are consulted
- Rates of permanent staff versus temporary staff
- Cultural and equality and diversity issues

SEE PAPERS/WEBCAST FOR CONTENT

11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

12th April 2016 at 10:30am.

A private meeting of the Select Committee is being held on 29th March to conduct a short inquiry into issues facing the Children's Services workforce.

CHAIRMAN