CSCL Select Committee 18th July.
Agenda Item 6 Growth Inquiry Notes.

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Full details of this item can be found on the webcast here: https://buckscc.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcast_interactive/273914

Strategic & Education	Questioned by*		Response*
What do Senior Managers from the Business Unit see as the main challenges that housing and population growth in Bucks will present over and above the "usual" increases in demand that the Business Unit has seen?	AC	We are working on the basis that growth will be in areas of housing growth. We assume that people will continue to have the average 2.2 children in their families. There are things that are out of our control, for example, if there was a problem with the housing growth not being realised. Ability to build schools and fund additional places. Building schools for the future Government plan changed the landscape, as did academies and free schools. We are focussing on the economy, which means that we will have more families in Buckinghamshire	GRW
Do either the Cabinet Member for Children's Services or Education and Skills sit on the Growth Board?	ID	Question was not responded to.	

Which Officers from the Business Unit sit on the Council's Growth Corporate Working Group?
   o How often do they meet?
   o What are the issues coming out of the Growth Board and Growth Corporate Working Group?
	ID	Mr Stephen Chainani from the education side sits on the Growth Corporate Working Group and they meet every 2 months, although this frequency does vary depending on the current agenda.
		Education ensure that we provide a corporate response in relation to any planning applications.
		
		There is no representative from social care on the
			PCB

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		Working Group.	
How does the Children's Services Senior Management Team get feedback from the Growth Corporate Working Group and Growth Board on issues relevant to the Business Unit?	ID	Senior management feedback to ensure there is awareness.	PCB
Does the Business Unit have a strategy (written or otherwise) for managing housing/population growth? If not, how does the business unit ensure that expected growth in Bucks is taken into account when planning its services? Has acadamisation of schools proved an issue – neighbouring authorities have their own growth agenda and there could be a potential knock on effect. With the closure of RAF Halton, has that been taken into account in relation to school places? Smaller developments can also have an impact on school places.	LS/KH/NH/ GW	We spend a lot of time as at the Corporate Management Team (Chief exec, and Exec directors) so that we are constantly making sure we understand others issues and critical areas of development. Have been looking at growth reports and development of the economy and housing initiatives so we are able to synergise our own plans. We already work very closely with colleagues to ensure we know where our provision needs to be increased. We would still look at our pupil population even if we were not in a time of growth. We do a check every year and check birth rates, unfortunately child benefit data is no longer available to us, which had been invaluable. We can't see what happens to the cohort until a school place is applied for. We apply trend data and constantly remodel based on the information. We look at parental preferences and map out likely 11+ results. Some of our schools are close to the county boundary and we have to take all of this into account. Schools have to publish any admission changes they would like to make. All of our schools have catchment areas apart from faith schools. Only academy that has made changes was	GRW PCB DM

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| | | Great Marlow in its early stages. They can change their capacity if they so wish, but they do not change their catchment.

RAF Halton closure has been taken into account, and once we are in receipt of further information, we will work with schools in the area to map available options. Schools do get growth funding assistance.

You cannot reserve school places for children moving into the area. We grow new schools from the bottom.

As we face growth there is a chance that children will not get their first preference of school. Some parents are concerned their schools may grow.

Every year when we do the admissions consultation we look at how we can ease concerns raised.

Increase in the number of travellers who will require school places. Important that the home to school transport service is self-sustaining.

SEN allocations are driven by preference and there will be a consequential impact. We are acutely aware that special school places are harder to find. | PCB |
|---|---|---|---|
| What data does the Children's Services Business Unit's senior management team use to inform themselves on expected growth in Bucks to plan both social care and education | BR | Modelling is as certain as we can be and we model birth data and migration rates and we do this every year. Will only be as good as the data we are provided with. | PCB |

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services?		Housing and planning permission information is fed into the modelling. When planning applications are received by the District Councils we have a statutory duty to respond to those applications. We work closely with other authorities including the District Councils. We also use pupil projections.	
How does Children's Services understand what the impact will be on the their own Business Unit and their clients of decisions being made around growth in other Business Units, particularly with the growth agenda being led by the Transport, Economy and Environment Business Unit.	KW	There is an extended Senior Leadership Team briefing where we bring topical subjects along. Second and third tier leaders are invited to these events. We have a rolling programme from each Business Unit so that there is an opportunity for questions and implications for other Business Units. There is a regular meeting of Cabinet Members and officers to discuss big issues and bring dialogue from across the board.	GRW/MA
What opportunities does the growth agenda represent for the Business Unit? How does the Business Unit engage with the Skills Hub (run by Bucks Business First) and Enterprise Co-ordinators in schools in promoting work opportunities within education and social care services?	DB	Important we look at the opportunities. We will develop our skills set and employment opportunities for young people. We are planning with colleagues to look at business growth and make sure we are able to train and sign up skills needed for the future. We are looking at what skills we need from people in the future.	GRW
Following Education Presentation:			
What is the statutory duty regarding providing a school place. There is an issue with children from the same families being separated and	NH	The admission rules apply for each child as an individual. There are limited school places but parents will have a better chance of their children attending the same school	DM

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having to attend different schools.		if they select their catchment school as first preference. As a Council, we have a general rule that siblings would attend the same school if the catchment has been entered as first preference.	
Do we fight for S106 monies and what extra funding do we get from the Government?	NH	Wherever possible we will try and pursue S106 monies.	PCB
The application process can be confusing for parents – how can we make this easier?	ID	Unfortunately the process could become more complicated due to getting a more varied group of schools with different admission rules. We try and be as clear as possible on our website and paper guides about the application process.	DM
On the presentation, the map showed Stoke Hammond and Newton Longville that are on the border – can we change our admissions process so that are school admissions are county based?	AC	We have catchment schools along boundaries and the law prevents us from prioritising our children over a neighbouring authority.	DM
There is an appeals process when the first choice of school has not been achieved. With growth in Buckinghamshire we may plan to build a new school but it would be redundant unless houses where then put on site.	DB	We would always need to be sure of demand and that developments will be built. An economic downturn could have a drastic effect.	PCB

Social Care

Ms C Douch, Service Director for Children's Services attended the meeting and highlighted the following:

- There had been a 3% growth year on year but contacts and referrals to the front door had remained about the same.
- There needed to be a flexible approach to services and the Early Help Strategy would assist with this.
- There was a need to reduce the number of high cost, high demand services and with housing growth the service needed to be aware of what proportion was social housing and what vulnerable families would use Children's Services.
- Children's Services were not maximising S106 monies and needed to have more input to ensure things like child friendly areas, green spaces and safe school walking routes from developments.

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• There are opportunities to work differently and more effectively.			
Can you define what poverty is?	WM	The national level is measured by those families that are just about managing without additional support. Both parents may be working, but there are not necessarily in the right kind of work.	CD
Projects and activity to manage growth: What actual projects and activity is underway to address some of the challenges identified for social care in managing growth in Bucks?	LS	Changes are always business as usual for children's social care. The areas that impact on Children's Social Care would be the build of new children's homes as well as the campaign by the council to become a Foster Friendly Employer.	CD
Effective use of data: What is the data telling you about where and how to locate & deliver services in future? How do you ensure that services will be available where people are going to need them in future?	AC	The adoption data showed that there was longer to place children than usual – this figure had meant that the average time to place was 226 days, but this had been due to one family that had been challenging to find homes for, which impacted on the figures. There are too many children placed outside Buckinghamshire and we are hoping to build more children's homes in Buckinghamshire.	CD
How flexible and robust is the modelling and forecasting data that you use. Do you have any examples of where you can do "what if" scenarios in modelling and forecasting?	ID	We have some good business intelligence support and now understand that we need to offer support early. What tips a situation which results in a child being brought into care? A lot of work is now being done to look at this. We do use quantitive data to ensure that we are targeting and supporting families.	CD
How does Social Care link with other Business Units around growth to ensure a strategic approach? Do you have any examples of where this is working well? Could joint working	ID	We are part of an extended leadership team and have had a discussion on growth. Starting to understand implications for children's social care and what we need to do.	CD

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be improved?		In relation to design, we are looking at creating green areas and easy routes to school.	
Do we have to pay for children known to social services that move to Buckinghamshire from another authority area?	GW	It depends on a child's level of need. If a child is on a Child Protection Plan already there are procedures in place to decide where responsibility for the case sits. If the child and their family become ordinary residents of Buckinghamshire then they would automatically become our responsibility.	CD
Opportunities: How is social care planning to take advantage of the opportunities of increased housing and population?	BR	If we are seeing new communities emerging we want them to be self-sufficient and what we would hope is to have more families that are independent and viable. We launched the early help consultation last week and multi-agency help needs to continue.	CD/GRW
Finance			
Financial Planning: How many years in advance does the Business Unit forecast its budget?	GW	In terms of position where we have got to, some corrections to base budget have been modelled and are tracked. We have a good projection for 4 years looking at how we make the model more sophisticated, but if we are able to judge a child's longer term needs that will certainly help. There is some flexibility at the edges which will assist and early help will be key. Agency staff is reducing – 21% now which is a positive step and need to maintain the number of children that social workers are working with.	DA/CD/GRW/JH

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		Strategy around having children homes and Foster Friendly Employers is putting the right mechanisms in place. It is always harder to manage volatile budgets which are subject to intervention.	
What challenges do we have in maximising S106 money and how can we overcome these? Are there any ways to lever S106 money for social care?	DD/NH/JW	There is not a great deal of capital investment with social care and need to think about the physical asset and whether that would be through S106 or targeting corporate social responsibility. We need to get smarter about S106 and work creatively with developers.	DA/GRW
Other business units may have more opportunities for income generation than Children's Services – is the money from income generation shared amongst all business units are kept within the BU that generates it? What is the plan?	AC	For schools we have 2 transformation plans that will be implemented over the coming years and the plan is to reduce the number of high needs pupils. We are looking at an inclusion strategy that keeps many children in mainstream school with additional support wrapped around them. There isn't a great deal of scope for income within the Business Unit and is more of a case of decreasing spend. Home to School transport and Adult Learning fee increase are being reviewed.	GRW/JH

* Attendees

GRW – Gladys Rhodes White   CD – Carol Douch   PCB – Paula Campbell Balcombe

DM – Debbie Munday   DA – Deborah Andrews   JH – John Huskinson

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KW – Kevin Wright

LS – Luisa Sullivan

DD – Dev Dhillon

WM – Wendy Mallen

AC – Alex Collingwood

DB – David Babb

BR – Brian Roberts

KH – Kelvin Hamblin

ID – Isobel Darby

JW – Julie Ward

NH – Niknam Hussain

GW – Gareth Williams