

Questions for County Council Meeting

Thursday 22 February 2018

Questions to the Cabinet Member for Children Services from Mr M Hussain:

Q1 Is there any intention of cutting, reducing or amending the budget which is given to support Buckinghamshire young carers in light of the Cabinet Member's suggestions that any future savings will have to be proportioned equally amongst Buckinghamshire young carers?

As part of the Early Help Review consultation process, a decision was taken to remove Buckinghamshire Young Carers from the Review. As a result of this, budget setting for this service is in line with the usual budget setting process for the Council, which is currently being concluded. We do not anticipate any amendments to the Buckinghamshire Young Carers budget for 2018/19 as a result of this. Once budget setting is complete, the Local Authority will confirm to Buckinghamshire Young Carers the budget arrangements for the 2018/19 financial year.

Q2 Having removed Buckinghamshire young carers from the scope of the Early Help service consultation, is there any intention of now consulting Buckinghamshire young carers on how they fit in to any proposed future service delivery plan?

Once the new Early Help Service is launched we would expect Buckinghamshire Young Carers to work with the service in the same way that we currently expect them to work with other agencies to support and protect the welfare of our children and young people. There will be regular communication across all of our partners as the new Early Help Service is launched to facilitate effective joint working.

Q3 In light of the fact Buckinghamshire young carers were not part of the consultation on Early Help, has there been a full risk analysis undertaken of the need of young carers in Buckinghamshire, to guide any possible cuts and support funding?

Buckinghamshire Young Carers is commissioned by the Local Authority to provide services for young carers. As such there is a specification in place detailing the service that will be provided and there are arrangements in place to monitor how these services are delivered and the outcomes that are being achieved.

Any plans to change current arrangements would involve engagement with stakeholders and a review of options before a decision on future commissioning models is agreed. This is in line with the usual process for commissioned services.

Q4 What is the anticipated financial support the Cabinet Member for Children's Services anticipates allocating Buckingham for young carers in the next financial year?

As per the responses to question 1, the budget for Buckingham and Winslow Young Carers (YC2) will be confirmed as part of the Council's usual budget setting process. We do not anticipate any amendments to the budget for 2018/19. The relevant

Commissioning Manager will contact the service to confirm budget arrangements as soon as the budget setting cycle has finished.

Q4b Will this be a similar amount of funding to previous years?

Response as per question 4.

Q5 What are the hours an average young carer can expect to receive in support from Buckinghamshire County Council?

Young Carers receive support from Buckinghamshire County Council in a number of different ways to meet their individual needs. This includes support from organisations such as Buckinghamshire Young Carers which offer a variety of different models including group work, holiday activities and intensive 1:1 sessions. However, Young Carers also access a variety of other services dependent on their needs such as targeted youth services, Children's Social Care Services and jointly commissioned health provision such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). Because each child's needs are different and the aim is to meet individual need, we do not measure and would not consider it appropriate to measure, the average number of hours of support a child receives.

Q6 What is a young carers legal right to receive support currently and will the County Council be maintaining its levels of support to the most vulnerable children who the council as corporate parents collectively has responsibility to see are looked after correctly?

Under various legislations a young person who is considered to be a young carer is entitled to an assessment and support from a local authority. The assessment needs to consider the following;

- the amount, nature and type of care which the young person provides (or intends to provide);
- the extent to which this care is (or will be) relied upon by the family (including the wider family) to maintain the well-being of the person cared for;
- whether the care which the young carer provides (or intends to provide) impacts upon the young carer's well-being, education and development;
- whether any of the tasks which the young carer performs (or intends to perform) when providing care are excessive or inappropriate for the young carer to perform, having regard to all the circumstances, and in particular the carer's age, sex, wishes and feelings;
- whether any of the young carer's needs for support could be prevented by providing services to:
 - the person cared for, or
 - another member of the young carer's family;
- what the young carer's needs for support would be likely to be if the carer were relieved of part or all of the tasks the young carer performs (or intends to perform) when providing care;
- whether any other assessment of the needs for support of the young carer or the person in cared for has been carried out;
- whether the young carer is a child in need;
- any actions to be taken as a result of the assessment; and
- the arrangements for a future review.

If there are any future changes to the service model for Young Carers then the Local Authority will continue to meet its legal duties.

Q7 Will young carers receive comparable levels of respite from their responsibilities looking after parents or other vulnerable members of the family, in the new service model proposed in the future?

Any plans to change current arrangements would involve engagement with stakeholders and a review of options before a decision on future commissioning models is agreed. The Local Authority will also continue to ensure that services take account of the legal framework set out in question 6 and that children receive a level of support to meet their individual needs.

Q8 If the Cabinet Member anticipates protecting vulnerable young carers, why does he choose proportioning any savings which have been agreed by Cabinet under the Children Service budget?

Buckinghamshire Young Carers and YC2 are subject to the same Local Authority budget setting process as all other Local Authority services. Elected Members are in the process of agreeing a budget that reflects Council priorities, pressures and risks across all services.

Questions to the Cabinet Member for Children Services from Julia Wassell:

Q9 What is the role of the Commissioner appointed by Ofsted since the inadequate rating?

The role of the DFE appointed commissioner will be to assess the council's capacity and capability to improve Children's Social Care. The Department for Education will be appointing the commissioner and not Ofsted.

Q9b What are the possible outcomes from this appointment?

The purpose of the review is to evaluate the capacity of the council to make sustained improvements to our services for children in order to achieve the outcomes that children in Buckinghamshire deserve. That evaluation could determine that either:

- 1) the council has the capacity to improve itself; or
- 2) whether alternative delivery arrangements outside of the operational control of the local authority would be the most effective way of securing and sustaining improvement in Buckinghamshire.

Q10 Can you provide us with information about the work planned with the 35 Children's Centres to keep them open? A list of the Centres with proposals would be most helpful.

As per the recommendation in the Cabinet report, a timeframe of 6 months was agreed for discussions with schools, Early Years providers, partners and the voluntary and community sector about how the Children Centre's buildings can be

best utilised in the future to maximise their benefit for children, families and the communities. Elected members will be fully involved in this process.

Question to the Cabinet Member for Children Services from Mr C Ditta:

Q11 Please can you inform me when you will be visiting Hampden Way Children's Centre to discuss how the Centre will be kept open?

We have visited a number of Children's Centres already and remaining Children's Centres will be visited in the coming weeks. We would be happy to meet with Councillor Chaudhary Ditta at a time convenient to discuss Hampden Way Children's Centre.

Question to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills from Mr M Hussain:

The County Council is still dealing with a significant backlog in the transfer of children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) to Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) due to a shortage of Educational Psychologists. Despite this, the draft budget proposals contain cuts in this area, with Special Educational Needs targeted for a decrease in funding of 6% in 2018/19.

Q12 With the failure of Bucks Learning Trust (BLT), which currently delivers some aspects of SEN support to schools, and the plan to bring BLT-delivered services back 'in-house' by July 2018, how does the Cabinet member for Education & Skills expect his business unit's funding requests for 2018/19 to change?

The Buckinghamshire Learning Trust has not failed. The decision to bring services back 'in-house' was necessary to respond to the way the educational landscape is changing, making this type of contractual model no longer viable with the significantly reduced funding we have available going forward.

The Council will be transferring the staff and budget for the Specialist Teaching Service back from the Buckinghamshire Learning Trust on the 1st April 2018 but the Buckinghamshire Learning Trust will continue to function as an independent charitable organisation. The budget presented to the Council contains all of the funding adjustments for 2018/19.