

Minutes

Cabinet

Date: 13 January 2020

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

Time: 10.32 am to 11.32 am

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

OTHER MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Mr R Ambrose, Mrs S Ashmead, Ms R Shimmin, Ms G Quinton, Mr T Vouyioukas and Ms S Taylor

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3 MINUTES

RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 9 December 2019 were **AGREED** as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

4 HOT TOPICS

Deputy Lead and Cabinet Member for Transportation advised that a new digital speed campaign had been launched on the [Buckinghamshire County Council](#) (BCC) website. Also, additional funding of £1,000,000 had been released for plane and patch and resurfacing schemes to improve the condition of the roads.

Cabinet Member for Education and Skills had recently visited recently one of the 242 schools in Buckinghamshire and was very impressed with the work being undertaken on environmental concerns and was particularly interested in the sculpture park which was being made from plastic.

Cabinet Member for Children's Services reported that the new children's home in Aylesbury had received a rating of "good" at its first Ofsted inspection; Mr Whyte highlighted that the inspection noted that the leaders and managers were focussed on providing a secure and stable base for the children to enable them to progress. Mr Whyte thanked the staff concerned.

The Family Support Service, which started in September 2019, had published its new timetable of activities throughout the county and was available on the [Bucks Family Information Service](#) website.

The Chairman stated that a report had been published on the County Council Network website on the amount of government funding provided for pothole and road maintenance. The London boroughs received £62,000 per mile, core cities received £57,000 per mile; however, the Shire counties only received £21,000 per mile. The Chairman highlighted the need for the Government to level up the funding as this was the reason why BCC struggled to maintain the condition of the roads. The Deputy Leader and Cabinet for Transportation added that the number of pothole repairs had trebled in December 2019 due to the recent heavy rainfall. Mr Shaw urged the public to report all issues via [Fix My Street](#) on the BCC website as soon as possible so a temporary fill, or permanent fill as the weather improved, could be carried out to prevent accidents and damage to vehicles.

5 QUESTION TIME

There were no questions.

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

Mr W Whyte, Cabinet Member for Children's Services, highlighted that the action noted in the previous minutes had not been completed. Page 24, the Early Help six month update scheduled for 24 January 2020 would be a three month update as the programme would not have been running for that amount of time.

ACTION: Ms S Ashmead

RESOLVED: Cabinet NOTED the report.

9 ADULT SOCIAL CARE - 6 MONTH UPDATE

Lin Hazel, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing stated that the Adult Social Care (ASC) update was a substantial report and consisted of a summary of what had taken place within the service nationally, locally and internally over the last six months. Lin highlighted the following points:

- The government continued to be lobbied for a long term solution to sustainable funding for ASC funding; BCC had provided a written submission to the Health and Care Parliamentary Select Committee in August 2019.
- ASC had worked with health colleagues to develop the integrated care partnership and improve the way staff worked together.
- The Integrated Hospital Discharge Service was launched in December 2019.
- Workforce recruitment and retention was still a concern; a three year strategic workforce plan had been launched.
- Section 3 of the report provided an update on the key transformation projects.
- The service was forecast to reach 100% of its Medium Term Plan savings for the current financial year.
- Sir Francis Habgood, former Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police, was appointed as Chairman of the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Adults Board in August 2019; Lin was confident he would drive the work forward and an improvement in service delivery had already been noted.
- In conclusion, ASC was aware of the challenges and was working to make the most of the limited resources to support residents with their care needs. There was a far more positive delivery service than there had been in many months.

Mrs G Quinton, Executive Director, Communities, Health and Adult Social Care (CHASC) drew members' attention to para 2.1 in the report which set out the recently published NHS long term plan. It was a significant document as it highlighted that the national focus was to increase out of hospital care to reduce pressure on hospital services. It gave people more control over their health and provided more personalised care. Digitally enabled primary and outpatient care would be provided to improve the health of Buckinghamshire's communities. All these elements were dependent on ASC and Public Health (PH) to be delivered successfully and Mrs Quinton stressed the importance of lobbying nationally for adequate funding for ASC and PH in order to deliver those objectives.

The following points were raised in discussion with Cabinet:

- In response to whether there had been any crises so far this winter; Mrs Quinton acknowledged that it had been a very challenging winter. The hospitals had struggled and an “OPEL 4”, the highest level of escalation, situation was declared for a short period. Services had worked collaboratively to get the situation under control. There had been an outbreak of respiratory illnesses in the county, which had caused pressure in the paediatric departments. As a consequence, a social media campaign was implemented to highlight the alternatives to visiting A&E e.g. the 111 telephone number, doctor’s surgeries, the urgent care centre at High Wycombe hospital and pharmacists; Mrs Quinton expressed her thanks to the members of the public who had used alternative sources of help.
- A Cabinet Member stated he was delighted that Thrift Farm would be continuing and asked when the new provider would be taking over and whether there had been any communication with staff and service users. Ms Quinton confirmed that Thrift Farm would be closed during the winter and the new provider would take over and re-open the farm in April 2020. There had been regular communications and positive feedback from service users.
- It was noted that the new [Care Advice Bucks website](#) was available; Mrs Quinton advised that there had been a positive impact and the website was now one of the highest performers nationally for people referring for advice and guidance. The website was still a “work in progress” and had been co-produced with the help of service users.
- Mr G Williams, Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Public Health, stated he chaired the Health and Wellbeing Board and highlighted the excellent work that had taken place between the Buckinghamshire Health and Social Care System. Mr Williams stressed that it would be important to retain the benefits accrued when the integrated care system commissioning was taken to a regional level as it was working well.
- A Cabinet Member reported that he had received excellent service during a recent stay in Stoke Mandeville Hospital and that the after-care service was good and asked for his thanks to be passed to the staff concerned.
- Another Cabinet Member had had to visit hospital on Christmas Day and also issued her thanks for the prompt service provided by the cheerful staff.
- In response to a question on the role and performance of the Delayed Transfer of Care (DTOC) service; Ms Quinton confirmed the service worked with the NHS to enable people to return home. Key targets were set and the service had under-performed during August and September 2019. Mrs Quinton explained that there were two elements to the DTOC targets; delays attributable to health and delays attributable to ASC which were combined to create the indicator. However, although performance had now improved, we still have not met its target nationally; the service had been set a high target as it was one of the better performers nationally.
- The Chairman asked how the partnership with Frimley Trust was working as many residents in the south of Buckinghamshire used Wexham Park Hospital. Ms Quinton

stated that the relationship had improved significantly and additional staff had been provided to help with the DTOCs which had reduced due to the increased collaboration.

In summary, Lin Hazell stated she was pleased at how ASC had moved forward in the last six months on service delivery. Lin praised the staff and stated that good progress had been made but there was still a long way to go; the staff were to be commended on the progress, particularly those working over the Christmas period.

RESOLVED: Cabinet NOTED the latest developments in relation to Adult Social Care both locally and nationally.

10 CHILDREN'S SERVICES - 6 MONTH UPDATE

Mr W Whyte, Cabinet Member for Children's Services, highlighted the following points:

- The issue of funding of local authorities' Children's Services was of great debate and further representation would be made before the government budget on 11 March 2020 to highlight that additional funding was needed for projects/services such as 'troubled families'.
- Paragraphs 17-19 covered the national mental health programmes between schools and the NHS; Mr Whyte stated he had received good feedback on the programme.
- Paragraphs 32-34 provided an update on the Ofsted monitoring visit in October 2019; the key issue noted was the challenge of recruiting to some of the departments. There had been some success in recruiting qualified social workers and the service was looking into new recruiting opportunities.
- Paragraph 32 showed the areas reviewed during the monitoring visit.
- Paragraphs 49-51 on Early Help provided information on the new [Family Support Service](#) which went live in September 2019. Mr Whyte encouraged members to view the timetables on the website to see what was being offered locally.
- Paragraphs 52-55 – Looked After Children. The new children's home in Aylesbury had been rated as 'good' at its first Ofsted inspection.
- There had been an annual foster carers' award event in October 2019.

Mrs A Cranmer, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, highlighted the following points:

- Changes had been made to the schools admission code so the most vulnerable children could access a school place more quickly (paragraph 10).
- New analysis showed that every classroom would have approximately three children who had been in contact with a social worker in the last three years (paragraph 11).
- A new course - 'T Levels', equivalent to 3 A levels would be available from September 2020. The two year course would equip young people to go straight to work and provided approximately 45 days 'on the job' experience (paragraph 15).
- There would be two other new courses in the curriculum; one on 'relationships education' and one on 'relationships and sex education and health education' (paragraph 16).

- 32 primary and secondary schools had enrolled on wave one of the national mental health programme to support training in the increased mental health issues for young people. The training would be rolled out to other areas of the county (paragraphs 17-19).
- Paragraphs 23 and 24 – In June 2019 the Department for Education announced that Ofsted would re-inspect schools with an ‘outstanding’ rating, some of which had not been inspected for ten years.
- Paragraph 25 contained information on the consultation on the proposed changes to the dedicated schools grant.

Mr T Vouyioukas, Executive Director, Children’s Services, highlighted the following:

- All local authorities’ children’s services were facing financial pressures.
- Paragraphs 32-34 provided information on the Ofsted monitoring visit in October 2019. Ofsted had identified that there had been limited progress in recruiting high quality, experienced social workers. However, Ofsted acknowledged that the leadership team had an accurate understanding of what was required.
- Paragraphs 35-37 referred to the peer challenge process undertaken on 15 November 2019 and the progress that had been made since the last peer review in February 2019.
- Highlights of the academic results in Buckinghamshire were provided in paragraphs 40-43; consistently above the national average but Mr Vouyioukas stressed that more work was needed to improve the performance of vulnerable pupils.
- Paragraphs 45-48; Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) – as of December 2019 SEND had achieved its target of 40% for issuing an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) within 20 weeks; however, improvement was still required. The service had been successful in appointing additional Special Educational Need (SEN) officers.
- Paragraphs 56-62 made reference to the recruitment plans; particularly the long term strategy to ‘grow our own’ social workers.

The following points were raised in discussion with Cabinet:

- Following a query from the Chairman on the reason for the 19% increase in home education in the last year; Mr Vouyioukas stated that the service was working with schools to understand the increase but stated that it was in line with the national picture. Mr Vouyioukas would provide a fuller answer outside of the meeting.
- A Cabinet Member stated he was delighted that the Aylesbury children’s home had received a ‘good’ rating in the Ofsted inspection. Mr Vouyioukas confirmed that the children had been involved in the plans for the new home and that it was important to equip the children with the skills needed to help them during their life.
- A Cabinet Member asked if it was possible to gauge the impact the homes had had and if there were plans to open more children’s homes in Buckinghamshire. Mr Vouyioukas confirmed that he wanted to consider the success of the existing children’s homes

before proceeding with the development of further homes as there may be a need for a different type of offer.

- In response to a Cabinet Member querying whether the proposed professional registration requirements mentioned on page 37 would have an impact on the service; Mr Vouyioukas advised that it would have a positive impact.
- A Cabinet Member stated he was pleased to see the recognition awarded to foster carers and asked if similar progress was being made in the adoption service. Mr Vouyioukas advised that he preferred the term 'permanence' which could take the form of adoption or special guardianship as the service was interested in securing a permanent home for young people who needed a better experience of parenting. The numbers were at the correct level and as soon as the assessments were completed a decision would be made about the permanence planning.
- The Chairman asked about the national issue of recruitment of permanent social workers as BCC had a high agency spend which was partly due to the proximity to London. Mr Vouyioukas highlighted the following key actions:
 - BCC now had a cohort of 10 qualified social workers in its academy and there were plans to increase the number by 10-20.
 - An overseas recruitment programme in countries with similar child protection processes was underway; Mr Vouyioukas was confident this would lead to recruiting eight more social workers.
 - A magazine called "Community Care" was expected to help improve permanent appointments.
 - 30% of the social workers were agency staff but BCC was fortunate to have committed agency workers and the recruitment strategy would continue to be reviewed.
- Following a request for more detail on the Family Centres; Mr Whyte advised that the 16 centres were well established and being well used. The new timetables were responding to local need; outreach teams were proactively working with almost 1,000 people to ensure a more targeted approach. Mr Vouyioukas added that the Early Help approach was to identify and target those who needed help the most; there would be a clearer picture on the amount of support provided at the end of the academic year.
- In response to being asked what was being carried out to improve the speed of the completion of the EHCP's; Mrs Cranmer explained that there had been a backlog of approximately 400 cases which had now been cleared. Mr Vouyioukas added that the rate was close to 29 weeks and the target set had been achieved. Mr Vouyioukas wanted to see an improvement in the quality of the plans and hoped that would be achieved by the recruitment of the additional SEN Officers.

The Chairman summarised that the issues of the Children's and Education services were taken very seriously and that a thorough induction programme would be essential for new members of the Buckinghamshire Council.

Mr Shaw thanked all those who had donated Christmas presents and raised money for children in care.

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

11 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

10 February 2020.

**MARTIN TETT
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**