



Minutes

CHILDREN'S SELECT COMMITTEE

Minutes from the meeting held on Tuesday 10 July 2018, in Mezzanine Room 1 - County Hall, Aylesbury, commencing at 10.35 am and concluding at 12.10 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

Mrs P Birchley, Mr A Collingwood, Mrs I Darby, Mr D Dhillon (Chairman), Mr M Hussain, Mr S Lambert, Mrs W Mallen, Mr B Roberts and Ms J Ward (Vice-Chairman)

CO-OPTED MEMBERS PRESENT

GUESTS PRESENT

Mr M Appleyard, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills
Mr W Whyte, Cabinet Member for Children's Services

OFFICERS PRESENT

Mr T Vouyioukas, Executive Director, Children's Services
Mrs M Moss, Interim Head of Commissioning for Children
Mr G Morgan, Head of Early Help
Mrs S Hawkswood, Committee & Governance Adviser

1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

That Mr D Dhillon be elected as Chairman of the Children's Select Committee for the ensuing year.

2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED:

That Mrs J Ward is appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Children's Select Committee for the ensuing year.

3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP

Apologies were received from:

Mr D Babb
Mrs M Aston

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mrs J Ward and Mr S Lambert declared an interest in item 11 as they are members of the Early Help steering group.

5 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 15th May 2018 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions received.

Committee Members discussed the importance of public questions and encouraged members of the public to submit their questions.

7 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman thanked Mrs I Darby and Mr G Williams on their work on the Permanent Exclusions Inquiry.

The Chairman went on to thank Mrs S Hawkswood, Committee & Governance Adviser, for her contribution to the Committee and wished her well.

8 COMMITTEE MEMBER UPDATES

There were none.

9 CABINET MEMBER QUESTION TIME

The Chairman welcomed Mr M Appleyard, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills to the meeting.

Mr Appleyard briefed the Committee on the issues of the outsourced public service delivery for transport between Marlow and Wycombe. The service provider informed parents they had considered terminating their service without informing the Council beforehand which caused unnecessary concern. Mr Appleyard advised that the Council would communicate the business requirements of the Council with the service provider.

Mr W Whyte informed the Committee that the current week was the start of Private Fostering Week. Following his appointment in March 2018, our commissioner, John Coughlan has completed his 3 month review of Children's Services. The commissioner has submitted his recommendations to the Department for Education and the outcome will be shared once received. In addition, OFSTED had visited the Council to complete the first monitoring visit following the November 2017 inspection and will publish their findings in early August. .

The following questions were asked and responses provided.

- A Member asked whether the Council paid the bus contractors and then collected the fares from the parents. The Cabinet Member responded by confirming that parents paid the transport supplier directly.
- In response to a question about how the side-by-side project would engage with the existing teaching school structure, the Executive Director explained that schools were collaborating and would share expertise. A report went to Cabinet recently and the Executive Director agreed to provide further information for the Committee at a future meeting.

ACTION: Mr Vouyioukas

- A Member asked about the current staffing position within the Service to which the Executive Director confirmed that most of the senior appointments had been filled and were permanent positions.
- In response to a question about the issues raised from the previous Children's home visits, the Executive Director confirmed that the moral and ambience at the home had improved. Additional support staff had been provided where necessary,
- In response to a question about whether the Council was responsible for paying travel costs for agency staff, the Executive Director explained that the Council was not responsible and that a fixed cost was paid for agency staff.

10 PERFORMANCE REPORT Q4 2017-18

During the discussion around the performance indicators, the following issues were raised.

- £2million had been allocated to residential homes to support the Council in placing more looked after children locally. The four homes will be located across the County.
- Recognition that improvements were needed across the system which would need all safeguarding partners working together.

11 EARLY HELP PROJECT - PROGRESS REPORT (VERBAL ITEM)

The Chairman welcomed Mr Whyte, Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Mr G Morgan, Head of Early Help, who provided a verbal update on the report.

Mr Whyte informed the Committee that the pre-consultation phase of the Early Help Review had been launched. The results of this research activity would be used to inform and develop the details presented during public consultation, which would be launched in the autumn. The Early Help steering group would monitor the results of the pre-consultation.

During discussion, the following questions were asked and responses provided:

What has been learnt from the previous consultation and how can the public be reassured that their concerns have been addressed?

- The Cabinet Member commented that the launch of the pre-consultation phase had been well publicised through the local media. A firm proposal would be offered to ensure the public understood the consultation when it is launched in October. A service user's workshop was scheduled to take place shortly to ensure their views were captured and bring together initial thoughts.
- The Cabinet Member commented that accessible terminology would be important to help support understanding of the whole range of Early Help services which include Children Centres which are just one constituent part of the Early Help offer.
- The Cabinet Member confirmed the project was focusing on redirecting resources into areas which needed it most rather than saving £3.3m. The Children's Services budget had gone up from last year and Early Help had a budget of approx. £7million for 2018/19 which would be spent on delivering primarily non-statutory services.

Mr Whyte re-confirmed that this was the pre-consultation stage and the public consultation would be launched in October 2018.

The Chairman thanked the Cabinet Member and his officers for their update.

12 CHILDREN'S SHORT BREAKS DRAFT STRATEGY CONSULTATION

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services was joined by Mrs M Moss, Interim Head of Commissioning for Children, who presented the report.

During discussion, the following questions were raised and responses provided:

- The Committee were seeking reassurance that the proposed strategy would not affect the quality and variety of services available to service users. The Cabinet Member explained that the draft strategy sets out an ambition to increase flexibility and choice in the short breaks offer. It also emphasises the importance of ensuring families know where to go in order to find out about the services and understand what services are available to them
- The officer explained phases of the consultation. The first phase will be a 6 week consultation on the draft Short Breaks Strategy which sets out the general direction of travel. This consultation will include children, young people and their families as well as wider stakeholders.. There will then be a second phase of consultation In the autumn which will consider the offer for children and families..

The Chairman thanked Mr Whyte and his officers for their update.

13 WORKING TOGETHER TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF PERMANENT EXCLUSIONS FROM SCHOOL - DRAFT REPORT FOR AGREEMENT

The Committee discussed the draft inquiry report, including the recommendations.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee AGREED the Inquiry report which would be presented to Cabinet on 10th September 2018

14 COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Members were reminded that the Voice of the Child Inquiry would be revisited at the next meeting.

ACTION: Committee & Governance Adviser

The Chairman advised the Committee Members to send their suggestions for the work programme to the Committee & Governance Adviser.

15 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 4th September 2018 at 10:30 in Mezz Room 1, County Hall, Aylesbury.

CHAIRMAN