

CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

THURSDAY, 20 APRIL 2017

PRESENT: Councillors Edward Wilson, David Evans, Lynne Jones, Marion Mills (Vice-Chairman), Nicola Pryer and Eileen Quick (Chairman).

Also in attendance: Cllr N Airey

Officers: Marie Bell, Alan Abrahamson, Kevin McDaniel and David Cook.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received by Cllr McWilliams and Tanya White.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Mills declared a personal interest in the item on 4 Marlow Road as she was a council representative on the management committee, as this was not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest she stayed and considered the item.

MINUTES

The Part I minutes of the meeting held on 22 March 2017 were approved as a true and correct record subject to on page 11 Cllr Louden be changed to Mr Louden.

Cllr Wilson asked if asked if the national rankings chart, as mentioned on page 10, had been sent to all Members. The Panel were informed that it had not yet been sent but it would be actioned.

Cllr Airey informed that the Forest Bridge schools report discussed at the Panel's last meeting had been Called In by the Culture and Communities O&S Panel. The Call In resulted in no further action required and thus the recommendations were implemented.

Cllr Airey also informed that Lowbrook School had not accepted the latest offer and thus the expansion would not go ahead.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

The Panel considered the latest Cabinet financial update report.

The Panel were informed that the council was in a positive financial position. The Adult, Children's and Health directorate projected an underspend of £25,000 on a budget of over £57m. The Corporate and Community Services directorate projected an underspend of £64,000. The Operations and Customer Services projected an underspend of £337,000. As a consequence, this left the overall reserves at several hundred thousand pounds above the target budgeted to achieve by 31 March 2017.

With regards to Children's Services the Panel were informed that the following three areas were reporting and overspend, commissioning (+7.4%), health, early help and safeguarding (5.4%) and dedicated schools grant spend (+1.1%). This was offset by underspends in schools and education services (-2.2%) and dedicated schools grant income (-1.1%).

The Panel were informed that main non DSG budget issues were:

- Home to school transport +£318k

- Agency staff in MASH +474k
- Residential Placements +261k
- Legal support from Joint Team +£276k
- CYPD childcare placements - £374k
- Leaving Care costs - £185k

With regards to DSG budget issues the Panel were informed that the issues were:

- Passenger assistance – high needs +£300k
- PVI entitlement - January headcount - £207k
- independent special school placements +£700k

Cllr Jones asked that if we were looking at trends for the pressures would they be increasing or decreasing. The Panel were informed that when looking at high needs there had been an increased pressure over the past year and initial measures to address this had been agreed by the Schools Forum who would also be looking at further measures. There had also been a pressure relating to passenger assistance and this was being reviewed. There had been a pressure relating to agency staff within the MASH and this was successfully being addressed.

Cllr Jones mentioned that she was please t hear that the agency staff pressure was being addressed and asked if it was possible to have a trend analysis for this in next months report.

The Panel were informed that there was a national issue regarding some agency staff who set themselves up as companies and paid themselves low wages to avoid taxation whilst charging a higher amount that went to the company. The government had recognised this and Councils could take tax a source and thus it became better for agency staff to become permanent staff.

Cllr E Wilson asked that with regards to CD95 Safe Routes – Holyport College, where did the money come from. The Pane were informed that it was from S106 contributions but this would be checked.

With regards to Lowbrook School Cllr E Wilson asked how much had been spent on the school to date to provide the extra 30 places and what was the balance. The Panel was informed that when the expansion agreement was in place last year £1.3 million had been set aside. About £75k had been spent for the internal expansion works and we were awaiting for the remaining costs of the external extension but this was expected to be about £300k. Officers would confirm if the remaining balance would be return to the capital budget or if there had been no additional borrowing and thus nothing to return.

Resolved unanimously: that the Children’s Services O&S Panel considered the Cabinet report and fully endorsed the recommendations relating to their remit.

INTENSIVE FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRESS REPORT

The Panel considered the Cabinet report on the progress of the Intensive Family Support Programme (IFSP).

The Panel were informed that the Troubled Families programme was launched in April 2012. The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM) had been delivering early help support services for Troubled Families through the Intensive Family Support programme (IFSP) since April 2012. RBWM made the decision to deliver this programme by setting up a specialist team that could work intensively with families. This team was known as the Intensive Family Support Service.

The Panel were informed that troubled families were families where children where persistently absence or excluded from school, if a young person was involved in crime or anti-

social behaviour and where parents were not working, affected by domestic abuse, drug and alcohol issues and parents or children with some health problems.

The programme allowed officers to work with families and prevent statutory intervention. When successful families were classed as 'turned around' when they were enabled to make changes to their lives.

RBWM had worked with 484 families overall since April 2012 but directly worked with 301 families with 214 families that have considered to have "turned" their lives around.

A payment by results approach had been designed to demonstrate tangible success through the outcomes for each family. The Royal Borough has put in place robust result verification and validation systems to secure assurance that payment by results claims were genuine and evidence-based. The Government will undertake regular spot checks of a sample of claims for payment and should the Royal Borough be spot checked officers were confident that everything required could be evidenced to satisfy scrutiny.

Members were informed that the programme was delivered in two stages, phase one ran from 2012- 2015 and phase two from 2015- 2020.

During phase one of the project, 209 families had been worked with and 160 of those received direct support with 140 of these families being assessed as achieving sustainable change and therefore are considered to have been 'turned around'. RBWM had made Payment By Results for the 140 families turned around.

The target for phase 2 was to work with and turn around 460 families which would require working with 660 families. To date RBWM had currently worked with 275. In 2016 -17 57 families had been 'turned around'.

Phase two used the knowledge gained from phase one to achieve continued significant and sustained progress for families within the framework of early intervention to reduce the demand on statutory services.

The Panel were informed that families were put on the programme via referrals from professionals or the public through the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) or via intelligence sources from partners, for example, families that may be at risk of financial exclusion, homelessness or families who were known to police through their community workers.

Work with families could last for up to a year with the average of nine months to ensure changes are sustained. The borough had 5 keyworkers with capacity to work directly with approximately 45 families at any point.

The Panel were informed that RBWM was one of the few local authorities whose delivery of the Troubled Families programme had provided intensive therapeutic and practical support to families attached to the programme for an average of nine months. A more intensive service than that provided through statutory provision.

There were a range of different strategies currently being used including family meetings or mediations to address presenting concerns. There was a specialist parenting worker undertaking targeted work within the Muslim community, including a parenting programme linked to Islamic values, which was unique in the UK. Research had been undertaken with local Scholars and the Muslim College to develop a booklet with information about Islamic values which could be used in conjunction to the Parenting Links programme.

The Chairman reported that she was the Lead Member for Children's Services when the programme was introduced and was pleased to see how it had been picked up and developed creating better outcomes for families.

Cllr E Wilson asked what difference the scheme had made and was informed that it was aimed at families just below intervention and if the scheme was not in place there would be more statutory intervention.

Cllr E Wilson asked if the families came from all parts of the borough and Cllr Airey replied that families came from different areas and were referred via a number of agencies. There had been targeted work in the Muslim community and in Cllr E Wilson's ward there would have also been work undertaken due to army families.

The Chairman asked if the Panel could have a future agenda item on the distribution of families throughout the borough and the Director of Children's Services suggested that an annual report could be brought back with this level of detail.

Cllr Jones recommended that visual mapping showing hotspots should be included as well as spider diagrams showing how the programme worked.

Cllr Jones also asked if the scheme was funded externally and was informed that it was funded via a mixture of the transitional grant, payment via results and additional funding via partner agencies.

Cllr Evans asked that as we had a self verification process were we confident that the scheme was making a permanent outcome. The Panel were informed that at the end of intensive support the families may continue to get support from other agencies and re-referrals were monitored to see if there had been a permanent impact.

Cllr Evans mentioned it would be useful to see if the work also had an impact on children's academic attainment and if there were certain factors that pushed a family towards needing support.

The Panel were informed that support was tailored to individual family needs and that within the borough we were talking about a small percentage of families. The Government undertook national reviews that help shape services along with local knowledge.

Cllr Airey reported that the Government had questioned why our self assessment results were lower than other authorities and we had replied that it was because we had a robust assessment process with very high standards as we were concerned about results more than money.

Resolved unanimously: that The Children's Services O&S Panel considered the Cabinet report and fully endorsed the recommendations. The Panel felt that future reports should include visual mapping showing hotspots in the borough and how the service works via a spider diagram. Future reports would benefit by showing how the service linked to other services and agencies and the long term benefits to families.

CONTRACT AWARD - OPERATION OF 4 MARLOW ROAD, MAIDENHEAD

The Panel considered the Cabinet report regarding alternative options for managing 4 Marlow Road as the new contractor (Achieving for Children) did not wish to manage the community building.

The Panel were informed that 4 Marlow Road was a purpose built youth and community centre. The site had previously been managed by leisure services, then youth services, and it was now proposed to move it to Parkwood Leisure from 1 August 2017 as an addition to the existing contract with the borough. The day to day running of the facility would move to Parkwood, however the ownership of the building would remain with the borough and highways would maintain the car park. There would be no breach in service for existing users

and no change to leases other than an extension. The report had also been considered by the Culture and Communities O&S Panel.

The Chairman asked if there was a break clause in the contract and was informed that there was as it was an extension of an existing contract that contained a clause.

Cllr E Wilson asked why it was just this buildings management that was being transferred and not the other youth centres. The Panel were informed that this was because 4 Marlow Road was a multi agency use building whilst youth centres were single use.

Cllr Wilson also asked if this was a change in policy due to AFC and was informed that it was not a shift in policy just about the management of the building.

Cllr Jones asked if there were guarantees that the services that were currently in the building would continue and was informed that there was and that the lease was being extended.

Cllr Wilson asked if Parkwood were being asked to manage the building as AFC could not. The Panel were informed that AFC were responsible for service delivery and that the proposals were to have an existing contractor manage the building. Irrespective of AFC the Council would have been looking at transferred the management of the building out of Youth Services; AFC just brought this forward.

Resolved unanimously: that The Children’s Services O&S Panel considered the Cabinet report and fully endorsed the recommendations.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting whilst discussion takes place on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1-7 of part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

The meeting, which began at 6.30 pm, finished at 7.50 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....