

**CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND LEARNING
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL
24 MARCH 2010
7.30 - 9.20 PM**



Present:

Councillors Mrs Birch (Chairman), Ms Whitbread (Vice-Chairman), Dudley, Kensall, Mrs McCracken, Osborne and Edger (Substitute)

Dr P Josephs-Franks, Parent Governor Representative

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillors Mrs Beadsley and Mrs Ryder
Mr G S Anderson, Church Representative

Executive Members:

Councillor Alan Kendall, Executive Member for Education

Also Present:

Andrea Carr, Policy Officer (Overview and Scrutiny)
Martin Gocke, Chief Officer: Access and Inclusion
Dr Janette Karklins, Director of Children, Young People & Learning
Amanda Roden, Democratic Services Assistant
Dr Angela Snowling, Consultant in Public Health
Amanda Waters, Head of Adult and Community Learning
Bob Welch, Chief Officer: Learning & Achievement

10. Apologies for Absence/Substitute Members

The Panel noted the attendance of the following substitute member:

Councillor Edger for Councillor Mrs Ryder.

11. Minutes and Matters Arising

The Chairman expressed thanks for the tour of Bracknell and Wokingham College and conveyed her good impressions of the new facility.

Further details of the Committed Capita One (EMS) upgrade and a briefing note on the Playbuilder Project were provided for the Panel.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Children's Services and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Panel held on 20 January 2010 be approved as a correct record, and signed by the Chairman.

12. Declarations of Interest and Party Whip

There were no declarations of interest relating to any items on the agenda, nor any indications that members would be participating whilst under the party whip.

13. Urgent Items of Business

There were no urgent items of business.

14. Performance Monitoring Report

The Chief Officer: Access and Inclusion, introduced the Performance Monitoring Report (PMR) for the third quarter of 2009/10 (October to December) relating to Children, Young People and Learning. Performance relating to child obesity, children and young people's participation in high quality physical education (P.E.) and sport, and take up of school lunches had been identified for particular attention.

The Chairman welcomed Dr Angela Snowling, Consultant in Public Health, who gave a presentation entitled 'Staying Healthy – a life course prevention programme', which focused on tackling health inequalities through a lifecourse approach concentrating on the most deprived areas, an overview of the commissioning process, the Staying Healthy programme and the outcome of national performance indicators NI 55 and NI 56 for childhood obesity. The Staying Healthy programme consisted of the breastfeeding peer education project, the family weight management project, the supported voucher scheme for adult obesity, and the healthy life checks project.

There had been problems with data sharing in NHS Berkshire East but data would now be uploaded to a single website in order to simplify measures and access. Most of the indicators in health were annual and in the case of obesity, for example, the actual figures were too small to be published.

Figures from the evidence base which prompted the breastfeeding peer education project in NHS Berkshire East showed that children were less likely to become obese if they were breastfed and this could have a lifelong impact on obesity rates. NHS Berkshire East were awaiting confirmation from the Strategic Health Authority regarding possible funding.

The target group for the breastfeeding project was young families in the most deprived areas, such as expectant mothers and their babies. It was not just a peer education project. The possibility of awarding a qualification as part of the training and eventually working alongside health visitors would be explored. There would be an operational plan for releasing in-year costs. For the family weight management service there was a shortlist of five named providers and a very formal tendering process. The project was commissioning for outcomes and the aim was for ninety families to complete the course and achieve significant weight loss.

Figures on long term life expectancy in men and women showed that approximately a quarter of all deaths from each group was caused by a form of cancer. One purpose of the Staying Healthy programme was to tackle underlying risk factors for cancers and cardiovascular diseases. The top three factors affecting infant mortality rates were maternal obesity, smoking in pregnancy and infectious diseases. There had been an increase in smoking in younger women.

NHS Berkshire East would work with the local hospitals, children's centres, early years centres and breastfeeding charities to promote breastfeeding and would monitor the prevalence of breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks from birth. The most deprived areas of Bracknell Forest were Wildridings and Central, and Harmans Water, as less than a quarter of mothers in these areas maintained breastfeeding by 6-8 weeks. Only one in three children were breastfed by 6-8 weeks in Berkshire East as a whole. The project would focus on ten mothers per year and aim for a 'cascade' effect on other mothers.

Target groups for childhood and adult obesity were families and children in Years 4-5 of primary school in the wards with the highest rates of Year 6 obesity. The Birch Hill and Hanworth area would be targeted first, but the school figures would not be published as the issue was family based rather than school based. There were stringent targets for tackling obesity in Year 6 in primary schools and NHS Berkshire East had just two years to reach the target of 12.6%. Figures were higher amongst boys and in Asian and African groups. The end results were lower than the South East average, so on the whole Bracknell Forest had good results when compared to neighbouring authorities.

Multiple causes for obesity included a combination of an unhealthy diet and a lack of exercise. Discussion followed that children tended to use computers, and computer or TV based games, and did not go out and play as much as previous generations.

The Chairman thanked Dr Angela Snowling for her presentation.

The Chief Adviser: Learning and Achievement and the Chief Officer: Access and Inclusion advised on performance relating to children and young people's participation in high quality P.E. and sport, and take up of school lunches, respectively.

Arising from Members' questions and comments the following points were noted:

- Dr Snowling's presentation would be circulated to the Panel.
- A typical week in school for pupils was approximately 25 hours and at least 2 hours per week of this time should be spent on exercise. Information had been gathered by the government via an annual sports survey. High quality P.E. and sport was needed, for example, darts was not considered to be a sport. The majority of Bracknell Forest schools did complete 2 hours of P.E. or sport per week. A small number did not due to pressures on curriculum, for example in Year 9, as P.E. and sport was not linked to overall academic performance and some pupils were learning two languages alongside their other subjects. Ofsted would investigate this further as there was a strong pressure on schools for pupils to complete 2 hours of exercise a week.
- The Chief Adviser, Learning and Achievement, would provide a list of schools not providing two hours of exercise a week for pupils and advise on their actions to overcome this.
- Dr Snowling would provide further information on which schools in the borough were taking part in the Advanced Healthy Schools Programme.
- Take-up of school lunches in Bracknell Forest was 28.5% in primary schools and 31.0% in secondary schools. Bracknell Forest primary schools were in the worst performing quartile nationally and secondary schools were in the third quartile. Changes of contract, prices and publicity had all been undertaken but there had been no significant change in take-up and this remained an issue. There were very few free school lunches provided in Bracknell Forest as a local authority and it was felt that the numbers would rise if more meals were free. There was also the difficulty most children faced of not having time to queue for school lunches and eat them during their allocated lunch time period. Some schools staggered lunch hours but there was only so much flexibility within the school lesson timetable.
- It was suggested that the number of children who did not qualify for free school lunches could be compared to the number of children who did qualify but it was noted that some children who were entitled to free meals did not claim them. Opportunities for publicity for parents, for example through job

centres, could be explored. The cashless Edgcard system of purchasing school meals also made no difference to take-up. There would be pilots to investigate the possibility of reducing the threshold for free school meals.

- The Chairman extended an invitation for members to indicate which performance indicators in the PMR they would like to look at in detail at the next meeting.

15. **'Grow Our Own' Project**

The Chief Adviser: Learning and Achievement, introduced the progress report on the 'Grow Our Own' Project including case studies of people who had benefited from the scheme.

The Head of Adult and Community Learning, who was also the Grow Our Own Project Manager, presented the report on the project, which was jointly funded with the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM) to provide support and training for non-employed residents in both boroughs. The training would complement existing employment skills and the project was run from the Open Learning Centre in Bracknell Forest. The project involved activity to engage clients and build partnerships with support organisations, such as Children's Centres, Family Support Advisers, Job Centre Plus, Extended Schools team, and Bracknell & Wokingham College.

The new Client Adviser for Bracknell Forest had started in February 2010 and so far there had been seventeen client interactions. The Grow Our Own Project Manager had been invited to take part in a conference regarding the project. The case studies of the project involved people of differing ages and work experience, for example one client attended E2E (Entry to Employment) which was aimed at 16-18 year olds.

Arising from Members' questions and comments the following points were noted:

- South East England Development Agency funding continued to be used until November 2009 for all project costs. Bracknell Forest Council had committed £218,884 to support the project and a budget plan showed continuity up to May 2011. Funding was being drawn from Section 106 contributions and £9,337 had been funded to date via this method. No funding stream had been identified for beyond May 2011 as yet. If no other funding was found for after this time, then the project would likely cease. There was concern for how the project would stay viable as clients involved with the project would be potentially disadvantaged by its end. Funding for the joint initiative also came from RBWM to be paid in 'tranches'.
- The Chief Adviser: Learning and Achievement, would confirm the radius of use within Bracknell Forest for the Section 106 funding for the 'Grow Our Own' Project.
- The project targets and outcomes for Quarter 1 2010/11 commenced from January 2010, but the Client Adviser for the project did not start until February 2010, so up to February there were only administration costs.
- Clients who had been unemployed for a long period of time would possibly require more support and training.
- The project did not qualify for the government employer's incentive scheme with reward points and cash back as the clients would need to be registered unemployed and the project was not a Department of Work and Pensions contracted service. Only employers providing training were eligible. The project was ineligible for other grants until clients had been unemployed for six months or more.

- The Grow Our Own Project Manager would provide an update report and results of the 'Grow Our Own' Project for the October Panel meeting.

16. New South Bracknell Youth Facilities

The Panel received a report providing further details in respect of the provision of new youth facilities in South Bracknell. As part of the transfer of housing stock to Bracknell Forest Homes, the Council had made a commitment to invest £1million from the proceeds into youth facilities in South Bracknell. Great Hollands had been identified as a priority area for new youth facilities and a potential site had been found. This was welcome news and the Panel congratulated those who had been working on the project.

The Silver Bus which had been a mobile source of youth activities in Bracknell would be replaced with a newer and more flexible vehicle. The aim was for this to be operational in the summer time. The majority of youth workers would be able to drive the new vehicle and it would be able to access places which the Silver Bus was unable to.

17. Executive Response To The Review Of Delivering The 14-19 Education Entitlement

The Panel thanked the Executive Member for Education for being present at the meeting. The Panel considered the Executive response to the report of the review of Delivering the 14-19 Education Entitlement undertaken by a working group of the Panel and presented to an Executive Briefing meeting by the Panel Chairman.

The review involved working with Executive Members to provide recommendations which would assist in influencing and developing policy. The recommendations had been agreed by the Executive.

A letter had been sent to the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission from the Chair of the Engineering Diploma Development Partnership regarding the report and offering to attend a meeting of the Panel to discuss the introduction of the Diplomas in Bracknell. The Panel agreed that:

- The Chief Adviser, Learning and Achievement, would respond to the letter from Councillor Graham Lane, Chair of the Engineering Diploma Development Partnership in London, and include a copy of the Overview and Scrutiny Report: Delivering the 14-19 Education Entitlement and the Executive response with the reply.
- The Chief Adviser, Learning and Achievement, would provide a progress report on the Diplomas for young people aged 14-19, including progress and take up for the October Panel meeting.

In response to questions from the Executive Member, the Chairman confirmed that:

- The Executive Member's role as 14-19 Champion would be informal in nature.
- Copies of the Delivering the 14-19 Education Entitlement report would be sent to the Secretary and Shadow Secretary of State by the Executive Member.

18. Indicative Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for 2010/11

The Panel was invited to endorse its indicative Work Programme for 2010/11.

The proposed review of the Council's plans and performance with regard to safeguarding children, including the role of the Executive Member, was to be commenced in the near future by a working group of the Panel. In preparation, the Director of Children, Young People and Learning had met the Head of Overview and Scrutiny to frame the review.

RESOLVED that the Children's Services and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Panel's indicative work programme for the 2010/11 municipal year, set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be endorsed.

19. Overview and Scrutiny Quarterly Progress Report

The Panel noted the Quarterly Progress Report of the Assistant Chief Executive on Overview and Scrutiny activity over the period November 2009 to January 2010 and local and national developments in Overview and Scrutiny.

20. Executive Forward Plan

The Panel considered the forthcoming items relating to Children, Young People and Learning on the Executive Forward Plan.

Item I021485: Jennett's Park Procurement Route

The governing body for Jennett's Park Primary School had been established and the planned opening of the school was due to take place in September 2011. The Chief Adviser: Learning and Achievement, would provide an update on the development of Jennett's Park primary school and when it would be opened for the next Panel meeting.

Item I021254: Primary Capital Strategy for Change

The consultation in respect of the above had been through the governing bodies and some work had already been undertaken. It would be important for parents and other interested parties to be consulted as well.

- The Chief Adviser, Learning and Achievement, would provide further information on the consultation with schools and interested parties on the Primary Capital Strategy for Change, such as where, when, how, and which schools had been consulted.

Item I021971: Statutory Annual Complaints Report for Children's Social Care

Further to the Chairman's question, the Director of Children, Young People and Learning confirmed that the Panel would continue to receive the above Statutory Annual Complaints Reports.

CHAIRMAN