

## Notice of a Meeting

### Children's Services Scrutiny Committee Wednesday, 14 November 2012 at 10.00 am County Hall

#### Membership

Chairman - Councillor Michael Waine  
Deputy Chairman – Councillor Marilyn Badcock

<i>Councillors:</i>	Janet Godden	Anda Fitzgerald- O'Connor	Neil Owen
	M. Altaf-Khan	Pete Handley	Dave Sexon
	Ann Bonner	Caroline Newton	Val Smith

<i>Co-optees:</i>	Mr Chris Bevan	Mrs Sue Matthew
	2 Vacancies	

#### Notes:

*Date of next meeting: 10 January 2013*

#### What does this Committee review or scrutinise?

- Services for children, young people and families; preventative services; child protection; family support, educational policy; youth service; youth justice;
- Primary & secondary schools; special education; pupil services; school transport; music service
- Adult learning (oversight of the adult learning service in provider mode)

#### How can I have my say?

We welcome the views of the community on any issues in relation to the responsibilities of this Committee. Members of the public may ask to speak on any item on the agenda or may suggest matters which they would like the Committee to look at. **Requests to speak must be submitted to the Committee Officer below no later than 9 am on the working day before the date of the meeting.**

#### For more information about this Committee please contact:

Chairman	-	Councillor Michael Waine E.Mail: michael.waine@oxfordshire.gov.uk
Committee Officer	-	Lisa Michelson, Tel: (01865) 815673 lisa.michelson@oxfordshire.gov.uk

*Peter G. Clark.*

Peter G. Clark  
County Solicitor

November 2012

## About the County Council

The Oxfordshire County Council is made up of 74 councillors who are democratically elected every four years. The Council provides a range of services to Oxfordshire's 630,000 residents. These include:

schools	social & health care	libraries and museums
the fire service	roads	trading standards
land use	transport planning	waste management

Each year the Council manages £0.9 billion of public money in providing these services. Most decisions are taken by a Cabinet of 9 Councillors, which makes decisions about service priorities and spending. Some decisions will now be delegated to individual members of the Cabinet.

## About Scrutiny

Scrutiny is about:

- Providing a challenge to the Cabinet
- Examining how well the Cabinet and the Authority are performing
- Influencing the Cabinet on decisions that affect local people
- Helping the Cabinet to develop Council policies
- Representing the community in Council decision making
- Promoting joined up working across the authority's work and with partners

Scrutiny is NOT about:

- Making day to day service decisions
- Investigating individual complaints.

## What does this Committee do?

The Committee meets up to 6 times a year or more. It develops a work programme, which lists the issues it plans to investigate. These investigations can include whole committee investigations undertaken during the meeting, or reviews by a panel of members doing research and talking to lots of people outside of the meeting. Once an investigation is completed the Committee provides its advice to the Cabinet, the full Council or other scrutiny committees. Meetings are open to the public and all reports are available to the public unless exempt or confidential, when the items would be considered in closed session

**If you have any special requirements (such as a large print version of these papers or special access facilities) please contact the officer named on the front page, giving as much notice as possible before the meeting**

**A hearing loop is available at County Hall.**

# AGENDA

1. **Apologies for Absence and Temporary Appointments**
2. **Declarations of Interest - see guidance note on the back page**
3. **Minutes** (Pages 1 - 6)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2012 (CH3) and to note for information any matters arising from them.

4. **Speaking to or petitioning the Committee**

5. **Forward Plan** (Pages 7 - 12)  
10.15

6. **Committee Business** (Pages 13 - 16)  
10.25

The committee is asked to agree the report on the recent Early Intervention Hubs visits and discussion.

The committee will also receive a recommendation following the Preparing Young People for Employment Seminar that took place in September.

Lastly, the committee will receive an Education update.

7. **Oxfordshire Skills and Learning**  
11.00

A new service recently added to the remit of the committee, Mike Bardsley – Interim Head of Adult Learning and Vicky Field – Operational HR Manager will provide a presentation outlining the service. There will be an opportunity for the committee to pose questions.

8. **Cabinet Report on Children In and Leaving Care**  
11.45

Matthew Edwards, Corporate Parenting Manager, will discuss an upcoming cabinet report regarding Children in and Leaving Care, followed by a question and answer session.

This report, for information and discussion, comes to Scrutiny prior to its consideration by Cabinet on 27 November. The report reviews the performance and outcomes of Looked After Children and Care Leavers (LAC) over the last twelve months. It focuses specifically on actions taken in response to the All Party Parliamentary Working Group on Children Missing from Care, the impact of changes in adoption legislation and the

timetable for the Corporate Parenting Review. Views of this Committee will be passed onto Cabinet.  
(paper to follow)

**9. LINK Maternity Services project** (Pages 17 - 22)

12.15

An opportunity for the committee to provide steer on policy formation:

Adrian Chant – LINK Manager at Oxfordshire Rural Community Council will introduce the Maternity Services Project.

Alison Partridge, Public Engagement Manager at CEF, will discuss the planned transition of LINK to Healthwatch in 2013.

**INFORMATION SHARE**

**10. Close of Meeting**

13.00

## Declarations of Interest

### The duty to declare.....

Under the Localism Act 2011 it is a criminal offence to

- (a) fail to register a disclosable pecuniary interest within 28 days of election or co-option (or re-election or re-appointment), or
- (b) provide false or misleading information on registration, or
- (c) participate in discussion or voting in a meeting on a matter in which the member or co-opted member has a disclosable pecuniary interest.

### Whose Interests must be included?

The Act provides that the interests which must be notified are those of a member or co-opted member of the authority, **or**

- those of a spouse or civil partner of the member or co-opted member;
- those of a person with whom the member or co-opted member is living as husband/wife
- those of a person with whom the member or co-opted member is living as if they were civil partners.

(in each case where the member or co-opted member is aware that the other person has the interest).

### What if I remember that I have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest during the Meeting?

The Code requires that, at a meeting, where a member or co-opted member has a disclosable interest (of which they are aware) in any matter being considered, they disclose that interest to the meeting. The Council will continue to include an appropriate item on agendas for all meetings, to facilitate this.

Although not explicitly required by the legislation or by the code, it is recommended that in the interests of transparency and for the benefit of all in attendance at the meeting (including members of the public) the nature as well as the existence of the interest is disclosed.

A member or co-opted member who has disclosed a pecuniary interest at a meeting must not participate (or participate further) in any discussion of the matter; and must not participate in any vote or further vote taken; and must withdraw from the room.

Members are asked to continue to pay regard to the following provisions in the code that *“You must serve only the public interest and must never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person including yourself”* or *“You must not place yourself in situations where your honesty and integrity may be questioned.....”*.

Please seek advice from the Monitoring Officer prior to the meeting should you have any doubt about your approach.

### List of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests:

**Employment** (includes *“any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain”*.), **Sponsorship, Contracts, Land, Licences, Corporate Tenancies, Securities.**

For a full list of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and further Guidance on this matter please see the Guide to the New Code of Conduct and Register of Interests at Members’ conduct guidelines. <http://intranet.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wps/wcm/connect/occ/Insite/Elected+members/> or contact Rachel Dunn on (01865) 815279 or [Rachel.dunn@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Rachel.dunn@oxfordshire.gov.uk) for a hard copy of the document.

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## CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**MINUTES** of the meeting held on Wednesday, 26 September 2012 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 13.00.

**Present:**

**Voting Members:** Councillor Michael Waine – in the Chair

Councillor Marilyn Badcock (Deputy Chairman)  
Councillor Janet Godden  
Councillor M. Altaf-Khan  
Councillor Ann Bonner  
Councillor Mrs Anda Fitzgerald-O'Connor  
Councillor Caroline Newton  
Councillor Dave Sexon  
Councillor Val Smith

**Other Members in Attendance:** Councillor Melinda Tilley, Councillor Jenny Hannaby

**Co-opted Members:** Mrs Sue Matthew

**By Invitation:** Carole Thomson, Bob Martyn

**Officers:** Lisa Michelson, Debra Mann, Iain Watson, Frances Craven, Maria Godfrey, Jim Leivers, Jonathan McWilliam, Noreen Collins, Lorna Caldicott

Whole of meeting

Part of meeting

**Agenda Item                      Officer Attending**

*The Scrutiny Committee considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting [, together with a schedule of addenda tabled at the meeting/the following additional documents:] and agreed as set out below. Copies of the agenda and reports [agenda, reports and schedule/additional documents] are attached to the signed Minutes.*

### **216/12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS**

(Agenda No. 1)

Apologies were received from Councillor Neil Owen and Chris Bevan.

**217/12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - SEE GUIDANCE NOTE ON THE BACK PAGE**

(Agenda No. 2)

None.

**218/12 MINUTES**

(Agenda No. 3)

Cllr Waine referred to page 3 of the minutes regarding the promised joint working with the city council on schools' initiatives. He commented that the recent difficulties were very unfortunate.

Comments were made around the fact that the heads were working well together and that the recent media coverage has not been helpful.

A suggestion was made to consider bringing an item to the forward plan for the committee around the 'family of schools' concept.

**219/12 THRIVING FAMILIES INFORMATION UPDATE**

(Agenda No. 5)

The Committee was joined by Jonathan McWilliam (JMcW), Lorna Caldicott (LC), and Noreen Collins (NC) to discuss the national initiative 'Troubled Families' which is currently implemented as 'Thriving Families' in Oxfordshire.

JMcW gave an overview of the initiative.

LC let the committee know that the service was in the process of recruiting family support officers. These officers would work to achieve 3 key outcomes:

1. That children are on a different path
2. That outcomes are improved across the piece
3. That public funds will be saved.

She went on to describe the programme which sits within a number of externally facing groups – emphasising that it was important that things were joined up properly.

A question was asked around avoiding duplication with other efforts and whether there were short term success indicators given the 3 year time frame for the initiative. In response, NC stated that the efforts are intended to enhance rather than overlap.

JMcW clarified that the 3 year timeframe was a bit of a distraction. While it is established for 3 years in the first instance, Oxfordshire was taking a much longer



approach. He related that he expected to change the way that the county delivers services.

Questioning continued into the expected savings. NC stated that savings would be seen across the public sector including with partners such as the police and health service.

JMcW indicated that the initiative specifies an interagency approach both in delivery and identifying families for support. He suggested that the councillors might be a useful partner in understanding the local need for services.

Cllr Godden expressed concern that the programme was short term and that it was essential for families that the council be in 'for the long haul'. She also asked about the supporting research on the benefits for this approach.

JMcW responded that the criteria for identification of families is flexible and evolving. He agreed that continued support was important. He emphasised that the council is embarking on a long term approach.

## **220/12 SPEAKING TO OR PETITIONING THE COMMITTEE**

(Agenda No. 4)

None.

## **221/12 FORWARD PLAN**

(Agenda No. 6)

The committee identified an upcoming cabinet report regarding looked after children and requested that it come to the November meeting.

## **222/12 COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

(Agenda No. 7)

The committee discussed that it would like to request an early slot in the day for the upcoming budget discussion.

## **223/12 EDUCATION ATTAINMENT RESULTS UPDATE**

(Agenda No. 8)

Frances Craven (FC) gave an update on what was known about the recent attainment figures for education. She reported that early indications for Key Stage 2 indicated that there was an improvement.

Cllr Waine commended the schools, saying that they have been under the spotlight recently at the committee.

## **224/12 EARLY INTERVENTION HUBS**

(Agenda No. 9)

Cllr Waine opened the topic in reflecting on the recent visits to all the hubs that took place in September. It was his view that the staff had a high level of commitment. He also felt that there was a welcome level of honesty that officers had in some of the difficulties they experienced in transitioning to the new way of working. He believed that officers were 'buying in' to the new structure and ensuring things succeeded.

Frances Craven spoke to the presentation on the Early Intervention Hubs overview.

Delia Mann (DM) spoke to a recent case study which illustrated the joined up services available at hubs and how that contributed to a positive outcome for a particular family.

The committee discussed several aspects of hubs including making recommendations as follows:

### **Vision and Aims**

The committee viewed that there needed to be a level of consistency around the 'core offer' across all Hubs in the county. Better clarity around what this core offer entails can also be useful in communicating what services are not available in hubs.

It is acknowledged, however, that hubs need to maintain their local focus and that the full complement of each individual hub would reflect that area's service needs in addition to the core offer.

### **Committee Recommendation**

- Development of a better articulation of the core offer across all hubs.

### **Partners and Communication**

Partnership working is instrumental in ensuring that the hubs work effectively by providing sources of referrals and resources and knowledge that can be shared. Whilst there was evidence that in many cases this is working effectively, there is a lack of consistency in success across some hubs with some partners. It is essential that there be regular and on-going communication with all partners and expectations need to be clear and consistent from all parties.

The partnership working with schools is especially important as the conduit for the majority of referrals. There is further work to be done bridging hubs to schools and communicating the hub offer to key members of school staff. There was also discussion about the early focus targeting secondary schools; for the next stage of implementation, members suggested a deliberate approach to primary school outreach.

Partnership with the voluntary sector is also crucial as there are many voluntary organisations with skills/volunteers/information to offer the hubs. The hub message needs to continue to go out to the voluntary organisations so that the dialogue about what they can offer is ongoing. In particular, there are many small groups, particularly in rural areas, which could help with hub outreach.

#### **Committee Recommendation**

- Continued commitment to widening connections with all schools and projecting the hub's core offer to them.
- Continued development of strong links with the voluntary sector.

#### **Duplication/Overlap**

The committee discussed that there need to be clear links and liaison with partners to ensure the hubs are not duplicating work but are recognising each other's strengths and combining to provide a cohesive service.

The committee questioned whether there is joint working with the district/parish/town councils, particularly surrounding housing allocations as this is seen as an important issue that needs to be addressed effectively.

It was also noted that the Thriving Families initiative should be fully integrated with the work of the hubs.

#### **Committee Recommendation**

- Invite officers from the district councils to a future scrutiny meeting to explore contributing issues around housing provision.
- Consider investigating options such as pooled budgets with stakeholders or grant payments for some services

#### **Resources**

Over the first year of operation, hubs have developed and expanded their service provision. While it was apparent during the visits that they were well utilised and busy, anecdotal evidence from staff indicated that capacity is stretched.

Staff have been increasingly under strain to respond to the levels of demand for services. While there is currently an utilisation of volunteers across all hubs, questions were asked as to whether there is scope to develop further volunteer support. There were also suggestions about the potential to share more 'back office' support functions with other services such as Children's Centres. In addition, given the diversity of service users and provision, the intensity in some areas and the stretch in others, there was concern about the accepted approach to fund all hubs on the same basis.

While the committee recognised the benefit to the 'one front door' approach to services, there was concern surrounding the reach of services for those that do not live near to the hub location. There was best practice evidence at some hub locations

around flexibly providing services 'off site'. Many of the service users value meeting in neutral locations and it needs to be explored how these can be best provided.

There was also concern that not all of the hubs have adequate facilities. The Littlemore hub was highlighted particularly as it does not currently have its own premises and relies on sharing with the library.

**Committee Recommendation**

- A re-evaluation of the funding distribution between hubs.
- The committee also requested an explanation for the current year's under spending projection. The committee would seek to ensure that any current year underspend were re-invested in other aspects of the service.
- A continued emphasis on recruitment, retainment, and utilisation of volunteers.
- Enhancing the geographical reach of hubs – particularly with partners or developing other 'neutral territories'.

Overall the committee reflected that they Early Intervention Hubs are off to a 'Very Positive' start, and there is still work to take things forward in the second year.

**225/12 CLOSE OF MEETING**

(Agenda No. 10)

The meeting finished at 13.00.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing .....

# Forward Plan

## November 2012 - February 2013

***Ian Hudspeth***

Leader of the Council  
County Hall, Oxford OX1 1ND

*Date Issued: 3 October 2012*



**CABINET MEMBER: CHILDREN & THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR**

**KEY DECISIONS**

NIL

**NON-KEY DECISIONS**

**Chill Out Fund 2012/13 - November 2012**

To consider applications received (if any) from the Chill Out Fund.

*Decision Maker and Target Date:* **Cabinet Member for Children & the  
Voluntary Sector, 5 November 2012**

*Key Decision:* No

*Exempt* None

*Information:*

*Consultations:* N/A

*Report By:* Youth, Engagement & Opportunities - Service Manager

*Contact:* Ruth Ashwell, Youth, Engagement & Opportunities - Service Manager  
Tel: (01865) 810649 Ref: 2012/100

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**Progress Report on CLA and Leaving Care**

To note progress and issues in relation to the Children and Young People in the Council's care.

*Decision Maker and Target Date:* **Cabinet, 27 November 2012**

*Key Decision:* No

*Exempt* None

*Information:*

*Consultations:* N/A

*Report By:* Director for Children's Services

*Contact:* Matthew Edwards, Corporate Parenting Manager Tel: (01865) 323098  
Ref: 2012/097

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## **Chill Out Fund 2012/13 - December 2012**

To consider applications received (if any) from the Chill Out Fund.

*Decision Maker and Target Date:* **Cabinet Member for Children & the Voluntary Sector, 10 December 2012**

*Key Decision:* No

*Exempt* None

*Information:*

*Consultations:* N/A

*Report By:* Youth, Engagement & Opportunities - Service Manager

*Contact:* Ruth Ashwell, Youth, Engagement & Opportunities - Service Manager

Tel: (01865) 810649

Ref: 2012/109

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## **CABINET MEMBER: EDUCATION**

### **KEY DECISIONS**

#### **Expansion of Botley Primary School to 2fe**

Following publication of a Statutory Notice, if objections received, whether to approve expansion of Botley Primary School, Oxford.

*Decision Maker and Target Date:* **Cabinet, 27 November 2012**

*Key Decision:* Yes – Capital Expenditure >£1m

*Exempt* None

*Information:*

*Consultations:* Statutory Notice (Stage 2)

*Report By:* Director for Children's Services

*Contact:* Diane Cameron, School Organisation & Planning Tel: (01865) 816445

Ref: 2012/132

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#### **Expansion of St Ebbe's CE(A) Primary School, Oxford to 2fe**

Following publication of a Statutory Notice, if objections received, whether to approve expansion of St Ebbe's CE(A) Primary School, Oxford.

*Decision Maker and Target Date:* **Cabinet, 27 November 2012**

*Key Decision:* Yes – Capital Expenditure >£1m

*Exempt* None

*Information:*

*Consultations:* Statutory Notice (Stage 2)

*Report By:* Director for Children's Services

*Contact:* Diane Cameron, School Organisation & Planning Tel: (01865) 816445

Ref: 2012/134

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### **Expansion of Botley Primary School to 2fe**

Following publication of a Statutory Notice, if no objections received, whether to approve expansion of Botley Primary School, Oxford.

*Decision Maker and Target Date:* **Cabinet Member for Education, 10  
December 2012**

*Key Decision:* Yes – Capital Expenditure >£1m

*Exempt* None

*Information:*

*Consultations:* Statutory Notice (Stage 2)

*Report By:* Director for Children's Services

*Contact:* Diane Cameron, School Organisation & Planning Tel: (01865) 816445

Ref: 2012/133

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### **Expansion of St Ebbe's CE(A) Primary School, Oxford to 2fe**

Following publication of a Statutory Notice, if no objections received, whether to approve expansion of St Ebbe's CE(A) Primary School, Oxford.

*Decision Maker and Target Date:* **Cabinet Member for Education, 10  
December 2012**

*Key Decision:* Yes – Capital Expenditure >£1m

*Exempt* None

*Information:*

*Consultations:* Statutory Notice (Stage 2)

*Report By:* Director for Children's Services

*Contact:* Diane Cameron, School Organisation & Planning Tel: (01865) 816445

Ref: 2012/135

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## **NON-KEY DECISIONS**

### **Expansion of Windmill Primary School to 3 Form Entry**

If objections are received, to decide whether to publish a Statutory Notice.

*Decision Maker and Target Date:* **Cabinet, 27 November 2012**

*Key Decision:* No

*Exempt* None

*Information:*

*Consultations:* Stage One public consultation

*Report By:* Director for Children's Services

*Contact:* Diane Cameron, School Organisation & Planning Tel: (01865) 816445

Ref: 2012/090

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### **Expansion of Five Acres Primary School to 2 Form Entry**

If objections are received, to decide whether to publish a Statutory Notice.

*Decision Maker and Target Date:* **Cabinet, 27 November 2012**

*Key Decision:* No

*Exempt* None

*Information:*

*Consultations:* Stage One public consultation

*Report By:* Director for Children's Services

*Contact:* Diane Cameron, School Organisation & Planning Tel: (01865) 816445  
Ref: 2012/092

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### **Expansion of Five Acres Primary School to 2 Form Entry**

If no objections are received, to decide whether to publish a Statutory Notice.

*Decision Maker and Target Date:* **Cabinet Member for Education, 10  
December 2012**

*Key Decision:* No

*Exempt* None

*Information:*

*Consultations:* Stage One public consultation

*Report By:* Director for Children's Services

*Contact:* Diane Cameron, School Organisation & Planning Tel: (01865) 816445  
Ref: 2012/093

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### **Stanton Harcourt Primary School : Alteration of Lower Age Range and Merging with Preschool - Stage Two**

If no objections received, to consider the final decision on the proposal.

*Decision Maker and Target Date:* **Cabinet Member for Education, 10  
December 2012**

*Key Decision:* No

*Exempt* None

*Information:*

*Consultations:* N/A

*Report By:* Director for Children's Services

*Contact:* Debbie Rouget, Early Years & Child Care Sufficiency & Access  
Manager Tel: (01865) 810617 Ref: 2012/104

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## **Children's Services Scrutiny**

### **Early Intervention Hubs Review**

#### **September 2012**

At the 26<sup>th</sup> of September 2012 meeting of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee, members discussed the progress of the implementation of the Early Intervention Hubs in Oxfordshire now that the service has been running for a year

Prior to the meeting a majority of the committee members visited the hubs, with at least two committee members at each of the 7 hubs, which informed the discussion. Feedback from committee members on the visits was very positive; all agreed that the staff they met with were dedicated and that interviews with service users found many successes in positive outcomes for families and individuals. The launch of the hubs last year was followed by a period of significant change and it was seen that whilst this scale of change always presents challenges, things were progressing in a constructive way. The committee was impressed by the level of motivation they saw in the staff and volunteers as well as the high quality of services provided.

The committee divided its discussion into 4 themes which were 'Vision and Aims', 'Partners and Communication', 'Duplication/Overlap', and 'Resources'. The following reflects the committee's views on those themes and outcomes for policymakers to consider in leading the Early Intervention Hubs into their second year.

#### **Vision and Aims**

The committee viewed that there needed to be a level of consistency around the 'core offer' across all Hubs in the county. Better clarity around what this core offer entails can also be useful in communicating what services are not available in hubs.

It is acknowledged, however, that hubs need to maintain their local focus and that the full complement of each individual hub would reflect that area's service needs in addition to the core offer.

#### **Committee Recommendation**

- Development of a better articulation of the core offer across all hubs.

#### **Partners and Communication**

Partnership working is instrumental in ensuring that the hubs work effectively by providing sources of referrals and resources and knowledge that can be shared. Whilst there was evidence that in many cases this is working effectively, there is a lack of consistency in success across some hubs with some partners. It is essential that there be regular and on-going communication with all partners and expectations need to be clear and consistent from all parties.

The partnership working with schools is especially important as the conduit for the majority of referrals. There is further work to be done bridging hubs to schools and communicating the hub offer to key members of school staff. There was also

discussion about the early focus targeting secondary schools; for the next stage of implementation, members suggested a deliberate approach to primary school outreach.

Partnership with the voluntary sector is also crucial as there are many voluntary organisations with skills/volunteers/information to offer the hubs. The hub message needs to continue to go out to the voluntary organisations so that the dialogue about what they can offer is ongoing. In particular, there are many small groups, particularly in rural areas, which could help with hub outreach.

#### **Committee Recommendation**

- Continued commitment to widening connections with all schools and projecting the hub's core offer to them.
- Continued development of strong links with the voluntary sector.

#### **Duplication/Overlap**

The committee discussed that there need to be clear links and liaison with partners to ensure the hubs are not duplicating work but are recognising each other's strengths and combining to provide a cohesive service.

The committee questioned whether there is joint working with the district/parish/town councils, particularly surrounding housing allocations as this is seen as an important issue that needs to be addressed effectively.

It was also noted that the Thriving Families initiative should be fully integrated with the work of the hubs.

#### **Committee Recommendation**

- Invite officers from the district councils to a future scrutiny meeting to explore contributing issues around housing provision.
- Consider investigating options such as pooled budgets with stakeholders or grant payments for some services

#### **Resources**

Over the first year of operation, hubs have developed and expanded their service provision. While it was apparent during the visits that they were well utilised and busy, anecdotal evidence from staff indicated that capacity is stretched.

Staff have been increasingly under strain to respond to the levels of demand for services. While there is currently an utilisation of volunteers across all hubs, questions were asked as to whether there is scope to develop further volunteer support. There were also suggestions about the potential to share more 'back office' support functions with other services such as Children's Centres. In addition, given the diversity of service users and provision, the intensity in some areas and the stretch in others, there was concern about the accepted approach to fund all hubs on the same basis.

While the committee recognised the benefit to the 'one front door' approach to services, there was concern surrounding the reach of services for those that do not live near to the hub location. There was best practice evidence at some hub

locations around flexibly providing services 'off site'. Many of the service users value meeting in neutral locations and it needs to be explored how these can be best provided.

There was also concern that not all of the hubs have adequate facilities. The Littlemore hub was highlighted particularly as it does not currently have its own premises and relies on sharing with the library.

### **Committee Recommendation**

- A re-evaluation of the funding distribution between hubs.
- The committee also requested an explanation for the current year's underspending projection. The committee would seek to ensure that any current year underspend were re-invested in other aspects of the service.
- A continued emphasis on recruitment, retainment, and utilisation of volunteers.
- Enhancing the geographical reach of hubs – particularly with partners or developing other 'neutral territories'.

### **Exemplar practice**

Intervention projects bid for/led by partners eg. schools, utilising Hub grants.

Art Room/Play Therapy sponsorship.

Regular Partners Forum to share 'thinking' and expectations.

Development of 'neutral territory' for family meetings, particularly in the more rural areas.

Working with particular groups eg. young carers, disability, men.

Strong links with the police eg. operation stay safe, restorative justice.

Partnership with Children's Centres – joint meetings at different levels, representatives on advisory boards, joint strategic planning, recognition of each other's skills and 'pointing' families appropriately.

Appointment of staff with school experience as this helps to meet local need.

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**Oxfordshire Local Involvement Network  
Information share for Children's Services Scrutiny Committee meeting 14<sup>th</sup>  
November 2012**

Public, patient and carer concerns, issues and compliments collected through LINK engagement and outreach activities have resulted in the following projects being taken forwards. The information provided refers to projects which have a Health & Social Care remit.

**The LINK manager will provide an overview of LINK work and supply information about the following projects carried out during 2012 (copies of reports and outcomes will be available for members at the meeting):**

Mental Health Hearsay engagement event – January

Update event – December

Social Care Hearsay engagement event – March

Action plan update – November

Podiatry information resource – booklet and website

Service user engagement with Luther Street Medical Centre

Support for GP Patient Participation Groups – PPG Toolkit & networking event - November

**Maternity review – post-natal services (see below for detailed project plan)**

Care Home 'Enter and View' visits; Care quality monitoring

Self-directed support/Personal Budgets – research; support for the 'SDS Forum'

Dentistry Information survey

LINK Core Group quarterly meetings in public

Healthbus Roadshow – gathering evidence for projects

Project funding (small grants scheme)

Gathering views – promotional and marketing materials, website, social networking, newsletters, e-bulletins.

The future – LINK legacy and Local HealthWatch

## **Maternity Services Review – Project Plan:**

Evidence gathering. Timeframe – 1<sup>st</sup> August to 30<sup>th</sup> September

- Research group formed, LINK participants identified to gather views;
- Questionnaire (see following page) has been devised and sent to relevant individuals/organisations including Children's Centres, parish newsletters & websites, LINK contacts, NCT local groups & drop-ins;
- Press release circulated to media contacts (editorials and local radio being followed up);
- Online research/questionnaire via Facebook, Twitter, Netmums & LINK website for people to complete;
- Visiting support groups/mother & baby groups to gather opinions;
- Include comments gathered from previous engagement;
- Information provided via LINK Newsletter and e-bulletins;
- Healthbus 'roadshow' venues will be used to gather face to face comments and feedback;
- Ongoing feedback via Scrutiny Committee members.

Gathering & collating evidence. Timeframe – 1<sup>st</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> October

- Continue to follow up comments and feedback as appropriate;
- Bring all the information gathered together into a draft report divided into sections relating to particular areas of service.

Report and research findings. Timeframe – 1<sup>st</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> November

- Draft recommendations to be presented to service providers and commissioners;
- Work with the relevant service providers & commissioners to determine best route for comments to be examined;
- Request response/comments/action plan (based on recommendations) by 30<sup>th</sup> November.

Final Report. Timeframe – 1<sup>st</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> December

- Collate all information into final report with comments and with action plan agreed in partnership with service providers & commissioners;
- Published report to be presented to HOSC meeting, 17<sup>th</sup> Jan & Children's Services Scrutiny meeting, 28<sup>th</sup> February 2013.



**Sample Questionnaire:**

**Oxfordshire LINK Maternity Project**

Do you have any comments to make about any area of your postnatal care (after the birth) in Oxfordshire?

Areas of postnatal care you might want to tell us about include:

- Your stay in hospital after the birth
- Breastfeeding Clinics
- The Birth Afterthoughts service
- Neonatal units
- The Newborn Hearing Screening Programme
- Support around your choice of feeding
- Home visits from Midwives
- Health Visitors
- Support after the home birth

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Please can you tell us the month and year you gave birth?

Which area of Oxfordshire do you live in?

Thank you for your contribution to this project,

*Adrian Chant (LINK Locality Manager)*  
01865 883488 Update 01/11/2012

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# Children's Scrutiny Committee Briefing: 14<sup>th</sup> November 2012

## Healthwatch Oxfordshire

### Background

Under the Health and Social Care Act 2012, all (top tier) Local Authorities are responsible for commissioning a local Healthwatch by April 2013. Healthwatch Oxfordshire will be the new independent 'consumer champion' for people of *all ages* using social and health care services. It replaces the Local Involvement Network (LINKs) and will have a number of extended and statutory functions. A member of Healthwatch Oxfordshire will have a seat on the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Healthwatch England was launched on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2012. It is hosted by the Care Quality Commission (CQC), but has independent statutory powers to act outside of Government influence. It will provide national co-ordination of local issues of concern raised by local Healthwatch organisations, and exert a strong policy influence at a national level.

Healthwatch Oxfordshire will be responsible for:

- Provision of signposting, information and advice to the public regarding access to health and social care services, and making choices in relation to those services
- Obtaining the views of people about their needs, views and experience of local health and social care services and making these known to commissioners, providers and scrutiny committees, through its statutory seat on the Health and Wellbeing Board and through other routes
- Promoting and supporting the involvement of people in the monitoring, commissioning and provision of local care services
- Ensuring the views and experiences of local people are made known to Healthwatch England and making recommendations regarding special reviews or investigations into areas of concern

LA's will additionally take responsibility for commissioning an NHS Complaints Advocacy Service from April 2013 (currently ICAS). In Oxfordshire this is being commissioned regionally for one year initially.

### Commissioning and procurement

In Oxfordshire, we have:

- carried out a widescale consultation which has shaped the service specification. It has been developed co-productively in collaboration with a diverse Steering Group
- worked closely with the LINK and PCT PALs to ensure we take forward a rich legacy
- developed the local market by offering small grants and support through Co-operative Futures, encouraging partners to work together to seek local solutions.

### Timeline for Procurement:

- Invitation to tender: November 2013
- Tender shortlist and final interviews: January 2013
- Transitional set-up period for the new Healthwatch Oxfordshire: Feb/March 2013  
(supported by a Department of Health Transition Grant)

### Funding allocation:

The funding allocation for Healthwatch Oxfordshire has not been confirmed and will not be ring-fenced, but the indicative allocation is between £300k - 400k p/a.

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