

## CABINET – 10 NOVEMBER 2015

### ITEM 4 – QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

Question received from the following Member:

#### **Question from Councillor Susanna Pressel to Councillor Hilary Hibbert Biles**

“Councillor Biles gave the following answer to a supplementary question from me in Council on 8 September (page 28 on the agenda of our last Council meeting):

"I think children's centres do promote oral health but in actual fact it is the responsibility of the NHS not this Council. We are a monitoring organisation." Please could you tell me if this is correct?

The latest Public Health Annual Report in its section on oral health says that the local authority "has an emphasis on prevention". It gives a long list (page 55 to 56) of what we do, with much of the work being in pre-school settings, so I'm puzzled by the Cabinet member's statement. I hope this work won't be lost if the children's centres are closed.”

#### **Answer**

“On 1st April 2013 the statutory responsibility for the commissioning of commissioning dental epidemiology transferred from the NHS to local government.

The dental public health functions of LAs are described in regulations and include a statutory requirement to provide or secure provision of oral surveys. The statutory instrument states that:

*A local authority shall provide, or shall make arrangements to secure the provision of, the following within its area—*

#### *Oral health surveys to facilitate—*

- i. the assessment and monitoring of oral health needs,*
- ii. the planning and evaluation of oral health promotion programmes,*
- iii. the planning and evaluation of the arrangements for provision of dental services as part of the health service, and*
- iv. where there are water fluoridation programmes affecting the authority's area, the monitoring and reporting of the effect of water fluoridation programmes.*
- v. The local authority shall participate in any oral health survey conducted or commissioned by the Secretary of State under paragraph 13(1) of Schedule 1 to the 2006 Act (powers in relation to research etc.) so far as that survey is conducted within the authority's area.*

Domain 4 (Healthcare public health and preventing premature mortality) of the Public Health Outcomes Framework includes an indicator relating to “tooth decay in children aged 5.” Continued local dental epidemiology survey provision will be required for the monitoring of this indicator.

Oxfordshire County Council have a requirement to provide a capacity to collect dental epidemiology (surveys) which help inform on the local oral health of the population. This information can help NHS England in understanding the need for dental services locally.

In April 2015 OCC let a contract to Community Dental Services CIC for the collection of dental epidemiology, thus meeting the Council’s statutory requirement. The County Council collect data in line with the National Dental Intelligence Programme which provides a scientifically robust methodology and allows comparability of local data with regional and national data.

All Dental Services are commissioned by NHS England, which does include an element of oral health promotion in these contracts. Oral health promotion is on the same footing as providing dental services which is a clear NHSE responsibility.

OCC does not have a statutory obligation to deliver oral health promotion.”

**Question from Councillor Glynis Phillips to Councillor Hilary Hibbert Biles**

“Does the Cabinet Member for Public Health and the Voluntary Sector share the Association of Directors of Public Health 'deep concern and disappointment' about the Tory governments' £200m cut to non-NHS public health budget which will result in a 6.2% reduction to Oxfordshire's budget and explain what this cut means for the county's Public Health services?”

**Answer**

“Yes, the cut to the non-NHS public health grant is disappointing. Our Government has to make difficult choices in all areas of public spending. Prudent management of the Public Health grant by the County Council means that we plan to make this reduction without impact on front-line services.”

**Question from Councillor John Howson to Councillor Melinda Tilley**

“To ask the cabinet member the cost of non SEN home to school transport contracts in Oxfordshire for the summer and autumn terms of 2015 compared with the same periods in 2014 and the same figures for SEN transport? Within these figures, how much is due to in-year pupil arrivals that could not be placed within statutory walking distance of a school?”

**Answer**

See attached Annex.

**Question from Councillor Roz Smith to Councillor Nick Carter**

"Delays with the start of the building project at Windmill School are well documented. Would the cabinet member agree that lessons have been learnt regarding the lack of early communication from Carillion, and continuing communication that lead to unnecessary stress and wasted time?"

**Answer**

As with all our building projects we are always learning lessons and seeking to improve the way they are taken through from inception to completion. Schools provide an added complexity due to;

1. the fact that there is an additional link between the school and its governors and the council and;
2. the delivery timetable is more rigid due to school term dates.

The council is working closely with Carillion to improve communications with schools and they have changed their structure to reflect this need.