

**Children's Social Care and Learning**

**Business Unit Plan 2016/17 – 2019/20**

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Agreed by: David Johnston

Refresh in 1 years time –November 2016

Cabinet Members: Lin Hazell, Zahir Mohammed

**Children's Social Care and Learning  
Business Plan Executive Summary  
2016/7 – 2019/20**

**What We Do and What We Are Working Towards**

*Children and young people are healthy and safe, feel valued and value others, are treated fairly, have lives filled with learning, achieve their potential and are able to enjoy life and spend quality time with family and friends. (Children and Young People's Plan 2014 -18)*

Safeguarding our vulnerable children and helping all children and young people reach their full potential is an essential focal point for the Local Authority. The work of our teams is critical and challenging. Taking a systemic and multi-agency approach to early intervention and safeguarding, we provide meaningful intervention, appropriate assessment and support to children and their families.

A significant area of priority is the continued focus on the recommended actions following the inadequate inspection of our safeguarding services. In partnership with key stakeholders the Improvement Plan was refreshed in January 2016 and progress is monitored regularly by the independently chaired multi-agency Improvement Board. The challenge to protect children who are at risk of child sexual exploration (CSE) and radicalisation is a high priority for the Local Authority.

Our education system is highly regarded with the majority of our performance indicators above national average. We remain focused on championing education for all children and aspiring for educational excellence for all. We continue to build on our good relationships with schools and other education providers to make sure that necessary changes and improvements happen and all Buckinghamshire children and young people have the opportunity to reach their full potential. A key priority area is to continue improving outcomes for vulnerable children and those at risk of underachievement.

The work we do will underpin the Council's Strategic Plan Outcomes:

- Safeguarding Our Vulnerable Children and Families
- Creating Opportunities & Building Self-Reliance
- Keeping Buckinghamshire Thriving & Attractive

**Who's Responsible for the Plan?**

**David Johnston**  
Managing Director



**Lin Hazell**  
Cabinet Member Children's Social Care



**Zahir Mohammed**  
Cabinet Member Education and Skills



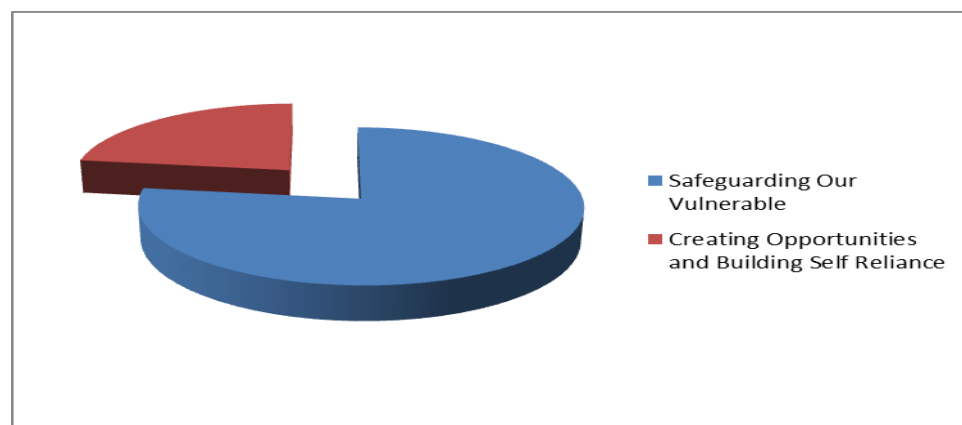
### What Money Do We Have To Deliver The Outcomes?

Children's Social Care and Learning (CSC&L) business unit predominantly delivers 2 of the 3 main Council outcomes. The medium term planning budget allocated to CSC&L to deliver these outcomes is shown in the table with the majority allocated to the 'Safeguarding Our Vulnerable' strategic outcome. CSC&L also contributes to the 3<sup>rd</sup> outcome 'Keeping Buckinghamshire Thriving & Attractive' but this is not reflected in the budget analysis due to the method of allocation used. The CSC&L budget accounts for almost one third of the Council's total budget. The figures show a decrease in budget compared to this year's budget (2016/17).

#### Medium Term Planning Budget by Outcome for CSC&L

Strategic Outcome	2016/17 (000s)	2017/18 (000s)	2018/19 (000s)	2019/20 (000s)
Safeguarding Our Vulnerable	68,541	68,267	68,067	68,710
Creating Opportunities & Building Self-Reliance	20,236	17,792	17,692	17,592
<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>88,777</b>	<b>86,058</b>	<b>85,758</b>	<b>86,301</b>

#### Chart - 2016/2017 Budget by Outcome for CSC&L



## What Are The Key Activities We Deliver To Safeguard Our Vulnerable

The Council's specialist teams support families who may be vulnerable and who have particular needs (which can happen at any point in a child's life). We may have to take statutory action in order to protect children and support them reach their full potential.

- **Children's Social Care** involves various interactions with children and families:
  - Respond to referrals from partners and consider the level of intervention required which could be no intervention, to go forward to Early Help, investigate to see if the child is in need of support or investigate to indicate the need and decide on action required to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
  - Providing early help - We work with the whole family to make positive changes to prevent or reduce the need for expensive or statutory service later. Through multi agency Early Help Panels, direct support, parenting groups and working with professionals to ensure children receive the right help at the right time from the right agency.
  - Supporting children in need - Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 places a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are in need. Promoting and supporting the upbringing of children in need by their families, through provision of a range and level of services appropriate to the child's needs.
  - Children in care - Looked-after' children are those given accommodation away from their families at the request of their parent (Section 20) or as a result of a Care Order (Section 31). We support children living with relatives, friends and foster families or sometimes in children's homes and units. This involves finding sufficient places to support the child's needs, preparing material for court, visiting children and listening and taking their wishes and feelings into account. Every Care Leaver is entitled to care leaving support until they are at least 21 as this gives them an opportunity to have the best start in adulthood.
- **Work with children particularly those that are vulnerable** including: those at risk of CSE, radicalisation, youth offending, substance misuse and unaccompanied asylum seekers
- **Understand and respond to the different needs of our communities** - understanding data , provision of information
- **Finding suitable placements and** provision of sufficient placement choice for our looked after children remains a priority

### Key contracts include: (please see main plan for all contracts involved in Social Care and Learning)

Key Programmes/Projects/Activities	Key Contracts Due For Review	Annual cost	Review Date	Member
Fostering Placements	Core Assets Group Ltd	1,708,745	31/3/2020	Lin Hazell
Client transport	Amey Client Transport	16,666,345	31/03/2016	Zahir Mohammed
R U Safe	Barnardos R U Safe	290,000	31/03/2017	Lin Hazell

### What Are The Key Activities We Deliver To Create Opportunities & Build Self-Reliance

Our aspiration is that all children and young people experience outstanding education delivered by outstanding professionals with the skills to nurture, inspire and challenge students. Outcomes, irrespective of backgrounds, should be excellent and all children should be prepared for life including having skills to be active citizens participating in work and their communities.

- **Monitoring performance** - As part of our statutory duty, all school performance (including those who are educated at home) is monitored. Children who are missing education are closely monitored and supported as not receiving a suitable education increases the risk of a range of negative outcomes that could have long term damaging consequences for their life chances.
- **Buckinghamshire Learning Trust** helps us to fulfil our statutory duties for raising attainment. Focus remains on increasing schools / settings that give good provision, challenge 'coasting' and reduce schools / settings falling into poorer Ofsted categories.
- **Special, Education, Needs and Disability (SEND)** – The SEN team ensure eligible children to have an up-to-date personal education health care plan that is reviewed yearly, identifying additional leaning/support needs to promote attainment. Education Psychology service support schools and settings with emotional welfare for pupils and staff, where appropriate (i.e. loss and bereavement or during emergencies)
- **Additional support** is given to those remaining in education Post 16, including working with other agencies to help prevent students from becoming NEET (Not in Education Employment or Training). Other work involves helping prepare students for entry into Higher education and developing apprenticeships.
- **The Virtual School** focuses on improving educational achievement of our Looked After Children
- **The Youth Service** delivers a behaviour and attendance offer designed to keep young people safe, break down barriers within communities and work with young people in communities to reduce incidents of anti-social behaviour and risk taking behaviour.
- **Family Information Service** fulfils our statutory duty to provide families with access to information on a range of services i.e. finding / paying for childcare, leisure activities, parenting support. It acts as a platform for professionals to share information.
- **The Adult Learning Service** delivers courses on basic and employability skills to promote sustained employment. Community courses support mental and physical well-being and also independent living skills for adults with learning difficulties and disabilities.
- **Prevent** – in response to the statutory duty there is a requirement to have robust policies to identify children at risk of being drawn into radicalisation, promote the importance of the duty and provide appropriate training. We also chair a multi-agency group where any individuals of potential concern of radicalisation can be referred for appropriate interventions (Channel Panel)

#### Key contracts include: (please see main plan for all contracts involved in Social Care and Learning)

Key Programmes/Projects/Activities	Key Contracts Due For Review	Annual cost	Review Date	Member
Buckinghamshire Learning Trust	Buckinghamshire Learning Trust	7,021,930	31/07/2018	
Occupational Therapy	Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust	1,138,227	31/03/2016	Lin Hazel

Speech and Language Therapy (SALT)	Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust	1,060,439	23/10/2016	Zahir Mohammed
Adventure Learning Foundation	Adventure Learning Foundation	120,000	31/03/2017	Zahir Mohammed

### What Are The Key Activities We Deliver To Keep Buckinghamshire Thriving & Attractive

Buckinghamshire is an affluent rural county, some parts of the county have pockets of high deprivation and we must not be complacent about the differing needs of our families and children. Children can be vulnerable for a number of reasons, at times beyond the control of their families such as children with a disability. We must be responsive to these differing needs.

Like many local authorities we continue to have a shortage of key workers such as teachers and social workers. It is essential that we have a robust recruitment and retention strategy.

- **School places and planning** – The council is responsible for planning the provision of school places. We do this by analysing birth rates and taking account of new households. From this exercise we plan additional school places and new schools.
- **Fair access** - We have a statutory duty to ensure fair access to educational opportunity and promote parental choice through supporting the diversity of provision
- **Sufficiency** We have a statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient early years places in the county. A particular focus is on the educational entitlement of vulnerable 2 year olds and 3 and 4 year olds. This bring challenges predominantly around vulnerable 2 year olds and disabled children and the market has a shortage of affordable and accessible places .
- **Making Buckinghamshire a place people want to live and work** – We value our workforce and have a number of initiatives in place to be an attractive employer: good training opportunities, access to affordable housing, create opportunities for people to be promoted internally, apprenticeships along with other incentives. We work with key partners such as the Schools, Universities and the Job Centre to create local employment and provide opportunities to acquire new skills

Key Programmes/Projects/Activities * denotes statutory activity	Key Contracts Due For Review	Annual cost	Review Date	Member
	NO CONTRACTS APPLICABLE			

### What's On The Horizon For Us?

The main areas of pressures for the unit continue to be centred on its budget. There is considerable effort to recruit and retain social workers to counteract the dependency upon agency staffing in order to meet the statutory needs of keeping children safe, however there is a national shortage and other Councils are aggressively recruiting. The lack of teachers (again national shortage) could also impact on improvement plans. Growth and demand management remains a concern, increases for education places, special educational needs and social care referrals all of which impact on already restricted budgets. Our improvement journey remains a concern as does national policy changes which may alter how public services are delivered.

The cost of looking after children in care is high and rising. There is a growth in referrals and a lack of places available (both locally and nationally) which increases costs on placements budget but also on staff time and travel. There has been considerable attention to manage resources to ensure best value for money however ultimately it is the child's needs which dictate the placement given. The impact of the National Living Wage needs consideration as care providers highlight they cannot absorb these additional costs. Client transport pressures are growing particularly in SEN which places pressures on contract prices.

The Prevent Agenda has the potential to grow and impact on our resources. This is an area that is dictated by events both locally and globally. Discriminatory incidents and community tensions have a tendency to increase locally during terrorist attacks which may occur globally. Schools in particular require support during these times and capacity to respond in a timely fashion may become an issue. Government legislation is likely to change and the role of schools may change requiring us to give continued / more support to schools. Communities and Local Government are currently looking at integration and the impact extremism is having on people's ability to live together harmoniously and once they have completed their investigation any new legislation could impact on our limited resources.

### Equalities Impact Assessment

We are currently doing well on:

- Focussing schools on the Narrowing the Gap agenda in attainment across the County
- Monitoring discriminatory incidents in schools
- Supporting schools including Governors with training as and when required.
- Guidance documents on dealing with discriminatory incidents have been developed and sent to all schools across the County
- County wide Model United Nations with Yr 9s which supports community cohesion
- Annual conferences on Anti bullying / E Safety

What needs to improve:

- Monitoring of workforce to ensure that all staff take advantage of the training offered
- Ensuring all staff embed equalities and diversity into their work practices
- Ensure all staff understand cultural awareness to enable them to meet the needs of all children who they work with

