

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 12 FEBRUARY 2013

64 CONSULTATION FINDINGS: WHAT REALLY MATTERS STAGE 2

The Committee received a presentation from Jane Morgan, Corporate Policy Manager, Chief Executive's Department. Details of the consultation process and consultation findings in relation to each budget option were provided. Members welcomed the diversity of the respondents to the consultation and expressed their thanks to everyone who had taken part in the consultation.

The Children and Young People's O & S Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive in relation to the What Really Matters Stage 2 Consultation that had been considered by the Cabinet on 7 February, 2013.

The Committee was requested to give consideration to the consultation feedback in relation to matters which fell within its remit.

The options were presented in the report, together with the quantitative data gathered through the consultation questionnaire, and a summary of any related comments that had been received through the consultation process.

The Committee considered the relevant options detailed in Appendix 3 of the report – Budget Options Feedback Families and Wellbeing.

COMMISSIONING OF PARENTING SERVICES

The Chair commented that the Committee had received a letter from Wirral Family Forum expressing concerns relating to the delay in commissioning of children with disabilities short breaks funding and the effect this may have on both children using services and also parents/carers who relied on these services.

Officers from the Children and Young People's Department addressed the meeting and gave members an update on the current situation regarding commissioning. Officers gave reassurances that a smooth transition would be enabled by various strategies – the delay in commissioning of one month would support good exit strategies so there would be no confusion amongst families and no gap in provision.

TRANSPORT POLICIES

Officers from the Children and Young People's Department informed the Committee that the proposals affecting children would need to be phased in over time and would follow a full public consultation. Changes would not be effective until at least 2014 - 15 as admission criteria for schools including transport policies have already been published. The proposals would be phased until 2019/20.

AREA TEAMS FOR FAMILY SUPPORT

Julia Hassall, Acting Director of Children's Services commented that this was linked to the whole review of preventative services. Area Teams would be reduced from 7 to 4 that would operate a 'gateway' and family support workers would be grouped behind the 4 Area Teams. Members were reassured that services would not be diluted.

Sue Talbot, Strategic Service Manager - Early Years & Primary Education, Learning & Achievement Branch, commented that there would be no reduction in family support staff and a triage system of support would be put in place that would be more efficient and effective.

Members commented that the public response to this proposal was understandable given that full details and background information was not able to be provided in the consultation document.

SCHOOLS MUSIC SERVICE

Sue Talbot, Strategic Service Manager - Early Years & Primary Education, Learning & Achievement Branch, commented that changes in this area would be very effective and that income would be generated by selling tutors time to small groups or covering PPA time in schools as schools would be paying for this service. Schools were able to use the pupil premium and costs for parents could actually be reduced.

OAKLANDS OUTDOOR EDUCATION CENTRE

Members commented that they believed Oaklands to be a valuable resource for young people and expressed concern that children should not be deprived of taking part in activities there.

EDUCATION PSYCHOLOGY SERVICE

Julia Hassall, Acting Director of Children's Services, commented that savings would be achieved by taking out a senior vacant post and admin time but was confident that the statutory requirement for undertaking assessments could be met.

FOUNDATION LEARNING

Vivian Stafford Strategic Service Manager- Post 16 Commissioning and Economic Regeneration commented on the work that had been undertaken with schools over the last 2 years. It would be the schools decision whether or not they delivered the programmes in future.

YOUTH AND PLAY SERVICES

Members commented that a number of petitions had been received regarding Youth and Play Services. Julia Hassall, Acting Director of Children's Services gave an update and commented that it was still the intention to retain the Youth Theatre. Members expressed concern over the proposed reduction of outreach teams and

noted that petitions had been received relating to both Moreton and Bebington Youth Clubs. Members also discussed the viability of transport links to enable young people to attend Youth Centres not in their immediate locality.

CHILDREN'S CENTRES AND SURE START

Sue Talbot, Strategic Service Manager - Early Years & Primary Education, Learning & Achievement Branch, commented that there were a lot of misconceptions regarding this proposal as it was wrongly believed that satellite children centres would close. Sue Talbot gave details of the options and commented that the Council would continue with statutory services and that service would not be compromised. It was also noted that further consultations would be required in this area.

CAREERS, EDUCATION INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

Vivian Stafford Strategic Service Manager- Post 16 Commissioning and Economic Generation commented that next years contract had just been successfully negotiated. Some Members commented that reassurance was needed as the option in this area was to 'reduce this service so it was targeted at those most in need'.

SHORT BREAKS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Simon Garner, Strategic Service Manager- Childcare, commented on this option and noted that parents were now part of the commissioning panel and that it was now clearer what needs were and providers were able to meet this. Julia Hassall, Acting Director of Children's Services endorsed this and noted that there was a rapid response service from Social Workers.

CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE

Simon Garner, Strategic Service Manager- Childcare, commented on this option and noted that where there had been different areas there would now be one route in - making this service more speedy and effective. Some members noted with concern that the wording on this option was to 'reduce this service so it is targeted at those most in need'.

Resolved – That:

- (1) The Consultation Findings: What really matters Stage 2 report of the Chief Executive be noted.**
- (2) That this Committee offers thanks to officers and to the people of Wirral who took the time and trouble to take part in the Consultation: What really matters.**