

Title of Report: **Addendum to Children's Services
Recruitment and Retention Strategy
Proposal**

**Report to be
considered by:** Executive

Date of Meeting: 24 July 2014

Forward plan Ref: EX2876

Purpose of Report: To advise the Executive of the debate held at the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission Special Meeting of 21 July 2014 during which the proposal for a Children's Services Recruitment and Retention Strategy was considered.

Recommended Action: The Commission supports the recommendations set out in the original report and further recommends that the Executive gives strong consideration for the recruitment specialist to be paid partly by basic salary and partly by results for the achievement of set targets.

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Executive Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Under the requirements of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, Council's must provide 28 clear days' notice of any intended key decision (defined in West Berkshire Council as decisions affecting more than one ward or that would incur significant levels of expenditure or savings) that are to be made by the Executive or by Individual Decision. This is done via the Forward plan which is published monthly.
- 1.2 On occasions, however, circumstances will arise where an urgent decision needs to be made in respect of an item that does not appear on the Forward Plan.
- 1.3 In order that decisions are subject to an appropriate degree of scrutiny, where notice is received within the 28 working day period meeting, but before five clear working days before the Executive meeting, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission (OSMC) will be provided with the opportunity to comment on a report and have its views considered as part of the debate by the Executive when the decision is made.
- 1.4 This report provides the view of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission on the Children's Services Recruitment and Retention Strategy, following its consideration of the item at a Special Meeting held on Monday 21 July 2014.

2. Key points from the debate

- 2.1 The Commission received a thorough introduction to the report which set out why the urgent action proposed was required. The following points were then made.
 - (1) The challenges facing Children's Service's were acknowledged and the measures recommended were well received.
 - (2) The implementation of the proposed actions appeared to be appropriately funded from reserves and from within the service. Assurance was sought that funds earmarked for preventative work should not be redirected to the achievement of the Recruitment and Retention Strategy's aims.
 - (3) The introduction of a children's social work academy was strongly supported.
 - (4) Matching an individual to the skill set specified for the proposed recruitment specialist could prove problematic. The post holder should have closer links with the Human Resources service and strong consideration should be given to a remuneration model based on a lower basic salary than proposed, with the balance being paid as bonus for the achievement of set targets.
 - (5) Whilst senior management and the Administration had been aware of the risk presented by the widespread use of agency social workers in key Children's Services teams, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission had not been and opportunities for an earlier constructive

intervention might have removed the requirement for urgent action through, for example, examination of the Risk Register.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 The Commission supports the recommendations set out in the original report and further recommends that the Executive gives strong consideration for the recruitment specialist to be paid partly by basic salary and partly by results for the achievement of set targets.

Appendices

There are no appendices to this report.