

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL

EARLY YEARS, CHILDREN AND YOUTH POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Monday, 23rd January, 2012

Present:- Councillors: Sally Davis (Chair), Dine Romero (Vice-Chair), Liz Hardman, Mathew Blankley, David Veale, Ian Gilchrist and Douglas Nicol (In place of Sarah Bevan)

Cabinet Member for Early Years, Children & Youth: Councillor Nathan Hartley

Co-opted Voting Members:- David Williams, Mrs T Daly and Sanjeev Chaddha

Co-opted Non-voting Members:- Chris Batten and Peter Mountstephen

Also in attendance: Ashley Ayre (Strategic Director for People and Communities), Tony Parker (Divisional Director for Learning and Inclusion Service), Liz Price (Divisional Director for Children's Health Commissioning & Strategic Planning), Kevin Amos (Parent Support Services Manager), Mike Bowden (Acting Director for Service Development), Helen Hoynes (School Organisation Manager) and Mark Durnford (Democratic Services Officer)

50 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

51 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chairman drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

52 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Councillor Sarah Bevan and Dawn Harris, Secondary School Representative had sent their apologies to the Panel. Councillor Douglas Nicol was in attendance as a substitute for Councillor Bevan.

53 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

There were none.

54 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN

The Chairman announced that she had received a letter from Councillor Nathan Hartley, Cabinet Member for Early Years, Children & Youth in which he was asking the Panel to consider undertaking a review of Home to School Transport in order to

attempt to make some financial reductions as part of the 2013/14 budget setting process.

Councillor Dine Romero commented that the matter had last been properly addressed in 2006 prior to the implementation of some decisions in September 2007. She suggested that some analysis of those decisions was required initially.

The Chairman asked for opinions from the Panel on how they would like to proceed with this matter and suggested that a Task & Finish group could be set up.

Councillors Ian Gilchrist, Liz Hardman, David Veale and the Panel's Roman Catholic Diocese Co-opted Member, Mrs Tess Daly indicated that they would like to take part in such a group.

The Democratic Services Officer added that he would need to discuss the matter with his colleagues in the Policy Development & Scrutiny Projects Team as to how much capacity there would be to support such a task.

55 ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC OR COUNCILLORS - TO RECEIVE DEPUTATIONS, STATEMENTS, PETITIONS OR QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OF THIS MEETING

There were none.

56 MINUTES - MONDAY 28TH NOVEMBER 2011

The Panel confirmed the minutes of the previous meeting as a true record and they were duly signed by the Chairman.

57 PEOPLE & COMMUNITIES, CHILDREN'S SERVICES - SERVICE ACTION PLAN

The People and Communities Strategic Director introduced this item to the Panel. He informed them of the six priorities within the Service Action Plan.

- Multi-agency delivery of the Children & Young People's Plan 2011-14
- People and Communities Department Restructure to integrate adult social care and community health service commissioning, housing, public health, children's services, employability and skills.
- To develop an integrated approach to the provision and commissioning of preventative services for those young people aged 11-19 who are most at risk.
- Improve provision for disaffected young people in schools and through our Specialist Behaviour Support Service.
- Further improve service for Young People in danger of becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training).
- Develop a supported programme of work placements, volunteering and work experience opportunities for Out of Work Benefit claimants.

Councillor Dine Romero asked if in future years an achievements section could be added to the plan.

The People and Communities Strategic Director replied yes.

Councillor Dine Romero asked how he saw the figures associated with NEETs as changing and would the Council be able to analyse the disappointment of young people given that the job market is getting smaller.

The People and Communities Strategic Director described this area of work as a real challenge. He hoped that they could build resilience within young people so that they would be able to take a knock and bounce back.

The Divisional Director for Learning and Inclusion added that the age for young people that must participate in education, employment or training was rising to 17 in 2013 and 18 in 2015.

Councillor Dine Romero asked how the Council will assess if all schools act the same way with regard to exclusions given the number of Secondary Schools that have become Academies.

The Divisional Director for Learning and Inclusion replied that exclusions are being monitored and that that work is on-going to put some preventative measures in place.

Councillor Ian Gilchrist asked for an explanation over the budget gap mentioned in section 3.5 of the report.

The People and Communities Strategic Director replied that a substantial amount of on-going revenue headroom had been identified to fund the gap that exists. He added that this would obviously form part of the decision making process at the Council's Budget meeting in February.

Councillor Dine Romero commented that she had concerns over the potential number of 19 year olds that could become NEETS and asked would the systems being put in place work.

The Divisional Director for Learning and Inclusion replied there was no guarantee we would be able to reduce NEETs to zero. He added that the challenge was to find the appropriate provision for them.

The People and Communities Strategic Director added that however difficult, the intervention must take place as soon as possible for the benefit of all parties.

Sanjeev Chaddha asked if there was historic data available to compare the numbers of NEET young people aged 16 -18 with the new figures that will be recorded as young people aged 16 -19.

The Divisional Director for Learning and Inclusion replied that good data was available and that this could be broken down into gender specific if required.

The Chairman summed up by explaining that the Resources Panel would now have an additional meeting in February prior to the meetings of Cabinet and Council when the budget will formally be agreed.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to approve the People & Communities, Children's Services - Service Action Plan as printed.

58 INTERIM ADMISSIONS REPORT

The School Organisation Manager introduced this item to the Panel. She explained that a higher transfer rate had been witnessed in 2011 and that resident population data was now being used as part of the process because it was more accurate than postcode data.

She informed the Panel that 15 additional places for Peasedown St John Primary School and 8 additional places at Bathampton Primary School had been agreed as part of general expansion plans of the two schools. She added that 30 additional places were being added to both Weston All Saints and Oldfield Park Infants solely for the admissions of September 2012.

She stated that lower levels of admissions were expected for 2013 but that they were likely to rise again in 2014/15. A detailed report is due to be submitted to the Panel in March 2012.

The Parent Support Services Manager reminded the Panel of some of the key dates involved in the admissions process.

15th January 2012 – Applications closed.

10th February 2012 – Schools receive details of all initial applications made for their school.

20th April 2012 – Parents receive application decision.

Peter Mountstephen asked what the potential scale of the 2014/15 bubble would be.

The School Organisation Manager replied that numbers would rise slightly in 2014 and that 2015 figures would be similar to 2011.

The Chairman thanked the officers for their attendance and welcomed the report the Panel were due to receive in March.

59 'SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME' UPDATE

The Acting Director for Service Development introduced this item to the Panel. He informed them that a series of conversations had taken place with schools and service managers on the future provision of services to schools and how they might be delivered. He added that some governor briefings on the matter took place in November and that a survey of schools had been carried out. A good response rate had been received and he was pleased with the quality of the responses. He wished

to highlight that it was not merely a tick box survey and that extended input was most welcome. He was also keen to state that the Council is not walking away from any provision. A proposal was now in place and had been submitted to the Headteacher's Conference last week and would be submitted to the Governor's meeting later this week.

This proposes that the Council commits to providing the broad range of current services for a minimum of two years and in those two years further analysis would take place on individual services. Some reciprocal commitment would be required from schools.

The Chairman on behalf of the Panel thanked him for the update.

60 FEEDBACK FROM HEADTEACHERS / CHAIR OF GOVERNOR CONFERENCE

Peter Mountstephen, the Panel's Primary School Representative introduced this item. He said that the conference had recognised that the Council had positioned itself in a very mature manner and that there was a strong sense of a partnership. He added that existing collaborative arrangements between schools were looked at and that it was noted that there was still a desire to work alongside each other and keep hold of the expertise available through the Council.

The Chairman on behalf of the Panel thanked him for the update and said she was looking forward to attending the Governor's meeting later in the week.

61 CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

Councillor Nathan Hartley, Cabinet Member for Early Years, Children & Youth addressed the Panel. He informed them that he was making good progress on the challenge he had been set to visit all schools within the Council by May 2012 and was finding the visits very informative. He added that it was also his intention to visit the Youth Hubs and Children's Centres.

Ofsted inspection: He met with the inspectors alongside Cllrs Hardman, Gerrish and Clarke to discuss corporate parenting.

NEET: He announced that a Quarterly Review Group had now been set up.

He informed the Panel that he had met with Alex Lupo, Bath Festivals and was pleased to hear that they were planning to expand and hold some events in Radstock.

Higher Education: He stated that a replacement for the role of Student Liaison Officer was being sought and that the position may become a Council employee with the hours being spread over five days.

Sexual Relationship education: He had written to the Secretary of State for Education to ask him to clarify the position on this matter in relation to the curriculum of Academies.

Headteacher's / Governor's Conference: He wished to thank all the officers concerned for their work and support to these two meetings.

School Meals: He had written to all schools to ask them to consider introducing a cashless payment system.

Youth Parliament: He informed the Panel that the elections for the Youth Parliament would take place on Thursday 2nd February 2012.

The Chairman thanked him for his update on behalf of the Panel.

62 PEOPLE & COMMUNITIES STRATEGIC DIRECTOR'S BRIEFING

The People & Communities Strategic Director introduced this item to the Panel. He handed out a briefing sheet, a copy of which can be found on the Panel's Minute Book.

Departmental Re-design:

He informed them that work was continuing with the Institute for Public Care (IPC) and a series of staff briefing and engagement events were held in late November and early December. Further discussions are underway about the future structures required to deliver the broad range of functions now included within the People and Communities Department. A formal report will be brought to the March Panel meeting.

Social Care Lean Review and Re-design:

He stated that the pilot re-designed way of working had been expanded in order to fully test this with the full range of types of work which are referred into the Children's Social Care Service. There remains a considerable amount of work to do and the Safeguarding and Looked After Children (SLAC) inspection by Ofsted has been helpful in 'crystallising' some of the issues that we have to address.

The pilot will be extended until the end of summer 2012 to enable further testing and review prior to a decision to rollout the new system across the whole service.

Ofsted inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children's Services:

He informed the Panel that until the findings / judgements were verified formal feedback is embargoed.

He did however feel it appropriate to state that the process had been extremely challenging and rigorous. He added that it continued to be the case that there was a focus on procedural compliance and an unhelpful mixing of population 'outcome'

measures with service – ‘effectiveness’ measures. He envisaged that he would bring a full report to the March Panel.

Early Years and Extended Services:

The first 2 Ofsted Inspections of our Children’s Centres have taken place and both have been graded ‘good’ with outstanding features: St Martin’s Garden Children’s Centre and First Steps, Twerton.

Sanjeev Chaddha asked what the reason for the pilot extension was in relation to the Social Care Lean Review.

The People & Communities Strategic Director replied that it was to give further thought to the training, development and skill sets that will be required.

The Chairman on behalf of the Panel thanked him for the briefing.

63 PANEL WORKPLAN

The Chairman introduced this item to the Panel.

Councillor Dine Romero suggested that some feedback on the proposed Home to School Transport Review be pencilled in for the March meeting of the Panel.

The Panel agreed with this proposal.

The meeting ended at 6.20 pm

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services