

## **BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL**

### **EARLY YEARS, CHILDREN AND YOUTH POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

Monday, 19th March, 2012

**Present:- Councillors:** Sally Davis (Chair), Dine Romero (Vice-Chair), Liz Hardman, Mathew Blankley, David Veale and Ian Gilchrist

**Co-opted Voting Members:-**Mrs T Daly and Sanjeev Chaddha

**Co-opted Non-voting Members:-**Chris Batten

**Also in attendance:** Ashley Ayre (Strategic Director - People and Communities), Tony Parker (Divisional Director, Learning and Inclusion), Mike Bowden (Divisional Director - Service Development), Helen Hoynes (School Organisation Manager), Kate Murphy (Drug & PSHE Consultant) and Liz Ball (Manager of Project 28)

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

#### **64 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

#### **65 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

The Chairman drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

#### **66 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Councillor Douglas Nicol, David Williams (C of E Diocese), Dawn Harris (Secondary School Representative) and Peter Mountstephen (Primary School Representative) had sent their apologies to the Panel. Teresa Austin was present as a substitute on behalf of Peter Mountstephen.

#### **67 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

Councillor Dine Romero declared a personal and non-prejudicial interest in relation to Agenda Item 10 (Primary and Secondary School Organisation Plan 2011-2015) as she has children that attend Hayesfield, Ralph Allen and Moorland Infants School. She stated that was also a governor at Moorland Infants School.

#### **68 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN**

There was none.

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

The Chairman announced that Councillor Colin Barrett had intended to address the Panel in relation to Agenda Item 10 (Primary and Secondary School Organisation Plan 2011-2015), but was unable to attend the meeting due to other Council business. She said that she would read out his written statement when the Panel reached that item.

**70 MINUTES - MONDAY 23RD JANUARY 2012**

Councillor Ian Gilchrist wished to raise a question relating to the proposed Home to School Transport Review and Tess Daly asked if Councillor Hartley had received a reply from the Government in response to his question relating to Academies and Sex and Relationship Education.

The Chairman replied by saying that both of those points would be picked up later in the meeting by Councillor Hartley in his Cabinet Member Update.

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

**71 YOUTH DEMOCRACY & PARTICIPATION OVERVIEW**

The Strategic Planning Officer for the Children's Health & Commissioning Service was unable to attend on this occasion and so the Panel decided to defer the item.

**72 PREVENTING DRUG AND ALCOHOL MISUSE BY YOUNG PEOPLE**

The Drug & PSHE Consultant introduced this item to the Panel alongside Liz Ball, the Manager of Project 28.

The Drug & PSHE Consultant spoke of the strong partnership network that exists between the two organisations and highlighted some of the aims of the Young People's Substance Misuse Group as set out within the report.

Liz Ball addressed the Panel. She informed them that around 100 young people a year are seen directly by the service and around 300 are seen by outreach workers. She added that a drop in service was also available every afternoon and importantly the service as a whole was shaped and ran by young people.

Councillor Liz Hardman wished to congratulate them both for the work that they do. She asked how the Council could be assured that schools use their PSHE time to educate on these matters.

The Drug & PSHE Consultant replied that as a partnership they needed to ensure that they do and added that she felt they currently do.

Councillor Dine Romero asked if the local academies have used the service to help as part of their education.

The Drug & PSHE Consultant replied that yes they have used the service over the past year.

Councillor Dine Romero asked the same question in relation to private schools.

The Drug & PSHE Consultant replied that she had carried out some training with private schools and that they were always invited to PSHE training events.

The People & Communities Strategic Director commented that Liz and her team should be commended for the work they have done and for putting a real focus on the needs of young people.

The Drug & PSHE Consultant concluded by offering to invite members of the Panel to a future training event.

The Chairman on behalf of the Panel thanked her for the offer and the report she had submitted to them.

### **73 PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL ORGANISATION PLAN 2011-2015**

The Chairman read out a statement from Councillor Colin Barrett. He wished to raise the issues of traffic flow and parking at Weston All Saints Primary School, he called for temporary buildings to not be used in any expansion of the school site and requested that the school be fully consulted on the proposals within the report.

The School Organisation Manager replied that she was sure that Planning officers would have a view on the traffic related matters, permanent accommodation on site was likely to be sought rather than temporary buildings and that talks with the school were on-going regarding the proposals.

She added that the Authority would need to consider the timing of the delivery of any additional places that might be required, particularly where the need for places is created by more than a single development and where Developer Contributions might need to be pooled or where a Developer Contribution from a single development is received in several staged payments.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked if whether the Council could take a more strategic view and factor in potential new homes.

The School Organisation Manager replied that Children's Services were working with Planning Policy officers to form a strategic view and using the most current available data.

Tess Daly asked if any further investigation of the figures relating to Swainswick School were required as only 12 pupils were due to enter the next reception class. She added that she was happy to see the balance of denominational and non-denominational schools remaining.

The Divisional Director for Learning and Inclusion replied that Swainswick was a small community school that was almost full as it stands. He added that there were no plans to expand it.

Sanjeev Chaddha asked if as part of the risk assessment the officers had considered the risk associated with the closure of an independent Primary School and if not, would they consider adding it.

The School Organisation Manager replied that they had not considered this directly although the number of surplus places had been assessed. She said that this scenario would be added to the risk assessment.

The Chairman thanked the officers on a well written report.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to agree:

- (i) The proposed strategy for the provision of school places within the 2011 – 2015 plan period.
- (ii) To note the proposed strategy for the provision of school places over the longer term up to 2026.

## **74 CHILD PROTECTION ACTIVITY AND PERFORMANCE**

The People & Communities Strategic Director introduced this item to the Panel. He informed them that he was in talks with the Improvement and Performance team with regard to developing some local indicators for this work area.

He then wished to highlight some of the key facts within the report.

- There was a steady increase in the number of children with protection plans throughout 2010/11 with a marked increase in the final quarter – 106 represented the highest number since the late 1990's. The Children's Service investigated this position and determined that the increase has been the result of a combination of factors (the complexity of new cases and risks being identified: cases where long standing but low level concerns have increased to become risks of significant harm: the quality of some assessments and multi-agency evaluations of the risk of harm resulting in cautious decisions about the need for some protection plans) – and took actions to address these factors which have resulted in an appropriate reduction in the number of children with protection plans and more children in need plans – whilst ensuring that protection plans are in place for all who require them.
- **Child Protection Plans lasting two years or more (NI 64)**  
The improvement noted throughout 2010/11 (which resulted in the end of year figure being only slightly off target), has been maintained and is on target for 2011/12. It must be noted that these percentages represent a small number of children and families. We have processes in place to review the circumstances of each child. Each child protection plan is reviewed by a multi-agency case conference, and the decision to continue with child

protection plans quality assured by the LSCB's Safeguarding Children Sub Committee.

- **Children becoming subject to a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time (NI 65)**

Our performance in this area had been strong for a number of years – exceeding both the national and family of Local Authorities' performance. As noted in previous reports, performance throughout 2010/11 was however off target (and above national and comparator positions). Gradual improvements have been achieved throughout the first three quarters of 2011/12 and it is now possible that the end of year target will be achieved. We are now closer to the level of comparator authorities. Absolute numbers are small but performance did raise questions about the overall effectiveness of the services provided by agencies at the conclusion of child protection plans to prevent risks from re-emerging. Ensuring that these are in place and consistently accessed by families is central to the re-design of Children's Social Care Service currently underway and has been reported to the LSCB. This should effect further improvements in the longer term.

- **Child protection cases which were reviewed within timescales (NI 67)**

Our performance is 100% and has been for the past eight years. Although this indicator is no longer part of the National Indicator set for safeguarding, we will continue to monitor this area of performance given its importance in underpinning good and timely planning.

- **Initial assessments by Children's Social Care carried out within ten working days of referral (NI 59) – (previously seven working days)**

The percentage of referrals that are subsequently taken forward to Initial Assessment has risen from 35% in 2008-9 to 74% in 2011-12. This means that the service carried out 400 Initial Assessments in 2008-9 compared to a projected figure of 1295 Initial Assessments in 2011-12. This is a three-fold increase in Initial Assessment workload with only three additional posts added to the social work workforce during this period. Sustaining this level of performance and also improving quality of work cannot be fully disassociated from the level of resource available to carry out this work.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked if he felt he had enough resources to continue this level of work.

The People & Communities Strategic Director replied that that was a difficult question to answer, but he believed that all posts were currently deployed to best effect.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to:

- (i) Note the report and the actions being taken in respect of the reported performance.
- (ii) Request further performance reports from the Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children Board in order to maintain an overview of the Council, and partner agencies', child protection activity and performance.

## **75 OFSTED INSPECTION OF SAFEGUARDING AND LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN SERVICES**

The People & Communities Director introduced this item to the Panel. He informed them that following the inspection the service was working on an improvement plan and that he would be happy to bring that back to the Panel at a future meeting. He added that the main aim from Ofsted's current framework is for services to seek procedural compliance and to consistently meet standards. The majority of the services' outcomes within this inspection were good but could not be graded as such because the procedures were not consistent.

The Chairman suggested the Panel receives the improvement plan at its July meeting and then a further report from the service in January 2013.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to:

- (i) Note the report and the actions to be taken to respond to recommendations for areas for improvement.
- (ii) Note the arrangements proposed for reviewing and reporting progress with those actions to the Local Safeguarding Children Board; the Corporate Parenting Group; the In-Care Council; and the Partnership Board for Health and Wellbeing.
- (iii) Request that the Director of People and Community and Divisional Director, Safeguarding, Social Care and Family Service present a progress report to the Panel at its July 2012 meeting.

## **76 SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS**

The Divisional Director for Service Development introduced this item to the Panel. He spoke of how following a series of conferences, workshops and discussions, all schools were asked to complete a survey during December 2011, letting us know their current thinking about academy conversion, which potential models of service delivery they would support for the 'core' educational services we currently provide and what support the authority can best offer to enable schools to adapt in the changing context.

He added that in response to the survey results, a draft proposal had been produced suggesting that the Authority could continue to provide the broad range of services for a minimum of 2 years, while further work is undertaken to consider the future of each service – this would require some reciprocal commitment from schools.

He informed the Panel that a broadly positive response to the proposal had been received from both heads and governors and that he was now in the process of developing plans for implementation. He added that there was a significant on-going role for the Council to play with regard to school planning and education.

The People and Communities Director commented that a comprehensive report had been recently submitted to the Change Board and that the service had a reputation of being in the lowest quartile for costs, yet the highest quartile for outcomes.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to note the report and receive a further update in due course.

## **77 CABINET MEMBER UPDATE**

Councillor Ian Gilchrist called for better supervision at Youth Centres during future Youth Parliament elections having witnessed ballot stuffing during the count at the event. He stated that he saw around 20 votes bundled together and marked in exactly the same way within one ballot box.

Councillor Nathan Hartley, Cabinet Member for Early Years, Children & Youth replied by saying that he was aware of the incident and was in the process of following it up with the Elections team and Off The Record.

In response to the question posed earlier in the meeting from Tess Daly relating to Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) in Academies he handed out the response he had received from Lord Jonathan Hill, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools. The response stated that the Government expects SRE and PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education) to be delivered by Academies as part of the broad and balanced curriculum that they are required to provide.

Councillor Hartley then informed the Panel of some of his latest actions, plans and visits.

- On the 14<sup>th</sup> March the Cabinet resolved (unanimously) to adopt the Youth Service Vision and Young People's Pledge.
- He met with the Governors of Broadlands School to discuss perspective Academy sponsors.
- Vision & Values – He hoped that more schools would become community hubs in the future.
- Healthy Living Week – As part of this initiative in May he plans on visiting as many schools as possible during the week.
- Southside Family Project – A three year contract has been awarded to the project to enable the development of hubs around the authority.
- The Council is to become a Stonewall Education Champion to help to ensure that no young person is bullied because they are, or are thought to be, gay, lesbian or bisexual.

Councillor Dine Romero asked how big the problem of homophobic bullying at schools was within the Council.

Councillor Hartley replied that he believed it currently occurred on almost a daily basis.

The People and Communities Director added that the Council needed to encourage an environment where children feel that they can raise their concerns.

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

## **78 PEOPLE & COMMUNITIES STRATEGIC DIRECTOR'S BRIEFING**

The People & Communities Strategic Director addressed the Panel. He said that with regard to the recently proposed Home to School Transport Review a Terms of Reference was being drafted and once it had been agreed by the Chairman of the Panel and the Cabinet Member it would be circulated to all members of the Panel.

He posed the question of whether the Panel would like to have the matter of Complex Families / Community Budgets as a future agenda item of the Panel.

He informed the Panel that he was currently the lead South West Director for Sector Led Improvement. He added that as part of the initiative the authority was required to carry out its own self-assessment.

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

## **79 PANEL WORKPLAN**

The Chairman of the Panel introduced this item. She asked if any member wished to raise an issue that they would like to add to the workplan.

Councillor Ian Gilchrist asked if the Panel could receive a report on the number of permanent exclusions issued across the schools within the authority.

The Divisional Director for Learning & Inclusion replied that the Council holds a great deal of data on that matter and therefore it should not be too onerous to produce a report.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to approve this proposal.

The meeting ended at Time Not Specified

Chair(person) .....

Date Confirmed and Signed .....

**Prepared by Democratic Services**