

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL

EARLY YEARS, CHILDREN AND YOUTH POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Monday, 28th January, 2013

Present:- Councillors: Sally Davis (Chair), Ian Gilchrist (Vice-Chair), Liz Hardman, Mathew Blankley, David Veale, Loraine Morgan-Brinkhurst MBE and Sarah Bevan

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

Co-opted Non-voting Members:- Chris Batten and Hazel Stockwell-Cooke

Cabinet Member for Early Years, Children & Youth: Councillor Dine Romero

Also in attendance: Ashley Ayre (Strategic Director, People and Communities), Tony Parker (Divisional Director Learning and Inclusion Service), Maurice Lindsay (Divisional Director - Children, Young People and Family Support) and Kevin Amos (Parent Support Services Manager), David Burston (School Sport Development Manager), Beth Jones (School Sport Development Manager), Paula Bromley (Connecting Families Operational Lead) and Councillor Eleanor Jackson

65 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

66 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chairman drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

67 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Andrea Arlidge, Peter Mountstephen and David Williams who are all Co-opted Members of the Panel had sent their apologies.

Councillor Sarah Bevan gave her apologies as she would have to leave before the conclusion of the meeting.

68 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Sarah Bevan declared a personal and non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 9 (Home to School Transport) as she is a Governor at St. Gregory's Catholic College and her son attends the school.

Councillor Loraine Morgan-Brinkhurst declared personal and non-prejudicial interest as she is one of the Council's representatives on the Sirona Care & Health Community Interest Company.

69 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN

There was none.

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

The Chairman announced that there were a number of public speakers in relation to agenda item 9 (Home to School Transport) and that they would be asked to address the Panel at the beginning of that item.

71 MINUTES - 26TH NOVEMBER 2012

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

72 HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT REVIEW - RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr Raymond Friel, Head Teacher at St. Gregory's Catholic College addressed the Panel. He said that he would like to take part in a focus group with the Chairman and other members of the Panel so that the review could be discussed in more detail. He stated that in particular the Filipino and Polish communities would be affected by any changes to the current subsidy as they would not be able to attend their school of choice and asked for that to be considered in any Equalities Impact Assessment.

He said that the school was not opposed to recommendations 1, 2, 4 or 5 and that recommendation 3c was the least of all evils.

He asked if the officers had calculated how much it would be for the Council to provide a cost neutral service.

He stated that if the subsidy were to be removed there would be a significant drop in the number of Catholic pupils in attendance.

He asked the Chairman to clearly outline the next steps of the review and how any focus group comments could be inputted into the process.

He ended his statement by asking for the subsidy to not be removed.

The Chairman asked Mr Friel to read out a brief statement from a member of the public, Mrs Phillips.

Mrs Phillips wished to let the Panel know that she was a parent wishing to send her child to St. Gregory's because of her Catholic beliefs. She stated that the issue of denominational transport was significant and would affect the choices of a number of parents if it were to be removed.

Penelope Restorick and her daughter Phoebe addressed the Panel. Mrs Restorick said that denominational transport was a vital service that enabled parents to make a real choice for their child's education. She stated that she had chosen St. Gregory's for faith reasons and hoped to send her three younger children there also in the future.

She said that the service enabled children to travel safely to and from school.

She asked if pupils who currently receive the service would continue to do so.

She stated that if the subsidy was removed she would have to work fewer hours so that she could drive her children to school and that if this was the case with other parents the congestion on the roads should be taken into consideration.

Phoebe said that she was grateful to be able to attend St. Gregory's and wanted her sisters to be able to join her there.

Mrs Webb and her daughter Lily addressed the Panel. Lily said that the school has a wonderful curriculum and a programme of events that she wanted her sisters to also experience. She explained that one of her sisters has a hearing impairment and would want the security of her or another sister to help her get on the bus to get to school. She added that she knew that despite the impairment St. Gregory's would give her sister the chance to shine.

Mrs Webb said that she had visited all the local schools and chose St. Gregory's so that Lily could continue her Catholic education. She said that Lily was happy, settled and thriving at the school and if the subsidy were removed parents would no longer be able to make a true choice for their children.

The Chairman at this point explained that Panel was only in a position to make recommendations and that it would be the Cabinet who would make the actual decisions on this matter. She explained that members of the public would also have the opportunity to speak at the Cabinet meeting on March 13th if they registered to do so with the Democratic Services team. The decision of the Cabinet would then be reported back to the Panel at their meeting on March 25th. She added that she would be more than happy to meet with schools to discuss the matter further and then report back to the Cabinet when she introduced the report at their meeting.

She also confirmed that any child currently receiving the subsidy would continue to do so until they moved to a different school i.e. from Primary to Secondary.

Tess Daly commented that she felt a balanced view had been given from the consultation responses. She said that if the subsidy were removed parents within Bath would still have a choice whilst parents within North East Somerset would be unduly penalised. She added that the Local Authority would still retain its discretionary powers and therefore individuals could apply for their own subsidy.

Councillor Sarah Bevan said that she felt that Roman Catholic and Church of England parents were already at a disadvantage within the Council. She added that she felt it was an essential service for the Filipino and Polish communities and that the Council should not discriminate against them.

Councillor Ian Gilchrist questioned whether the Cabinet would be in a position to make a decision within the proposed timescale as it would not know the budget requirements yet for 2014 / 15.

Councillor Loraine Morgan-Brinkhurst commented that she felt there was more to be done on the review. She suggested that officers should investigate the option of a cost neutral service and that focus groups should take place between the schools concerned and members of the Panel.

The Divisional Director for Learning & Inclusion replied there would be no problem in delaying the decision, but added that depending on when it was made would have an impact on when it could be implemented as any change would need to be appropriately advertised.

Councillor Liz Hardman said that she agreed with the comments made by Councillor Morgan-Brinkhurst and would like a cost neutral service to be investigated. She added that as she represents a community outside of Bath that she wanted parents there to have the same choices available to them.

Councillor Liz Hardman then proposed that the Panel agrees recommendations 1, 2, 3c, 4 and 5 to be considered by the Cabinet.

Councillor Loraine Morgan-Brinkhurst said that she would second this proposal but wished to add some additional wording to recommendation 2.1 from the cover report and further recommendation to be known as 2.2.

She suggested that recommendation 2.1 should be as follows.

The Panel having reviewed and discussed the Home to School Transport review report and recommendations have asked officers to provide a cost neutral service investigation to the Cabinet for its March meeting.

She suggested that recommendation 2.2 should be as follows.

Members of the Panel will take part in focus groups and report back any additional comments to the Cabinet.

Councillor Liz Hardman said that she was happy to second these proposals and asked that her recommendation become 2.3.

Councillor Loraine Morgan-Brinkhurst said that she would second this proposal.

Councillor Ian Gilchrist commented that he felt that none of the recommendations should be removed from going forward to the Cabinet.

The Panel voted unanimously to accept recommendations 2.1 and 2.2.

The majority of the Panel voted in favour of recommendation 2.3.

Therefore the Panel agreed the following:

2.1 The Panel having reviewed and discussed the Home to School Transport review report and recommendations have asked officers to provide a cost neutral service investigation to the Cabinet for its March meeting.

2.2 Members of the Panel will take part in focus groups and report back any additional comments to the Cabinet.

2.3 Recommendation One

1) The Council should continue to seek to encourage more sustainable methods of home to school transport; the Panel would particularly like to see an increase in cycling. We understand that as part of the medium term service and resource plan for 2012/14, £500,000 has been allocated to improve cycling provision and we recommend that these, or future funds, are spent across B&NES and not just the city centre. We would particularly encourage the Cabinet to consider where routes could be used to create safer cycling routes to schools.

Recommendation Two

2) Given the questionnaire evidence, we recommended that the Cabinet encourage the promotion of safe cycling routes to school as an alternative to using the car where there is a safe route to do so.

Evidence from our questionnaire also suggested that there was some level of demand for two cycle paths and we recommend that the Cabinet investigate the feasibility of establishing the following two routes:

- a) Between Bishop Sutton and Chew Valley School
- b) Compton Dando to Marksbury

Recommendation Three

3) We recognise that the existing home to school transport system needs to become more efficient in the current financial climate and that 'doing nothing' is not an option. We therefore recommend that the Cabinet considers exploring and implementing from September 2014 option C (i.e. a combination of option A and option B) in order to reduce the overall spend on home to school transport, as follows:

- A) Raising the level of financial contribution currently paid by parents/carers using home to school transport from the Council i.e. those who do not qualify for free home to school transport. This could take the form of raising the fare currently paid for the 1st child from £50 per term to a level that would ensure that the service operated on a cost neutral basis (this amount would need to be identified by the Cabinet and Service Officers);

B) Removing the 50% reduction for 2nd and 3rd children and/or removing the subsidised transport for families with more than three children requiring home to school transport (unless they qualified as a low income family).

Recommendation Four

4) That the budget to provide home to school transport for children in care (circa £70,000) is maintained for the foreseeable future.

Recommendation Five

5 a) Passenger Transport Services should review home to school transport routes on a termly basis to ensure best value for money and that home to school transport bus routes are as efficient and effective as possible.

5 b) This should also include liaising with parents/carers of students who have Special Educational Needs to consider whether it is appropriate for them to receive independent travel training and a personalised transport budget to arrange their own transport which may be more suitable for their needs, similar to the system used at Coventry City Council.

The Chairman thanked everybody for their contributions to the debate.

73 B&NES SCHOOL SPORT PARTNERSHIP

The Divisional Director for Learning & Inclusion introduced this item to the Panel. He explained that the Partnership has been supported by the Schools Forum to deliver a PE & sports service for all 63 primary schools in the authority. He stated that it has been an amazingly successful programme, but unfortunately since September 2011 has had its central government funding cut by the Department for Education and the funding will cease completely in August 2013 except for National School Games funding. He added that attracting new and additional investment is critical for its future sustainability and for Secondary School staff to be released one day a week to work with the Primary Schools.

He introduced Dave Burston & Beth Jones from the School Sport Development team to address the Panel.

Dave said that following the funding cut in 2011 they have only been able to deliver a restricted programme and that the service was a necessity to enable children to take part in sport at school. He wished to thank the Schools Forum for their support. He added that the Primary Head Teachers have spoken of how much they value the programme.

He informed the Panel that they also run expansion schemes for Secondary pupils with the help of partners such as Bath Rugby, University of Bath, Bath Spa University & Bath City FC.

He said he was very pleased that all secondary, special, primary and independent schools were due to take part in the new National School Games initiative. He added

that within B&NES the School Games events were being coordinated by the School Sport Partnership with support from the County Sport Partnership and that funding for the School Games is provided by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Department of Health.

He wished to highlight to the Panel two particular areas of work within the Partnership.

Playground to Podium Initiative

Playground to Podium was the national strategy for the identification, development and support of talented young athletes with a physical, sensory or learning disability. National funding has now ceased. However, the Partnership has maintained this excellent programme in B&NES. The Playground to Podium framework forms a pathway which take young people with a disability from school based participation, through to high level performance and competition opportunities. The ultimate aim is to produce our next Paralympian and elite disabled athletes. We currently have over 50 pupils from mainstream primary, secondary and special schools. They are invited to experience days at the University of Bath and are signposted onto local clubs or performance pathways where required.

The Dance Umbrella

The Dance Umbrella Festival brings together young people from across the Authority in a celebration of schools dance. Hosted at the Forum in Bath, this event provides pupils with the opportunity to perform in front of a live audience. Dance pieces include whole class routines developed as part of curriculum PE lessons and after school clubs run by enthusiastic teachers. Over the three nights, over 2000 pupils from over 65 primary, secondary and special schools take part. All profits from the festival are used to fund dance specialist provision in schools to support and develop the quality of curriculum delivery.

Councillor David Veale asked what the main function would be of the new sports centre at Wellsway School.

The Divisional Director for Learning & Inclusion replied that it was the school sports centre as well as a hub for the B&NES School Sport Partnership and a resource that could be used by the local community.

Beth added that the centre had been in use from early November 2012 and was open to the public from 6.00pm on weekdays and all day at weekends. She added that they recently had the England Women's Netball Team train at the centre prior to them playing a match against Australia.

Councillor Liz Hardman wished to congratulate them on their work and asked how the funding cuts would affect the future of the programme.

The Divisional Director for Learning & Inclusion replied that he believed that Secondary Schools would find it increasingly difficult to release staff and that the

programme would be reliant on funding from the Schools Forum and raising its own funds.

He suggested that if possible members of the Panel should attend one of the upcoming Dance Umbrella performances on March 12th, 13th or 14th. He asked for further information to be sent to them regarding the event.

The Chairman on behalf of the Panel thanked Dave and Beth for their work and for their attendance at the meeting.

74 RADSTOCK YOUTH PARTNERSHIP

Councillor Eleanor Jackson introduced this report to the Panel. She explained that since funding was received for the partnership it has attempted to reach out to as many young people as possible. She informed them that following the results of the questionnaire a number of practical workshops, activities and skills programmes were set up that lead to young people achieving certificates in a variety of subjects.

She wished to highlight the lack of rural public transport, street lighting and poor road conditions in the area.

She stated that she believed in a universal provision approach and that all youth work should be professionally led. She added that for the Partnership to continue its work it required further resources.

Councillor Liz Hardman congratulated her on the work of the Partnership and asked how long was left for the funding of the project.

Councillor Jackson replied that the last church activity would take place in August 2013 and that the trustees were actively fund raising.

The Chairman on behalf of the Panel thanked her for the report and commended the work that has been achieved.

Councillor Dine Romero, Cabinet Member for Early Years, Children & Youth said that she had noted the comments made during the presentation of the report.

75 DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD 2012/13

The Divisional Director for Safeguarding, Social Care and Family Services introduced this item to the Panel. He explained that the appendix was a draft of the third Annual Report of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) compiled in accordance with a national template. He added that the Panel had requested the opportunity to contribute to the draft report for 2012/13 prior to its submission to the Local Safeguarding Children's Board on 5th March 2013 and the Children's Trust Board on 14th March 2013.

He said that the work programme for 2013/14 would be completed by the LSCB on 7th February 2013 and the final Report would be signed off by the LSCB at its meeting on 5th March 2013 for publication on 1st April 2013.

The People & Communities Strategic Director commented that there had been more permanent exclusions in the period from September to Christmas 2012 than the whole of last year and that the service was working on provision for these pupils. He added that feedback on the report was welcome by any means.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to note that the Annual Report 2012/2013 will be published on 1st April 2013.

76 SAFEGUARDING AND LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN SERVICES IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Divisional Director for Safeguarding, Social Care and Family Services introduced this report to the Panel. He informed them that the report showed how progress with the implementation of the Council's Children's Service Improvement Plan was progressing following the Ofsted Inspection of the Safeguarding and Looked After Children's Services undertaken in January 2012. He added that the full Improvement Plan and a progress report in respect of its early implementation were considered by the Panel on 9th July 2012, where this further progress report requested.

He highlighted some of the progress points to the Panel.

- Required improvements have been effected in respect of notifications of care and protection plans: feedback to referrers: timeliness of Looked After Children (LAC) Reviews: involvement of health professionals and progress of health plans for LAC Reviews: and evidence that these improvements are being sustained.
- Required improvements effected in respect of core assessments following Section 47 investigations: reports to child protection conferences and LAC Reviews. Emerging evidence that these improvements are being sustained – to be evaluated over a longer period.
- Robust arrangements in place (and being enhanced through the redesign of the Children's Social Care Service) for professional supervision: further training provided (and on-going): reflective supervision more prevalent. Further work required to evidence how this is impacting upon practice and outcomes.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to:

- i) Note the report, the actions taken to respond to recommendations for areas for improvement, and the progress reported thus far.

- ii) Note the arrangements proposed for reviewing and reporting progress to the Local Safeguarding Children Board; the Corporate Parenting Group; the In-Care Council; and the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- iii) Note that the Children's Service and Health Agencies will be presenting a combined report to the Local Safeguarding Children's Board on 5th March 2013 detailing and evidencing progress one year on from the Inspection.

77 CONNECTING FAMILIES

The Divisional Director for Learning and Inclusion gave a presentation to the Panel regarding this item. A full copy is available on the Panel's Minute Book, a summary is set out below.

He explained that rather than using the term Complex Families or Troubled Families, the term Connecting Families was the term the service have chosen to use. Paula Bromley would be the operational lead. Sally Churchyard (11-19 outcomes manager) would, as part of her duties, take over leading on the Youth Service.

He stated that the Troubled Families Unit within the Department of Communities and Local Government gave funding in three directions.

- European Social Fund - Contract for getting people on pathway to employment
- Prospects - Contract for 16-18 NEET Young People with no GCSEs at > C (30 to 50 Young People)
- Local Councils - Bath & NES Connecting Families Initiative

Purpose of Connecting Families

To turn around the lives of the families who are:

- Not in work
- Not sending their children to school regularly
- Causing anti-social behaviour
- Engaging significant resources as a result of:
 - Domestic Violence
 - Mental ill health
 - Children in care or on the edge of care

How we work with our families?

- Dedicated One Family Support Worker
- Practical hands on support
- Whole Family Approach
- Agreed Action Plan

Degrees of the Family Intervention Service

Intensive: intensive work, low caseloads, building on the practice in FIPs.

Light: less intensive work, caseloads of about 15 families.

Super light: usually a worker with another day job and set of responsibilities, but some dedicated time to work with the family.

Measures of Success

- Family members in work
- Children and young people in the families regularly attending school
- Reductions in youth crime and anti-social behaviour caused by the children and young people within these families
- Reduction in domestic abuse within these families
- Reduction in the numbers of children admitted to care / staying in care

Councillor Liz Hardman commented that the staff involved in this work would be key and asked what training would be provided.

The Divisional Director for Learning and Inclusion replied that two experienced members of staff from the Family Intervention Project would work within the team and that views would be gathered and resources sought for further training.

Councillor Liz Hardman commented that she disliked the payment by results scheme.

The Divisional Director for Learning and Inclusion replied that unfortunately the payment method cannot be avoided. He added that the intention was to keep the team small.

The People & Communities Strategic Director added that the Council has a small Looked After Children population and that it was a complex area to work within. He said that the intention was to simplify the interventions required over time.

Sanjeev Chaddha asked how long it would take to work with the 200 identified families.

The Connecting Families Operational Lead replied that it was anticipated to take around three years to work with all 200 families.

The Chairman on behalf of the Panel thanked them for the presentation.

78 CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

The Cabinet Member for Early Years, Children & Youth, Councillor Dine Romero addressed the Panel.

She said that she would do all that she could to protect the Children's Services budget in the upcoming discussions at Cabinet and Council.

She spoke of how she had the pleasure of attending a number of carol services over the festive period as well as the recent What's For Tea Awards in Farrington Gurney.

She was also pleased to announce that she had been present at St Keyna Primary School when they had been discussing their new initiatives against bullying.

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

79 PEOPLE & COMMUNITIES STRATEGIC DIRECTOR'S BRIEFING

The People & Communities Strategic Director addressed the Panel on the following matters.

Independent Reviewing Service: A thematic Inspection Survey took place on January 22nd and 23rd. Two Inspectors reviewed 10 cases, 6 of which were tracked in great detail. The Inspectors also met with Young People, Foster Carers, Birth Parents, staff groups and colleagues from other agencies.

A report by Ofsted will be published in mid-May which summarises their findings based upon visits to ten local authorities including Bath and North East Somerset. Informally, the overall feedback was very positive.

Children's Centre Cluster Trial Inspection: The inspection took place between 14th – 17th January and was focused upon the Somer Valley cluster of Children's Centres.

He said that in reality this was an inspection of all early childhood services not simply Children's Centres. The inspection was a positive experience for Early Years and Children's Centre Staff and for Ofsted. The inspection will inform the final planning of how the service will inspect Children's Centres from April 2013 onwards.

We need to build on our information sharing particularly with Health Services as often these services are working with key families, but that information is not effectively shared.

Sector Led Improvement – Peer Challenges:

- i) Bath & North East Somerset 'Challenge' of Swindon – Staff from B&NES have visited Swindon to agree the focus of the challenge. A range of information from Swindon has been analysed and will be used as the basis of the full day challenge visit on February 1st.
- ii) Dorset 'Challenge' of Bath and North East Somerset – Colleagues from Dorset spent a full day with selected staff on 21st January. The focus was

on services to divert children and young people away from the care system. Feedback from the Dorset Director of Children's Services is due on 30th January. A number of pieces of work will be taken forward as the service looks to re-design due to budget reductions and the need to clarify our 'early help' services.

Staffing Changes:

A number of staffing changes are underway linked to the service re-structure and some personal decisions.

Liz Price retires on 31st January as Head of Commissioning and Strategic Planning. In the new structure Liz will be replaced by Mary Kearney-knowles who will lead on Specialist Commissioning.

Maurice Lindsay retires on 31st March as Divisional Director for Safeguarding, Social Care and Family Services. A recruitment campaign has been launched to find a permanent replacement and the service is also looking to recruit an Interim Divisional Director to cover the period between Maurice's departure and the arrival of his successor.

Nigel Harrison retires on 31st March as Inclusion Support Service Manager. In the new structure this post combines with that of Head of School Improvement and Achievement. From 1st April until 31st August Wendy Hiscock will temporarily hold this new combined post which is also now subject to recruitment.

Wendy Hiscock will then retire on 31st August when it is envisaged a permanent successor will start duties.

Adoption Changes:

A ministerial announcement was made on 24th January by Edward Timpson, MP. The announcement is mixed in terms of its impact. On the positive side the £150m 'top sliced' from the Early Intervention Grant for 2013 – 14 will return to authorities to improve adoption performance. On the negative side is the threat to legislate to remove the power from authorities to recruit, select and match prospective adoptive families.

He said that he understood the need to drive up performance, but this seems to imply a premise that all local authorities are poor at this element of their work when that is clearly not the case. A financial allocation has not yet been announced.

Ofsted – Targetted (School Improvement) Inspections:

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector announced on 18th January that Ofsted will start targeted programmes of school inspections in local authorities with a high proportion of school demand in intervention or in need of improvement. In the report the proportion of children attending a school categorised (by Ofsted) as 'Good' or 'Outstanding' were identified. B&NES had 79% of children attending Good or Outstanding Schools, this figure has since risen as recent inspections have moved schools from the old category of 'satisfactory' to either Good or Outstanding.

The Chairman on behalf of the Panel thanked him for his update and wished to thank Liz, Maurice and Nigel for all the work they had done for the Council.

80 PANEL WORKPLAN

The Panel on this occasion had no amendments to make to the printed workplan.

The meeting ended at 7.20 pm

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services