

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL

EARLY YEARS, CHILDREN AND YOUTH POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Monday, 25th March, 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

Co-opted Non-voting Members:-Chris Batten

Also in attendance: Ashley Ayre (Strategic Director, People and Communities), Tony Parker (Divisional Director Learning and Inclusion Service), Mike Bowden (Divisional Director - Health Commissioning and Strategic Planning), Michael Gorman (Headteacher, B&NES Virtual School for Children in Care) and Richard Baldwin (Interim Divisional Director CYP Specialist Services)

81 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

82 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chairman drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

83 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies had been received from David Williams, Sanjeev Chaddha, Peter Mountsteven and Andrea Arlidge.

Councillor Dine Romero had sent her apologies to the Panel that she would be unable to attend

84 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Councillor Sarah Bevan declared a pecuniary interest in item 8 on the agenda, since she was the parent of a child who attended St Gregory's School and was the beneficiary of home-to-school transport.

85 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN

There was none.

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

THIS MEETING

A document [*attached to the Minutes as Appendix 1 and on the Council's website*] had been placed into the public gallery in advance of the meeting which showed a question from Councillor Eleanor Jackson and the written response from the Chair on behalf of the Panel.

87 MINUTES - JANUARY 28TH 2013

The Panel considered three requests for minor amendments to the draft minutes, all relating to paragraph 72 (home to school transport):

Councillor Sarah Bevan asked for the minutes to be amended to show that her observation had been about Roman Catholic as well as Church of England parents.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked for the minutes to be amended to show more detail of what the Panel had actually agreed; and in particular to make it clearer that the Panel had recommended option 3(c) to the Cabinet member. She provided a sheet with her proposed amendment to the minutes.

Tess Daly asked for the minutes to be amended to show that she had actually said that the local authority would retain discretionary powers, not that each school would retain such powers.

The Panel asked the Democratic Services Officer to amend the minutes; and agreed to adopt the minutes as amended.

88 HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT REVIEW - CABINET MEMBER RESPONSE

The Chair introduced the item by observing that the Equality Impact Assessment had been tightened up as requested. She drew attention to her briefing note on the Focus Meeting held at St Gregory's on 20th February, which had been distributed with the agenda.

Councillor Anthony Clarke said that he appreciated that the debate was now fairly advanced. He was keen to see every penny spent properly but was concerned that front line services such as this should not be cut. He was also concerned that the effect of removing this support might be that the faith schools would draw more students from within the city and this in turn would put new pressure on other schools in the city.

The Chair referred to the Cabinet Member's response to the recommendations, which had been included with the agenda. The Panel agreed to NOTE the Cabinet Member's response.

89 VIRTUAL SCHOOLS UPDATE

Michael Gorman (Headteacher, Bath & North East Somerset Virtual School for Children in Care) introduced his report which had been circulated with the agenda. He welcomed the increase in pupil premium from 1st April and explained some recent initiatives, particularly in the area of forming relationships. He drew the Panel's attention to the list of key recommendations arising out of the two recent national

reports and said that in recommendation 2, the age range should read 16-25 (not 0-25 as printed).

He added that in a number of measures, the authority's children in care had achieved better results at KS2 than the national average, and at KS4 had attained about the same. All Year 6 pupils had achieved or surpassed their expected grades.

Councillor Ian Gilchrist asked how this compared with the B&NES average. Michael Gorman explained that compared against the B&NES averages, the KS4 English results had been about the same (71%), and the maths results were 61% (all B&NES was 65%).

Councillor Liz Hardman congratulated the team. She asked whether the advent of academies had changed the role of the virtual school.

Michael Gorman said he felt that the critical factor was the ethos of each school, not so much the organisational type. However he observed that because of the pressures on schools to demonstrate their own success, some schools might be reticent to admit a pupil with attendance or behavioural problems, depriving the pupil of opportunities.

Tony Parker (Divisional Director, Learning and Inclusion) added that early intervention by Mike and his team prevented such situations from becoming very difficult for students.

Ashley Ayre (Strategic Director, People) thanked Mike and agreed with the comments already made. He felt there was a need for a regional protocol about crossing boundaries. He pointed out that recently the House of Lords in its report "Caring Schools" had said that pupil tracking should be reintroduced into the framework. He himself felt that this would ensure rigour and would benefit vulnerable young people.

The Panel agreed to NOTE the report.

90 ACADEMIES AND SERVICES TO SCHOOLS

Mike Bowden (Divisional Director, Service Development) introduced the report which had been circulated with the agenda. He explained that the local authority had committed to provide broadly the same range of services, with the exception that schools had in the main chosen not to continue to fund the Learning Support Service. He drew attention to paragraph 3.7 in the report and to the green background paper relating to the evolving role of the local authority.

Councillor Liz Hardman referred to paragraph 3.8 in the report, relating to the authority's role in challenging schools where they are failing. She asked how this would work in practice.

Mike Bowden said that this would be the subject of a report at a future meeting of the Panel. He observed that, while the authority was not responsible for the institution, it still retained responsibility towards the pupils.

Ashley Ayre advised the Panel that he had recently been able to ask a visiting DfE Standards Advisor how systemic failure of a failing academy could be averted, and what would happen in the event of such a failure. The reply was that the responsibility for the children would fall on the authority. He explained some of the complex issues and said he felt that ministers had not been clear about this. He emphasised however that the authority continued to be proactive in support of individual children.

Councillor Ian Gilchrist referred to paragraph 3.3 and observed that he had received feedback from a school that the brochure was not helpful. Mike Bowden welcomed the feedback and explained that the brochure would be subject to regular updates.

Ashley Ayre observed that the brochure had been prepared with the involvement of 2 head teachers and a school business manager.

Councillor David Veale asked what budget savings had been achieved now that the budget for most services had passed to schools.

Mike Bowden and Ashley Ayre replied that there had been considerable budget savings. He reminded the Panel that the authority still had a major statutory role, particularly in the areas of admissions, transport, exclusion, psychology and educational welfare.

Tony Parker observed that in critical situations such as for example the death of a child, the authority would always provide all the support a school needed and would discuss the cost later.

The Panel agreed to NOTE the report.

91 SECTOR LED IMPROVEMENT

Ashley Ayre referred to his report [*attached to the Minutes as Appendix 2 and on the Council's website*] which had been placed into the public gallery in advance of the meeting. He explained that the need for sector led improvement had arisen because the CQC no longer had responsibility for adult social care. He drew the Panel's attention to the main points made in his report. The authority had asked to be peer challenged about diversion from care. He explained how the process had worked and that it had been helpful.

The next round of peer challenges would be centred on children's social care, especially safeguarding and sexual exploitation. He offered to present a further report to the Panel at that time.

Councillor David Veale said he was encouraged by the regional dialogue and was pleased that the authority had gained from the experience. He wondered if it could be done more widely. Ashley said that plans were in place for a corporate peer review in July.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked if the Panel could be shown the action plan arising out of the peer challenge. Ashley replied that each team had taken responsibility for its own action plan, but he would be happy to report back to the Panel on this at a future meeting.

The Chairman thanked Ashley for his update.

92 CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

The Cabinet Member had provided an update report [*attached to the Minutes as Appendix 3 and on the Council's website*] which had been placed into the public gallery in advance of the meeting. The Panel agreed to NOTE the report.

93 PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES STRATEGIC DIRECTOR'S BRIEFING

Ashley Ayre introduced his report [*attached to the Minutes as Appendix 4 and on the Council's website*] which had been placed into the public gallery in advance of the

meeting. He updated the Panel on some of the senior appointments recently made, which were listed in his report. He welcomed Richard Baldwin to the meeting, who had recently been confirmed as Divisional Director, Specialist Services. He reminded the Panel that responsibility for Public Health would return to the Council on 1st April, so Dr Bruce Lawrence had been appointed as Director of Public Health. He reported that the recent Ofsted inspection (for which an hour's notice had been given) had been based on the case tracking of 119 cases. The inspection had been very rigorous. The Ofsted report had not yet been published but he would make it available to the Panel as soon as possible.

Ashley referred to Councillor Jackson's question about Children's Centres. He proposed to set some dates, starting mid-May, for briefing the Panel. He then propose to bring a paper to the June Panel for consideration.

Cllr Liz Hardman was delighted to hear that the review of Children's Centres was to be conducted but felt strongly that it must be held in advance of the February 2014 Budget process. She asked to be told the impact of the proposed cuts.

Ashley reminded the Panel that the one-off funding which had been found to save Children's Centres in 2013/14 could not necessarily be found in subsequent years; so the effect was that cuts of £500K were anticipated in 2014/15. He explained that the longer-term vision could only come out of the discussions with the Panel. There were some complex issues to be resolved in order to get where he hoped to be by April 2015.

The Chairman asked Ashley to circulate the details of the briefings to members because a great deal of interest was being expressed.

The Panel thanked Ashley for his update.

94 PANEL WORKPLAN

The Panel considered the work plan which had been circulated with the agenda. It was agreed to ask the Democratic Services Officer to add the following items to the plan:

- Children's Services Update – June 2013
- School Travel Plans (including Safer Routes to School) – July 2013
- Hot School Meals – Future Items

The meeting ended at 6.25 pm

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services

This page is intentionally left blank

APPX 1

Question from Cllr Jackson to the Early Years, Children & Youth Panel

25th March 2013

Question:

Does the Panel know anything about the procedure for the review of children's centres approved by Council on 4 March, and will they be involved in any way?

Answer:

The Strategic Director will briefly outline the proposed process for developing these proposals in his Director's Briefing to the Panel on 25th March. A report will then be prepared for the May meeting which will outline the proposed process in detail and set out a timescale for concluding this piece of work.

This page is intentionally left blank

**Early Years, Children and Youth Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel
25th March 2013**

Re: Sector Led Improvement and engagement by Bath and North East Somerset

The Sector Led Improvement initiative started in 2010 as a result of discussion between the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Association. The LGA proposal was that Local Authorities could secure their own Service Improvement through a process of Peer Challenge and Peer Review.

Particular emphasis has been given to the improvement of Adult Social Care Services and Children's Services. In relation to Children's Services the Department for Education as the lead central government department have placed a particular emphasis on the improvement of services for children in receipt of Social Care.

In the South West the 16 Local Authorities responsible for Children's Services have formed a local Children's Improvement Board which is Chaired by Councillor Toni Coombs, Lead Member for Children's Services for Dorset County Council. Other Board members include 2 Chief Executives from the South West, 2 Directors of Children's Services and 3 other Lead Members from South West Authorities.

The programme of peer challenge in the South West has been driven by a region wide analysis of key developmental areas for each Service.

Through a combination of analysis of past Safeguarding and Looked After Children Inspection, previous Annual Performance Appraisal letters and a Self-Assessment carried out by each Local Authority, 3 clear priorities for peer challenge were identified as follows:-

- Adoption
- Diversion from care
- Safeguarding Services and thresholds for access to Service

Each of the 16 Local Authorities were asked to choose 1 of the 3 priority areas for a Peer Challenge. However, where the above issues were not a key developmental need for an individual Local Authority, that Local Authority was able to select an area for Peer Challenge other than the 3 identified. In this regard, Dorset County Council chose to look at its response to Domestic Violence Referrals and Bournemouth Local Authority considered its response to children with Special Educational Needs.

Each Authority was then matched with a Peer Challenger and preparations made between the Authority to receive and deliver the challenge for a robust process.

For Bath and North East Somerset, we selected an area of focus around children to be diverted from care.

Dorset County Council were selected to be our Peer Challenger and arrangements were made for the Peer Challenge to take place in January 2013. A series of front line staff and Service Managers presented on the range of Services currently in place to prevent the need for Children to be received into public care. This covered the age range from childhood – early childhood through to 17/18 years of age.

Colleagues from Dorset reviewed our data and performance and then questioned the staff about the efficacy of the Services provided.

A feedback session was then organised for the following week where Dorset provided their view on the effectiveness of our Services for diverting children and young people from the care system and made suggestions as to further work that Bath and North East Somerset could undertake to improve the Service offer made. This feedback is now being taken forward in terms of strengthening our data collection and understanding the needs of children as they first present to the Children's Social Care teams and we will be reviewing the work of the Specialist Child and Family Support Service and Project 117. Within the piece of work we will be carrying out we will seek to define our early help offer. This piece of work now also has to reflect the feedback from the unannounced inspection of services for protecting children which happened on March 4 – March 13 2013. This will require the Authority to further consider its support for children and young people and families prior to the formal engagement with the Social Care Services provided by the Authority.

Bath and North East Somerset acted as a Peer Challenger to Swindon, which had chosen the area of thresholds and access to safeguarding services. This challenge was led by Maurice Lindsay (Divisional Director for Safeguarding, Social Care and Family Service) supported by Trina Shane (Service Manager), Julie Morris (Team Manager), Sara Willis (Early Years and Extended Services Manager) and Caroline Dowson who manages our Early Intervention and Common Assessment framework.

This challenge followed a similar pattern to the one experienced by Bath and North East Somerset and BANES staff visited Swindon on 2 occasions. On Day 1 a series of presentations were made about how the safeguarding threshold worked in Swindon and Day 2 consisted of a process of feeding back the findings of the BANES Team.

Following the Peer Challenge visits, I received letters of thanks from both the Strategic Director for Children and Young People's Services and also from Councillor David Rennard, Lead Member for Children's Services with Swindon Borough.

Overall the process has been managed to allow for an open and frank dialogue between Authorities about levels of performance and pressures that

are being experienced within Children's Social Care Services across the region. It was the clear intent of the regional Children's Improvement Board and the Directors of Children's Services that the Peer Challenge should not feel as if it is an inspection by Ofsted. The key was to enable open and frank discussion. Each Authority that has taken part in the Peer Challenge is now working on an action plan for improvement in the areas submitted for the challenge and the regional Board has provided each Authority with a small sum of money to facilitate continued partnership working across the Authorities who challenged each other.

A report on the quality and effectiveness of the Peer Challenges is now being coordinated and will be submitted to the National Children's Improvement Board by the end of March.

A further round of Peer Challenges will begin in late summer 2013 concluding in late January 2014. The regional Board and the 16 Directors of Children's Services have agreed that the focus should continue to be around safeguarding services, thresholds for action and the quality of the early help and preventative support made available to children and families.

As a Director of Children's Services, I have found the Peer Challenge process to be immensely helpful. We were able to engage a number of key front line staff in discussing their work and whilst the process was very challenging, it was also professionally rewarding for both the recipient Authority and the Authority providing the challenge.

We intend to fully engage in the next round of Peer Challenges and are currently working on a refresh of our self-assessment as are all other Local Authorities within the South West Region. Until the end of March, I had been the Regional Lead of Sector Led Improvement with a particular emphasis on supporting those Authorities facing the greatest level of challenge. This has been professionally rewarding and has enabled me to transfer some learning back into Bath and North East Somerset with a view to improving our own performance. From 1 April 2013 the lead responsibility will pass to Annie Hudson, Director of Children's Services for Bristol City Council and Linda Uren, Director of Children's Services for Gloucestershire County Council.

I would be happy to bring a further report to the Panel when the next round of peer challenges are underway.

Ashley Ayre
Strategic Director: People and Communities

Cabinet Member Report to EYCY PDS 25th March 2013

Recap of main events since the last PDS panel meeting.

1. Budget approved including panels concerns on the savings asked for from Children's Centres. (Will be interested in the findings of this panel on Children's Centres).

2. Children Social Care

Sat in on feedback from Dorset peer challenge which picked up on much of the good practise within this service.

Satisfactory conclusion of Ofsted inspection on Child Protection processes. No change to grading, though many areas described as good.

Appointment of Richard Baldwin, Divisional Director of Children's Social Care.

3. Risk Benefits in Play: launch of new activities in Carrs Wood, with children and HT, David Crouch, of St Michaels School. This, coupled with discussions at Early Years conference with many providers from different settings, highlighted the issues children face with "permission" to play. This tied in with the Rotary's Youth Speak event, one entry was on whether children are over-protected. The young people concluded that they were! This is an issue that I plan on exploring further.

4. Celebrations

Virtual Schools Celebration event: great event celebrating the success of our Children in Care.

Employee Excellence Awards: Congratulations to Mike Gorman (Head of Virtual School), Wendy Hiscock and Team, and Paulton Juniors Governors for their fantastic work and well deserved awards.

5. Meetings

Attended meeting at St Gregory's to hear concerns over proposed changes to HTST.

Also met governors of Paulton Infant and Junior school and Paulton Parish Council to discuss proposed expansion. All support the expansion but most have concerns about the impacts on highways, travel and parking. These are being picked up through the planning process.

Dine Romero

Cabinet Member for Early Years, Children and Youth

This page is intentionally left blank

**Early Years, Children and Youth Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel
25 March 2013**

People and Communities Strategic Directors' Briefing

1. Update on items from briefing 28 January 2013

(i) Staffing Changes

Divisional Director for CYP Specialist Services (Social Care)

Richard Baldwin has been appointed as Divisional Director. Richard joined Bath and North East Somerset Council on 18 March in an interim capacity on secondment from London Borough of Lambeth and has secured the permanent post following a very thorough recruitment process.

I am delighted to welcome Richard to the authority and I am confident that he will make an outstanding contribution.

Director of Public Health

Dr Bruce Laurence has been appointed as Director Public Health and will join us in early June. Bruce is currently Deputy Director in Derbyshire and will bring a depth and breadth of experience to Public health as it returns to the Council.

Paul Scott will continue as Acting DPH until early June, Paul has made a fantastic contribution in his acting capacity and I am grateful for his help and expertise over the last few months.

Education Outcomes Lead

This post will lead our Inclusion Support and School Improvement Services. Wendy Hiscock takes on this role temporarily from 1 April until 31 August. We are currently advertising to secure a suitably skilled replacement.

Safeguarding Assurance

Nicola Bennett has secured a promotion with Wiltshire County Council and will leave Bath and North East Somerset in late April. We are now recruiting a replacement.

I want to place on record my thanks to Nicola who has been a great asset to the Council for many years and she will be greatly missed by her colleagues across the entire Children's Schools and health service landscape.

2. Ofsted Inspection of Services to Protect Children

Ofsted arrived at 12.00 on Monday 4 March to carry out an unannounced inspection of our services for protecting children, a telephone call was received at 11.00am on the day to advise of their arrival.

The Inspection lasted until Wednesday 13 March. It is different to past inspections as it primarily focused upon Case work and the experience of the child and family.

A confidential draft report should be received on 25 March; however, judgements are embargoed until mid-April when Ofsted publish the report.

The staff response was excellent and the Ofsted team were extremely challenging, professional, engaging and courteous.

I will bring a full report to the May Panel.

3. Review of Early Years and Children's Centre Services

Following the Council budget setting decision of 19 February I have been asked to develop a proposal for how this piece of work can involve and engage the EYC&Y PDSP.

A briefing paper will be developed for agreement by the Chair within the next two or three weeks to be formally approved at the May PDSP meeting.

Broadly I envisage that the service will carry out a series of briefing workshops for the Panel over the summer concluding in September.

Sarah Willis and her staff will then begin to develop re-structure proposals for debate and consideration by the Panel during autumn 2013. This process will lead to formal proposals by early spring 2014 for wide consultation.

Implementation of the full restructure will happen from 1 April 2015.

A critical element will be to understand how the re-structure of services aligns with the 'thresholds' for access to social services for children and young people and how the interfaces with Connecting Families will work.

Panel may wish to discuss how they wish to be involved in the shaping of the initial brief I will be providing.

Ashley Ayre
Strategic Director: People and Communities