

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

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

Monday, 8th July, 2013

**Present:- Councillors:** Sally Davis (Chair), Sarah Bevan (Vice-Chair), Liz Hardman, David Veale, Loraine Morgan-Brinkhurst MBE and Michael Evans

**Co-opted Non-voting Members:-** Chris Batten, Peter Mountstephen, Holly Dando and Haze Stockwell-Cooke

**Also in attendance:** Ashley Ayre (People and Communities Strategic Director), Briony Waite (Strategic Planning Officer, Children's Health & Commissioning Service), Mike Bowden (Deputy Director for Children & Young People Strategy and Commissioning) and Richard Baldwin (Divisional Director for Children & Young People Specialist Services)

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

#### **17 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

#### **18 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

The Chair drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

#### **19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

David Williams had sent his apologies to the Panel.

#### **20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

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

Councillor Liz Hardman read out a letter on behalf of Councillor Eleanor Jackson. She wished to thank Councillor Dine Romero for her prompt action ten days ago to save the Secret Garden Project from behind the Victoria Hall. She very much appreciated her response when the young people at Radstock Youth Hub contacted her. She added that she was also indebted to the Children's Centre and Nicky Holt for agreeing to take the raised beds and hoped this could be done as soon as possible.

Councillor Dine Romero, Cabinet Member for Early Years, Children & Youth replied that she was glad to have been able to help.

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

There were none.

**23 MINUTES - 3RD JUNE 2013**

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

**24 PUPIL PARLIAMENTS**

The Strategic Planning Officer introduced this item to the Panel. She explained that on this occasion no presentations had been prepared by the pupils prior to the event and that they had all been created during the day.

She added that the pupils present were representing the Primary Parliament and that she hoped to be able to bring along members of the Young People Parliament to the meeting in September.

The winning presentation was entitled 'Who do you turn to when you feel worried?'

Who do you turn to?

A friend, a teacher, a trusted grown up, ChildLine.

What should you do?

Talk about your feelings, report incidents of concern.

What should you not do?

Do not bottle your feelings up, do not react with an act of violence.

The Chair asked if a booklet of the event was going to be published.

The Strategic Planning Officer said that one would be available in due course.

Councillor Dine Romero, Cabinet Member for Early Years, Children & Youth congratulated the pupils on their work. She asked is this would be linked to the bullying work that arose out of Parliaments held last year.

The Strategic Planning Officer replied that it would be linked to the previous years' bullying work and the equalities work which is now on-going with schools. She added that there was now an online form that could be used for pupils to report bullying.

Councillor Sarah Bevan asked if the Panel could receive a formal report on bullying at school at some stage.

The Strategic Planning Officer replied that a report could be prepared for the Panel for a future meeting.

The Chair thanked the Strategic Planning Officer and all the pupils for attending and for the work they had done on the day.

## **25 BETHLEHEM B&NES LINKS**

Mr Peter Downey introduced this item to the Panel. He explained that the aim of the project was to create links between the two countries in many walks of life. He added that in particular, one idea was to have a sports festival involving the 13 Secondary Schools within Bath & North East Somerset and to invite around 80 children from Bethlehem to take part.

He said that teams would take part in Football, Netball, Basketball, Table Tennis and Dance. He commented that he had received a great reaction for the event from the schools he had visited.

He spoke of how he hoped the visiting pupils would be accommodated with local families and that if possible he would like a similar event to take place next year in Bethlehem.

Councillor Sarah Bevan asked on what dates the festival take would place.

Mr Peter Downey replied that it was to be held from 21<sup>st</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> September.

Councillor Liz Hardman commented that she felt it would be a wonderful opportunity for the visiting pupils. She asked if there would be any difficulties regarding language or culture.

Mr Peter Downey replied that the majority of pupils would speak English and that two chefs would travel with the group to cover any dietary requirements.

Councillor Loraine Morgan-Brinkhurst asked what funds were required for the event.

Mr Peter Downey replied that air fares were to cost £450 per child (80 children) and that the festival itself was likely to cost £27,000. He added that £22,000 of this figure had already been raised.

## **26 CABINET MEMBER UPDATE**

Councillor Dine Romero, Cabinet Member for Early Years, Children & Youth addressed the Panel. She spoke of how she had attended the Young People Parliament event and had found it to be very interesting.

She stated that had also been very impressed with the work regarding the Celebration of Fatherhood project.

The Chair thanked her for her update.

## **27 PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES STRATEGIC DIRECTOR'S BRIEFING**

The People and Communities Strategic Director addressed the Panel. He informed them as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review the Education Support Grant to the Council would be cut by £420,000.

He said that the Council's Head of School Improvement and Achievement was conducting an analysis of the old and new Ofsted frameworks. He reported that so far 15 grades for Primary Schools had gone up and 9 had gone down. He commented that it would be interesting to see how this plays out over the coming months.

Peter Mountstephen commented that the bar could not keep on being raised by Ofsted and that he was concerned by the nature of the proposed cuts. He added that he believed that schools should maintain a link with their Local Authority.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked if any school was currently failing and if so what would Council's role be.

The People and Communities Strategic Director replied that no school was within a failing category. He added that if one was to be found then the Council would work with the school to provide an improvement plan and encourage peer support from other local schools.

He said that in terms of Academies the Council may think it has a role, Ofsted and the Government may think the Council has a role but in reality the Academy can simply stop us from becoming involved.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked who then helps Academies if they are found to be failing.

The People and Communities Strategic Director replied that there was a division within the Department of Education to aid with the construction of an improvement plan.

The Chair at this point on behalf of the Panel wished to thank Wendy Hiscock, Head of School Improvement and Achievement for all the work she had done as she was due to leave the Council over the summer.

## **28 PANEL WORKPLAN**

The Chair introduced this item to the Panel and asked if any member wished to comment on the workplan.

Councillor Loraine Morgan-Brinkhurst commented that she was intrigued by the work of the Bath Food Bank having recently become aware of it and asked if there was any on-going child poverty work the Panel could be made aware of or whether volunteers from the Food Bank could deliver a presentation to a future meeting.

The People & Communities Strategic Director replied that this area of work was a big concern to him, but stressed that it was also very complex. He cited the Welfare

Reform and changes to Housing and other benefits that needed to be assessed. He added that a duty to help families in need remained upon the Council under section 17 of the Education Act.

He commented that he felt that the Pupil Premium was not enough and that it should also be able to help children who are under five years old.

He also said that departments within the Council were not allowed to share some data on families currently and that he was trying to unlock this barrier through the use of Community Budgets.

Councillor Dine Romero, Cabinet Member for Early Years, Children & Youth suggested the Panel could receive further information about this matter informally.

The People & Communities Strategic Director replied that a factsheet could be created for them and suggested that a gateway group could be formed within the Council on the matter.

Councillor David Veale asked how many families would be part of the Connecting Families project.

The People & Communities Strategic Director replied that the aim was to work with 189 families over three years.

The meeting ended at 6.00 pm

Chair(person) .....

Date Confirmed and Signed .....

**Prepared by Democratic Services**