

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

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

Monday, 24th March, 2014

**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 and Ed Joseph

**Also in attendance:** Mike Bowden (Deputy Director for Children & Young People, Strategy & Commissioning), Richard Baldwin (Divisional Director, Children & Young People, Specialist Services) and Kevin Amos (Parent Support Services Manager)

#### **84 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

#### **85 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

The Chair drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

#### **86 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

David Williams and Peter Mountstephen who are both Co-opted Members of the Panel had sent their apologies.

Ashley Ayre, the People & Communities Strategic Director had also sent his apologies to the Panel.

#### **87 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

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

There was none.

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

Councillor Eleanor Jackson addressed the Panel on the subject of the proposed sale of Radstock Library. A copy of the statement can be found on the Panel's Minute

Book and online as an attachment to these minutes. A summary is set out below. She also handed in a petition signed by 80 Radstock residents.

She stated that the library had been recently renovated, was purpose built and used overwhelmingly by children and the elderly as well as job and accommodation seekers who have no access to computers of their own.

She said that it was regarded as a friendly building where the Surgery holds clinics for young mums and teenagers at risk, but more importantly, it is where Children's Services have an essential office with two desks.

She added that it made no sense to her to dispose of a building just when Children's Services are being remodelled and Radstock is becoming the North East Somerset 'hub', with even more pressure on space.

She closed by saying that as the focus would now more and more be on 'targeted' clients, a space where troubled teenagers feel comfortable is invaluable and therefore the library should be kept open.

Councillor Liz Hardman commented that she shared the concerns of Councillor Jackson and did not think that moving the library and its associated services would be wholly suitable.

Councillor Dine Romero, Cabinet Member for Early Years, Children & Youth said that the views expressed by Councillors Jackson and Hardman along with the petition could be fed into the consultation process.

Councillor Hardman asked if a timetable for the decision was known.

Councillor Romero said that she would find out that information for the Panel.

The Chair welcomed the comments from Councillor Romero and the Panel agreed that the petition should be fed into the consultation. She also asked for the Panel to be updated at their May meeting if not sooner on when the consultation process would begin.

## **90 MINUTES - 27TH JANUARY 2014**

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

## **91 SCHOOL TERM AND HOLIDAY DATES 2015-16**

The Parent Support Services Manager introduced this item to the Panel. He explained that for the 2014-15 Academic Year the Cabinet agreed to set a calendar based on a 190 day model with 5 in-service days being taken outside of these dates. He added that this decision had not been universally popular with schools and as a result for 2015-16 the Local authority consulted on a 190 and 195 day model.

He informed them that a total of 11 schools had responded in favour of a 195 day model. A joint response on behalf of the Norton Radstock Schools also favoured the 195 day model. A number of schools suggested bringing the holiday in the 195 day model at the end of term 4 forward a week so it follows on from the two public holidays at Easter. These dates are attached to the report as Appendix C.

Councillor Loraine Morgan-Brinkhurst commented that her preference would be the 190 day model shown as Appendix A.

Councillor Liz Hardman proposed that the Panel should recommend Appendix C as it offers schools a degree of flexibility and pupils would be fresher following the Easter holidays.

Chris Batten asked if Appendix C had similar dates to those proposed by other Local Authorities.

The Parent Support Services Manager replied that other Local Authorities had been consulted and he was awaiting their reply.

Chris Batten asked if when the replies had been received they would be shared with the Cabinet Member.

The Parent Support Services Manager replied that they would.

Councillor Michael Evans commented that his preferred option was Appendix C and that he would second the proposal made by Councillor Hardman.

The Chair said that she thought that Appendix C was an even hand out of dates and gave the best structure for learning. She then asked the Panel to vote on the proposal of Councillor Hardman to recommend Appendix C which had been seconded by Councillor Evans.

The Panel voted by 5 in favour and 1 against to recommend Appendix C to the Cabinet Member for Early Years, Children & Youth.

## **92 PROPOSALS FOR FUTURE REPORTING OF EDUCATION RESULTS TO THE PANEL**

The Deputy Director for Children & Young People – Strategy & Commissioning introduced this item to the Panel. He explained that a report would be presented to them each March and would be a summary of key results for the year, including those of vulnerable groups such as those eligible for free school meals. He added that the report would highlight key successes and key issues. He proposed that this year's report be submitted to the next Panel meeting in May.

Councillor Liz Hardman proposed that a fifth bullet point be added to recommendation 2.2 that read 'Attainment of All Pupil Premium Children'.

The Panel agreed with this proposal and resolved to accept the following recommendations;

- i) The Panel will receive a report annually summarising the main results of the previous academic year. Key successes and key issues would be highlighted.
- ii) The report will cover education attainment and progress for all pupils and for vulnerable groups including:
  - (1) attainment in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile
  - (2) attainment and progress at Key Stages 2 and 4
  - (3) attainment at Key Stage 5
  - (4) attainment of looked after children
  - (5) attainment of all Pupil Premium children
- iii) The Panel will receive the first of these reports at its May 2014 meeting.

### **93 FAMILY INFORMATION SERVICE**

The Deputy Director for Children & Young People – Strategy & Commissioning introduced this item to the Panel. He informed them that it was a statutory requirement to have a service such as this within the Council.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked what the budget was for the service and were any changes being proposed for it in the future.

The Deputy Director for Children & Young People – Strategy & Commissioning replied that he was unsure of the total budget for the service and would seek an answer for the Panel. He added that no budget changes were proposed for the service.

Councillor Sarah Bevan asked how this service differed from the work within Connecting Families.

The Deputy Director for Children & Young People – Strategy & Commissioning replied that the role of this service was to provide general information, advice and assistance to parents and to ensure parents and prospective parents can access the full range of information they may need to support their children physically, emotionally and socially.

He added that Connecting Families sought to enable families with multiple complex needs to receive the services they need to change and to support them to achieve resilience, health and wellbeing within their community.

Councillor Loraine Morgan-Brinkhurst said that she would like to see further dialogue with Sirona encouraged so that they are able to highlight services available to new parents.

Councillor David Veale commended the work of officers involved in the service, but asked where possible for the systems to be made simpler so that more people can understand them.

The Deputy Director for Children & Young People – Strategy & Commissioning replied that it was hoped that work around the Children & Families Bill, which had just received Royal Assent would enable this as it intends to make more central the needs of the child.

The Chair commented that some parents may find it difficult to accept the help offered as factors within the family may not always be that simple. She also wished to commend the work of officers within the service.

#### **94 PARENT PARTNERSHIP SERVICE**

The Deputy Director for Children & Young People – Strategy & Commissioning introduced this item to the Panel. He explained that the Council's Parent Partnership Service fulfils its statutory duty under the Special Educational Needs & Disability Act 2001 and the SEN Code of Practice (2001), to provide parents of children with Special Education Needs with information, advice and support. He added that the service provides advice to all parents of children with additional needs, including those with disabilities, from 0-19 years.

Chris Batten asked why if the number of contacts and cases had risen within 2012 / 13 had the number of Independent Support Workers decreased.

The Deputy Director for Children & Young People – Strategy & Commissioning replied that the number of hours worked had remained the same and that it was about ensuring the right level of support was in place.

The Chair thanked him for presenting the report and wished to thank the staff involved in the service for their work.

#### **95 LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN'S BOARD REPORT (2013 / 14) & WORK PROGRAMME (2014 / 15)**

The Deputy Director for Children and Young People, Strategy and Commissioning introduced this item to the Panel. He informed them that the (draft) Annual Report and Work Programme detailed progress with the work of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and the effectiveness of local arrangements for safeguarding children, and the individual member agencies that contribute to this.

He highlighted the key priorities of the Board for 2014 – 15:

1. The LSCB will co-ordinate a multi-agency approach to reduce the risk of CSE (et al) (E-Safety) to Children and Young People.
2. To increase the participation and involvement of children, young people and parents/carers in service improvements and developments.
- 3.i A robust audit tool to be used to determine the quality of safeguarding and compliance with Section 11 across all member agencies required to complete Section 11.

- 3.ii A 'common' tool to be used across B&NES, Bristol, North Somerset and Somerset for co-terminus agencies working within those authorities.
4. Sufficient and Competent Workforce to ensure Children and Young People are 'safe'.
5. Continuous Improvement of the LSCB.

Councillor Sarah Bevan asked if the Council was as sure as it could be that other agencies were communicating with each other.

The Deputy Director for Children and Young People, Strategy and Commissioning replied that he considered the LSCB to be a well-functioning Board that has good partnership arrangements. He added that any Board should always seek to do better.

Councillor Sarah Bevan asked if the subject of Female Genital Mutilation was on the agenda for the Council.

The Divisional Director for Children and Young People, Specialist Services replied that it was on their agenda and he had attended two meetings on the matter within the last week.

Councillor Liz Hardman commented that it was a very thorough workplan. She asked if the Panel should have been made aware of the Serious Case Review that took place in 2013 and were there lessons to be learned from it. She also asked if the resources available to the LSCB were adequate enough.

The Deputy Director for Children and Young People, Strategy and Commissioning replied that it was the role of the LSCB to handle the Serious Case Review and the Panel's role is to receive the Annual Report to assure them that it has been dealt with. He added that lessons had been taken from the review and that he believed sufficient resources were in place for the role of the LSCB. He said that he looked at the caseloads himself on a regular basis.

Councillor Michael Evans asked if the Police were represented on the Board.

The Deputy Director for Children and Young People, Strategy and Commissioning replied that they were, among a whole range of other bodies.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to note the report and the proposals within the (draft) Annual Report 2013-2014 and Work Programme 2014-2015 which will determine the work of the LSCB over the coming year.

## **96 DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICE - TEST OF ASSURANCE**

The Deputy Director for Children and Young People, Strategy and Commissioning introduced this item to the Panel. He explained that the Statutory Guidance concerning the duties of the Director of Children's Services was revised in summer

2013 and the Guidance recommends that where the DCS role is combined with other duties a test of assurance is undertaken.

The Test of Assurance was carried out by Bronwen Lacey a specialist consultant in Children's Services and a former Director of Children's Services for Plymouth Council.

He informed the Panel that the test of assurance reached the overall conclusion that our new structures, systems and lines of accountability are understood and allow the local authority to;

- Fulfil our statutory duties
- Be transparent about accountabilities and responsibilities
- Support effective interagency and partnership working

Councillor Loraine Morgan-Brinkhurst commented that she was surprised that the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Early Years, Children & Youth were not mentioned as recipients of the final report.

The Deputy Director for Children and Young People, Strategy and Commissioning replied that the recipients listed were set down from statutory guidance.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to;

(i) Note the Test of Assurance Report

(ii) Request the Strategic Director of People and Communities to:

- Refresh the Scheme of Delegation
- Develop a Participation and Consultation Strategy
- Develop a Single Commissioning Strategy

(iii) Request a second Test of Assurance on partnership and governance arrangements to be completed by March 2015.

## **97 POLICY DEVELOPMENT & SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS - ALCOHOL HARM REDUCTION STRATEGY**

Councillor Liz Hardman introduced this item to the Panel. She informed them that the review heard a great deal of evidence during the day. She said that the most concerning information was around the number of young people aged under 18 who were being admitted to hospital due to the intake of alcohol and that this included a large number of admissions of young people that were aged under 16.

She stated that early education on the causes and effects of alcohol harm were vital and that the role of the Council's Drug & PSHE Consultant was key.

The Chair asked if it could be clarified if the Young People's Substance Misuse Group would be taking the lead to focus on the topics of self-harm flagged in recommendation 1b.

The Deputy Director for Children & Young People, Strategy & Commissioning replied that they would alongside the Children & Young People's Emotional Health and Wellbeing Group.

Councillor Michael Evans asked if Licensed Premises within the Council could be refreshed of their responsibilities towards young people.

The Divisional Director for Children & Young People, Specialist Services replied that work had recently been undertaken with Licensing Officers to highlight the need to protect vulnerable children.

The Chair on behalf of the Panel wished to thank everybody that took part in the review.

## **98 CABINET MEMBER UPDATE**

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

She informed them that she had attended the Youth Parliament Elections and wished to commend the work of everyone involved as it was a successful event. She also wished to congratulate Ed Joseph on becoming the Member of Youth Parliament for Bath and North East Somerset.

She said that she had attended a music collaboration event at Wellsway School and was very proud of the music offer that schools provide to their pupils.

She spoke of the innovative schemes to enhance the wellbeing of our children that she had heard about whilst attending the Director of Public Health Awards.

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

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

The Deputy Director for Children & Young People, Strategy & Commissioning handed out the brief that had been prepared by the People and Communities Strategic Director. It covered the following topics;

### **1. Children and Families Act**

The new Act is in place following Royal Assent. There will be significant changes for our social care practice and there will be a substantial financial pressure particularly in relation to the extension of foster care up to the age of 21 years. Overall, the Act is a positive change and will improve services for children and young people.

### **2. Single Inspection framework (SIF)**

Ofsted have now implemented their new SIF which combines the inspection of Child Protection, Looked After Children, Fostering and Adoption Services. The inspectors will also judge the effectiveness of our adoption outcomes and the quality of services

to Care Leavers. The new SIF will last for four weeks with Ofsted HMI on site for the first, third and fourth week.

### 3. School Organisation and Capital Investment Plans

Cabinet will consider these two plans on 9 April. The School Organisation Plan identifies the pressures within the school system related to both housing growth and underlying population growth. Aligned to this is the plan for capital investment to deal with 'Basic Need' (Underlying population growth) and maintenance spend. These will be in addition to any capital/'in kind' contributions from housing developers which have major school place planning implications. This has been a very challenging task and the School Capital and Organisation Team and Admissions and Transport Team have done outstanding work.

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

## 100 PANEL WORKPLAN

The Chair introduced this item to the Panel. She asked if they wished to add or amend any reports that were listed on the plan.

Councillor Sarah Bevan asked for a report on the work of Apprenticeships to be presented to a future meeting of the Panel.

Councillor Liz Hardman commented that the report relating to educational results and attainment would need to be added for May. She also asked for an update on the work relating to the restructure of Children's Centres.

The Chair considered how that information should be conveyed and asked for a verbal update at the May meeting on Children's Centres.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to agree with all of the proposals raised.

The meeting ended at 6.10 pm

Chair(person) .....

Date Confirmed and Signed .....

**Prepared by Democratic Services**

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**We, the under-signed residents of Bath and North East Somerset, petition the Early Years and Children's Scrutiny Panel to investigate the proposed sale of the Radstock Library building and re-location of the library *because***

- **this is a child-friendly popular facility with holiday programmes to encourage reading**
- **many children in Radstock do not have home computers to help with their learning**
- **children's services and health programmes currently organised there will cease for lack of appropriate accommodation.**
- **The council should not be selling off a valuable community asset.**

**We deplore the total lack of public consultation**

This is the wording on a petition signed by 80 Radstock residents and a 'ballet dad' from Shepton Mallet who uses the library while waiting for his daughter to finish her classes. He is very impressed with what B&NES Council provides and thinks we should keep it! However, I am speaking tonight **not** because I think that the family silver is being sold off in an effort to balance the books after all the expenditure on the Victoria Hall, **nor** because I think it is a daft idea to rent space in a commercial building when you own a property, **nor** because it is outrageous that there has been no public consultation. After all, there could be arguments in favour of demolishing an eyesore sandwiched between two Victorian listed buildings and opposite a Georgian one (Hope House Surgery). No, the point I want to make tonight is that this is a purpose built, recently renovated library used overwhelmingly by children and the elderly, as well as by job and accommodation seeking teenagers who have no access to computers of their own.

It is a friendly building where the Surgery holds clinics for young mums and teenagers at risk, but more importantly, it is where Children's Services have an essential office with two desks, hold events for small children which cannot be fitted into the overflowing Children's Centre/Youth Hub, and even convene district meetings. It seems to me deeply ironic to the point of nonsensical to dispose of a building just when children's services are being remodelled and Radstock is becoming the NE Somerset 'hub', with even more pressure on space. Similarly, as the focus is more and more on 'targetted' clients, a space where troubled teenagers feel comfortable is invaluable. There is no space in the Victoria Hall, the Methodist Church is too daunting, and Leigh House is not DDA compliant nor properly maintained. Therefore this resource should be kept.

Cllr Eleanor Jackson, Radstock Town Council and B&NES Council

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