

Minutes of the Meeting held

Tuesday, 17th November, 2015, 5.30 pm

Bath and North East Somerset Councillors: Lisa Brett (Chair), Matt Cochrane (Vice-Chair), Karen Warrington, Peter Turner, Sally Davis, Alison Millar and Liz Hardman

Co-opted Voting Members: Andrew Tarrant (Diocese of Clifton)

Co-opted Non-voting Members: Chris Batten (ATL)

Officers : Ashley Ayre (People & Communities Strategic Director), Mike Bowden (Director, Children & Young People, Strategy and Commissioning), Sarah Watts (Complaints Procedure Manager) and Sara Willis (Service Manager, 0-11 Outcomes).

Cabinet Members in attendance: Councillor Michael Evans

27 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

28 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chair drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

29 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

David Williams had sent his apologies to the Panel.

30 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Liz Hardman declared an other interest as she is a governor at The Link (Aspire) School.

31 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN

There was none.

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

Ian Parsons addressed the Panel on the matter of Duke of Edinburgh Award funding. He said that he was one of seven leaders that worked in the local area and that he was concerned about the proposed cuts within the latest budget.

He explained that the local centres provided regular sessions for 14 – 18 year olds to learn new skills and where necessary catch up on life skills.

He said the Council currently provides safeguarding and child protection advice to leaders and volunteers involved in the Duke of Edinburgh Awards. He added that they also offer general support and advice to volunteers. He was feared that without this support the volunteer base would reduce significantly.

He called for the Council to retain the licence that allows them to be part of the national scheme.

The Chair asked if he felt that there was a potential risk to either children or volunteer recruitment should the Council pass over the licence to another organisation.

Ian Parsons replied that if another organisation were to take up the licence he would be initially concerned that they knew enough about the rules and parameters of working with young people and that this possible lack of stability would put people off from applying to take part.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked how the possibility of funding being withdrawn had affected their current work.

Ian Parsons replied that they had not been able to start their current scheme because they could not confidently say that it would be completed.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked how much directing funding do they receive from the Council outside the cost of maintaining the licence etc.

Ian Parsons replied that they receive some money towards the running costs of the mini bus and that he believed the fee for the licence was £1,500.

Dave Bonstow addressed the Panel on the same matter. He said that they had only been informed by email of the decision for funding to be withdrawn and he asked if any of the young people involved in the scheme had been made aware of this. He said that he also questioned the figure of £30,000 as the cost to the Council's involvement.

He felt that the children that gain the most from the scheme currently would miss out if it were to be run through schools. He wished to encourage officers within the Council to have further conversations with those involved before making a final decision.

Councillor Peter Turner said that he had some sympathy with the speakers as he himself was a mentor for the Prince's Trust. He added that he felt that a support network was vital to the success of the scheme.

Councillor Michael Evans, Cabinet Member for Children's Services thanked both of the speakers for their statements and said he was pleased to announce that he had obtained funding for the Open Centres in Keynsham & Bath to continue their provision with the current level of LA support. This will be on a one-off basis for the remainder of the 2016 financial year, and within the People & Communities Budget for subsequent years, subject to a review of take-up.

The Chair said that she was pleased to hear of this decision and thanked the Cabinet Member.

Councillor Matt Cochrane asked that the reduced figures for this year be taken into account in any future review.

Dave Bonstow thanked Councillor Evans for his decision as he did not believe that as many people would take part if it had been run by 'uniform groups' such as the Scouts. He added that he hoped that consultation in the future could prevent a similar situation.

33 MINUTES - 15TH SEPTEMBER 2015

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

34 CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

Councillor Michael Evans, Cabinet Member for Children's Services addressed the Panel. He informed them that he had attended a meeting of South West Lead Members on October 22nd where they received a presentation from Bradley Simmons, Ofsted Regional Director, South West.

He said that he took away the following particular points from the meeting:

- i) Attainment at Key Stage 5 (2014); B&NES performed below the national average for 3A* - A or better. B&NES performed at national average for AAB or better. On both performance measures we were slightly better than Bristol, on a par with North Somerset and decisively poorer than Wiltshire, Poole, Bournemouth, Gloucestershire and Torbay.

He said that this confirmed his concern that as an area we are not serving our higher ability students as well as we should be and that he would continue to exert what influence he has to highlight their needs.

- ii) Value added for previously high attaining pupils KS2 to KS4 (2014); B&NES performed slightly below national average. Dorset, Bristol, Isles of Scilly, Devon, Bournemouth, Torbay, Poole, North Somerset, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire all outperformed B&NES on this performance measure.

- iii) KS1 to KS2 Value Added Score (2014) for previously high attaining pupils; B&NES was below the national average on this measure and in the South West it was below Somerset, Devon, South Gloucestershire, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Torbay, Bristol and the Isles of Scilly.

He said that this evidence gave him cause for concern.

On October 20th he attended a meeting of the Children & Young People's Network. He said that he was impressed by the contributions of young people who came forward to give feedback on their experience of some of the services they receive. He said that there was a strong feeling of the need for a Member's Champion for Voluntary Services so that these groups have someone within the Council who would be conscious of their concerns and represent them if necessary. He asked for any member interested in the role to put their name forward.

He said that he had met with Dr Melanie Macer and Dr Laura Green to further discuss the matter of the Child Friendly City. He informed the Panel that the Bath Spa University Institute for Education would consider funding a project to develop a B&NES Child Friendly City manifesto using online tools including Learn to Lead to maximise young people's involvement. He added that the manifesto would frame the job and person specification for a Project Officer. Further funding would then be sought from appropriate Trusts and potentially crowd funding to finance the post.

He said that he was happy to support and further explore this initiative and learn more about the Learn to Lead programme and to hopefully see it in action at Chew Valley School.

Finally, he stated that discussions are well advanced with stakeholders for a project to refurbish the Riverside Youth Centre for inclusion in the 2016/17 budget.

Councillor Liz Hardman suggested that Value Added information be included in the exam results reports that the Panel receive.

Councillor Lisa Brett noted there were significant pressures on SEND provisions across B&NES, that Special School Places are now at capacity, and that the Council now have to pay for independent school provision.

She asked what is the additional cost to B&NES between state and independent provision for SEND (per child/currently/four year forecast) and how far advanced are plans to build another special school.

Councillor Evans replied that the costs associated with an SEN pupil at a state school is £18,500 and at an independent school is £81,000. He added that a better mix of SEN provision is required across the Council.

The Strategic Director for People & Communities added that whilst B&NES does need further provision it does have to be the right mix. He said that this could come in the shape of specialised units within mainstream schools.

Councillor Lisa Brett further noted that it is not just special schools who are struggling, all schools in BANES are experiencing increased demand for SEND provision due to legislative changes, additional burdens being introduced by central government without sufficient additional resources.

Councillor Lisa Brett asked what is the Council's budget shortfall for SEND provision in schools and what steps are being undertaken to ensure that, despite the shortfall in the budget, children are getting the level of support they legally entitled to.

The Strategic Director for People & Communities replied that there had been a 50% increase in assessments over the past year due to the new legislation, so there is a cost towards pupil support and administration. He added that the Council receives £180,000 through new burdens funding, but that he felt that total costs would be around £200,000 more, these are costs that the Council has to meet. He said that the budget pressure related to levels of pupils support and placements costs lie with the schools and not the Local Authority through the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).

Councillor Liz Hardman asked if he could explain further a line from the report that said existing resources for this work area were not enough.

The Strategic Director for People & Communities replied that this was regarding the numbers of staff required to administer the new assessments. He added that he had discussed this matter with schools over a number of years to seek them working more collaboratively and inclusively so that more children are supported locally and the numbers moving into provision outside of the area is restricted to those that truly require a highly specialist school placement.

The Chair asked if the automatic enrolment to pensions which is to cost around £1.1m should be seen as a 'Stealth Tax' to the Treasury and a way of not implementing direct cuts.

Councillor Evans replied that he would not wish to comment until the comprehensive spending review had been announced.

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

35 CHILDREN'S CENTRES / STAFF MUTUAL

The Director for Children & Young People, Strategy & Commissioning explained that a review and redesign of Children Centre services was carried out following the budget setting process of 2013 and was supported by a task and finish group of the Early Years, Children & Youth Panel. The new model for service delivery was agreed at Cabinet in September 2014.

He said that a Staff Mutual Project Board was established to provide independent support and a challenge through the development process.

He informed the Panel that the Board had now concluded that the potential gains of a staff mutual model are not sufficient to outweigh the financial disadvantages. He added that both the Council run service and the commissioned service (First Steps) have confirmed that the services can be delivered within the reduced budget without the need to move to a two centre management arrangement.

The Chair congratulated the staff group managers for being able to self-fund the delivery of some universal services. She asked for reassurance that the momentum of expanding the trading of services isn't lost.

The Service Manager for 0-11 Outcomes replied that the demand for services is high and that they feel there is potential and an appetite to deliver universal services.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked if the service could still bid for grants.

The Service Manager for 0-11 Outcomes replied that they have a strong partnership with First Steps and others, including Sirona and would work with them on related bids which can be submitted by those partners with input from the service.

The People & Communities Strategic Director added that the Council would be part of the planning process for grant bids.

The Panel **RESOLVED** note the report.

36 ANNUAL REPORT ON CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS 2014-15

The Complaints Procedure Manager introduced this report to the Panel. She explained that during the year a total of 86 complaints were received and recorded under the Children's Service statutory complaints procedure or the Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure. She added that 39 compliments or letters of thanks were recorded.

She stated that in the past five years there had been a significant increase in the number of complaints and representations received. However, despite this it has not resulted in a significant increase in the number of complaints escalated to Stage 2.

Councillor Karen Warrington asked if they could identify any reason for the increase.

The Complaints Procedure Manager replied that she thought that the public were more aware of the ability to complain and able to access information online.

Councillor Alison Millar asked if they were happy with the figures.

The People & Communities Strategic Director replied that he was delighted with the compliments received and he recalled comments from one Headteacher regarding a particular Social Worker on the depth of work that they had carried out. He added that the directorate had recently achieved the Customer Service Excellence Award.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked if there were any follow up procedures for staff involved in a complaint.

The Complaints Procedure Manager replied that Team Managers were given feedback, they were discussed at supervision meetings and any related training was provided for staff.

The Chair congratulated the Complaints Procedures Manager on getting 39 compliments - almost a third of all comments formally recorded were complimentary

The People & Communities Strategic Director added that staff do always make people aware of the ability to complain when there is a difference of opinion. He

added that there are two In Care Councils as well as an advocacy service that is available. He said that he wished to praise the Social Work teams for all that they do and the work of the Complaints Procedure Manager and her small team in particular.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to note the report.

37 DIRECTORATE PLAN FOR PEOPLE & COMMUNITIES

The Chair asked from where the £1.2m associated with increased employer's national insurance contributions in the Children's Services budget would come.

The People & Communities Director replied that this was a sum that would be sourced from the central corporate budget.

Councillor Alison Millar asked how much of a budget impact will there be to the Council when it welcomes Syrian refugees to the area.

The People & Communities Director replied that the key first step is housing and they will need access to good interpretation services in order that we can fully assess the needs of each family member. We can then access families into the services needed including health and education. He added that Government funding is allocated for one year. He stated that it is likely that families will present with a high degree of need given the trauma and dislocation they have suffered and that he had been pleased to hear that some schools will breach their admission numbers if required in order to admit any children.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked if the Panel could receive the Alternative Provision Strategy at their next meeting.

The People & Communities Director replied that they could and said that the plan is to double the amount of provision.

The Chair queried the Health, Commissioning & Planning budget line as the income line seems extraordinarily high, whereas the Direct Schools Budget grant appears to be non-existent on the line below.

Officers agreed this was a quirk of the accounting system that they planned to address.

The Chair asked how accurate can officers be with regard to their growth assumptions for the area.

The People & Communities Director replied that birth data is used and analysed as the children grow and their care needs change.

The Chair asked for an explanation of the impact to children of the efficiency savings of £450,000 relating to substance misuse and £50,000 relating to sexual health.

The People & Communities Director replied that these figures were regarding adults and related to how the Council manages its resources and the ability to signpost people to services. He added that he did not anticipate an adverse effect on Children & Young People.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked if a direct grant to the Music Service was to cease and if so would more children have to pay for lessons.

The People & Communities Director replied that the service was moving towards becoming self-funded and that a grant was available from central Government. He added that the majority of music lessons have always had to be paid for.

The Chair asked if once the indicative settlement announcement had been made would there be a draft medium-term 3 year budget plan available for their January meeting.

The People & Communities Director replied that he was already working within a four year plan and clear figures would be available for 2016 / 17. He added that care placement costs would be a focus as we move forward.

38 PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES STRATEGIC DIRECTOR'S BRIEFING

The People & Communities Strategic Director addressed the Panel.

Educational Outcomes 2015 – Provisional results data

Early Years Foundation Stage: Above national average and improved on last year, with the performance gap narrowing for disadvantaged children.

Key Stage 1: Overall attainment at Level 2b+ was above national average and improved in reading, writing and maths, although at Level 3+ some of the attainment gaps have widened.

Key Stage 2: Overall attainment is significantly above national average, but gaps for disadvantaged pupils remain a concern. The proportion of pupils making better than expected progress is below the national average.

Key Stage 4: B&NES are second highest in the South West for 5A* to C GCSEs including English and Maths, and highest in the South West for English Baccalaureate.

He said that confirmed results and further analysis will be reported to the Panel in March 2016.

Child Sexual Exploitation – Integrated Victim Identification and Support Service

He informed the Panel that this project has been established as a partnership across Avon & Somerset Constabulary, Wiltshire Constabulary areas and the National Children's Charity Barnardo's.

He added that within B&NES the project is fully aligned with the Children's Social Care Services including the specialist Willow Project.

He said that the Integrated Victim Identification and Support Service is also in discussion with each of the Local Authorities who support the project to agree to joined approaches in relation to information sharing and referrals processes.

Early Help Strategy

The LSCB has published a multi-agency Early Help Strategy which brings together our aims and objectives around early identification and help for children, young people and families. The strategy aims to ensure that key professionals are equipped to identify and intervene at the earliest point of need.

New Children’s Social Care Case Management System (Liquid Logic)

The Council has procured a new case management system for both Children and Adult Social Care. The Children’s system is to be implemented first and has a ‘Go Live’ date of November 25th. An extensive training programme is now underway for all relevant staff to ensure that workers are appropriately skilled.

SEN Strategy Development

He explained that the Local Authority has proposed and Schools have agreed to support the development of a new SEN strategy to consider the demand for and supply of SEN provision. He said that as mentioned earlier in the meeting legislative changes which took effect in September 2014 have resulted in a 48% increase in requests for assessments. He added that this may be a topic of interest to a future Panel meeting.

Councillor Sally Davis commented on the good use of a satellite SEN unit at Norton Hill School by Fosseyway School. She added that where possible a lot of parents want their children to remain in mainstream school.

The Chair thanked the People & Communities Strategic Director for his briefing on behalf of the Panel.

39 PANEL WORKPLAN

The Chair introduced this item to the Panel. She asked for an item relating to Pupil Parliament Feedback to be added to the workplan.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked for a report on the Alternative Provision Strategy to be discussed at their meeting in January 2016.

The Panel approved both of these proposals.

The meeting ended at 7.40 pm

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services