

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL

EARLY YEARS, CHILDREN AND YOUTH POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Monday, 3rd June, 2013

Present:- Councillors: Sally Davis (Chair), Sarah Bevan (Vice-Chair), Liz Hardman and Anthony Clarke (In place of Michael Evans)

Co-opted Voting Members:- David Williams

Also in attendance: Tony Parker (Divisional Director for Preventative Services), Briony Waite (Strategic Planning Officer, Children's Health & Commissioning Service), Mike Bowden (Deputy Director for Children and Young People Strategy and Commissioning), Richard Baldwin (Divisional Director for Children & Young People Specialist Services) and John Wilkinson (Acting Divisional Director for Regeneration, Skills and Employment)

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

1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chair drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Councillors Evans, Hall & Morgan-Brinkhurst had sent their apologies to the Panel. Councillor Anthony Clarke was present for the duration of the meeting as a substitute for Councillor Evans.

Apologies were also received from the following Co-opted Members of the Panel – Chris Batten, Tess Daly and Peter Mountstephen.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

5 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN

The Chair announced that at the recent Chairs & Vice Chairs meeting a decision was made to include the Early Years, Children & Youth (EYCY) Panel in developing a Scrutiny Inquiry Day (SID) looking into Alcohol Harm Reduction. She stated that the piece of work had previously started through the Wellbeing panel but, because of overlaps into several other Panel's remits the decision was taken to make this a joint

piece of work. It will be a joint panel SID with input from Planning, Transport & Environment / Economic & Community Development / Wellbeing and EYCY led by Cllr Lisa Brett.

The Chair asked for a nominee from the Panel to help progress the work of the steering group.

Councillor Liz Hardman volunteered to be the Panel's representative.

The Chair thanked Councillor Hardman for taking up this role and asked that she and Councillor Bevan be kept in the loop on work as it progresses.

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

There were none.

7 MINUTES - 25TH MARCH 2013 & 9TH MAY 2013

The Panel confirmed the minutes of the meeting that took place on March 25th 2013 as a true record and they were duly signed by the Chair.

Councillor Liz Hardman proposed the following amendments to the minutes of the meeting that took place on May 9th 2013.

She asked for the fifth paragraph on page 4 to read Councillor Hardman instead of Councillor Harding.

She asked for part of the fifth paragraph on page 5 to be amended to read 'in September 2012 there were 14 children in one academic year who would qualify for transport to their local school if they were not attending St. Gregory's.

She asked for the second paragraph on page 9 to read Councillor Bull instead of Councillor Ball.

The Panel agreed with all of these proposals and the minutes of the meeting that took place on May 9th 2013 were duly signed by the Chair.

8 YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT FEEDBACK

The Strategic Planning Officer introduced this item to the Panel. She explained that following on from last year's event a number of successful initiatives related to anti-bullying had been implemented.

Pupils were given the opportunity to apply for Good Idea Grants and from the applications received it was identified that a vulnerable time of day was time spent in the playground. Grants were then awarded to schools for play equipment to encourage more structured play.

She added that the anti-bullying theme had been worked upon throughout this past academic year and highlighted that a number of equality groups had been set-up.

She announced that this year's events would take place on June 25th for the Primary Parliament at The Guildhall and June 27th for the Young People's Parliament at Bath Community Academy.

She stated that there would be four themes for the events.

- Safe Places
- Keep Well
- Who Do You Turn To?
- Money / Finances / Budget

She added that two further themes would be explored by the Young People's Parliament.

- Transport
- Training / Preparation For Work

Councillor Dine Romero, Cabinet Member for Early Years, Children & Youth commented that she was pleased to see that Academies were due to be involved in the events and asked if any independent schools would be.

The Strategic Planning Officer replied that none were currently.

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

9 SKILLS & EMPLOYABILITY UPDATE

The Acting Divisional Director for Regeneration, Skills and Employment introduced this item to the Panel. He wished to highlight some key points from within the report.

He stated that within B&NES there were over 8,800 benefit claimants, of which approximately 6,000 have been claiming for upwards of two years. He said that the Worklessness Programme Team focus on two particular client groups.

- Young Care Leavers at risk of not being in Education, Training or Employment
- Long term (2 years+) out of work benefit claimants over 25 years old

He added that in recognition of the particular issues faced by individuals in the client groups the Worklessness Team had developed a flexible "Whole Journey Pathway Management" Programme to provide individual clients with flexible solutions tailored to their needs and requirements.

During the past financial year the team engaged 46 clients in individual work experiences and/or the commencement of accredited training which have led to 26 paid outcomes which have removed claimants from out of work benefits.

He informed the Panel that Smart Growth Analytics were commissioned to produce a comprehensive labour market analysis, including future labour market trends, needs and pressures. This is being used as the basis for developing a B&NES Employment & Skills Plan that will be produced and delivered jointly with the B&NES Learning Partnership.

He explained that the Economy, Enterprise & Business Development (EEB) Team supports and provides funding for the B&NES Learning Partnership which brings together education providers and key labour market agencies operating in B&NES. The focus of this work is to make sure the needs of B&NES residents are met by education and job agency providers as well as being articulated through the Local Enterprise Partnership economic and skills initiatives.

The EEB Team have been successful in securing a range of targeted employment & training (TET) outcomes on the Crest Nicholson Bath Western Riverside development. To date 10 apprentices, 10 unemployed skilled trades and a total of 125 up skilling outcomes have been achieved.

The EEB Team are delivering a policy to Cabinet in June to ensure that the Council operates to a corporate standard and looks to deliver a coordinated approach to engaging apprentices, work experience placements, internships and volunteers.

Engaging schools in understanding the scope and shape of future employment opportunities is an important element in the skills agenda. The EEB Team has worked with partners to engage with school students. The B&NES "Have a Go" event organised by the B&NES Learning Partnership delivered over 4500 taster apprenticeship sessions to over 1000 B&NES school students in February 2013.

Councillor Sarah Bevan asked what percentage of apprentices were eventually able to take up employed positions within that company.

The Acting Divisional Director for Regeneration, Skills and Employment said he did not have that information to hand and would supply an answer to the Panel.

Councillor Anthony Clarke suggested that it would be good to see some benchmarking figures for this area of work.

The Acting Divisional Director for Regeneration, Skills and Employment said he did not have that information to hand and would supply an answer to the Panel.

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

10 RAISING THE PARTICIPATION AGE

The Divisional Director for Preventative Services introduced this item to the Panel. He explained that from September 2013 all young people will be required to continue in an approved form of learning or training until the end of the academic year in which they are 17 years old. He added that from September 2015 they will be required to continue until they are 18.

He informed them that currently there was an oversupply of post 16 school and college places within B&NES.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked whose role was it to explain this to the pupils.

The Divisional Director for Preventative Services replied that this was the role of the school and that the Council's commissioned Connexions service provides direct advice and support to schools. He added that the Connexions service was to be brought in house next year and a cut made to the budget of the service will mean that we will have to work more effectively.

The Strategic Planning Officer commented that no focus was given to becoming self-employed.

The Acting Divisional Director for Regeneration Skills and Employment replied that the Council has done some work on this and hoped to do more work regarding it in the future.

The Chair thanked the Divisional Director for Preventative Services and the report author for the update.

11 ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN - INSPECTION / IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Divisional Director for Children & Young People Specialist Services gave a presentation regarding this item, a summary is set out below.

Arrangements for Protection of Children: Ofsted Inspection 4th – 13th March.

Inspection Findings

- Four domains
 - **Overall effectiveness** (How well does the Council deliver Protection Services?)
 - **Effectiveness of help** (Does the service offered meet the assessed need of the CYP?)
 - **Quality of practice** (Are we efficient, effective and professional?)
 - **Leadership and Governance** (How well does the Council lead the multi-agency response to Child Protection?)

Judgement: Adequate in all domains

Overall Effectiveness

- Council and partners have clear strategic focus
- Improvement in practice is evidenced
- Good sense of what continues to need to improve
- Effective political support, good challenge and scrutiny

Effectiveness of Help

- Council responds in a timely and proportionate manner
- Council has to develop overarching 'early help' strategy
- Evidence of good outcomes

- Broad range of services provided/commissioned
- White British culture and social/economic circumstances not always recognised.

Quality of Practice

- HMI alert to massive increase of work coming into Duty System therefore concerned re capacity and possible impact on quality of response
- Decision making timely, robust and evidenced
- Some inconsistency re timeliness but no concerns re practice decisions
- Need to tighten up focus of CP Plans

Leadership and Governance

- Senior leadership focussed and secure
- CYP Plan very strong
- Clear lines of accountability
- Good workforce planning
- Strong performance management and use of data (needs to be fully bedded in)

Improvements Required

- Immediately
 - Ensure that all cases that require social work intervention are allocated without significant delay
 - Take action to ensure a consistency of response to new contacts and referrals so that all cases requiring social care involvement are identified and progressed promptly
- Within three months
 - Ensure that the performance management framework has sufficient focus on qualitative aspects of statutory casework
 - Ensure that weaknesses that have been identified by the local authority in relation to assessments, case conferences and children's plans are addressed
- Within six months
 - Evaluate the impact of early help services and ensure an overarching strategy for early help is in place

Improvement Board

- First meeting 2nd July
- Improvement Plan written and agreed with Senior Management Team.
- Improvement board will include front line Social Workers, and staff from Preventative services.
- Reference group of ex- service users to assist in this process.

Key Areas for Improvement

- Quality and Consistency of Assessments
- Quality and Consistency of Plans for Young People.
- Expand the availability and consideration of Advocacy for Young People
- Improving the analysis of/consideration of cultural needs for young people.
- Improving service-user feed-back

Councillor Liz Hardman asked if the department were disappointed in the judgement and had enough staff.

The Divisional Director for Children & Young People Specialist Services replied that the department was reasonably resourced and was able to accept the judgement considering that the bar for inspections had been raised by Ofsted.

The Divisional Director for Preventative Services added that approximately 40 inspections had taken place under the new Ofsted framework and only 2 had been judged as good. None had been judged as outstanding with 17 being judged as inadequate.

The Chair thanked the officers for their work and the presentation and commented that she would be willing to receive further updates on the matter in the future.

12 DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE REVIEW OF EARLY YEARS & CHILDREN'S CENTRES

The Deputy Director for Children and Young People Strategy and Commissioning introduced this item to the Panel. He explained that the Panel were being asked to consider and agree the Draft Proposal and Terms of Reference and to establish a Task and Finish Group to carry out the detailed work proposed.

He added that this process will allow the Cabinet to consider options for the delivery of £2,335k of savings from the Early Years and Children's Centres budget within the Children's Service over the 2014 – 15 and 2015 – 16 financial years.

He stated that the Panel were to embark on a series of briefings in May, June & July before embarking on a Task and Finish Group exercise from mid-July to late September.

Councillor Liz Hardman commented that Children's Services had to implement huge cuts in the recent budget and wanted it to be clear within the terms of reference that the figures mentioned were proposed savings that would still need to be agreed by the Council.

She also asked that the 3 possible models of operation show what the service would look like having undergone a full range of cuts, a service created from a blank sheet and an intermediate model as it provide the Panel with the appropriate evidence.

Councillor Anthony Clarke commented that he was not happy with the year on year cuts imposed on this service area and asked that the Cabinet be given notice that the Panel feels a degree of protection should be given to Children's Services.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked for section 2(ii) of the terms of reference to be amended so that it was not solely the most vulnerable young people, but also those in danger of becoming vulnerable.

The Divisional Director for Preventative Services commented that during the work of the Task & Finish Group it may be that more than 3 possible models are identified but they need to be aware of the resources they will have at their disposal.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked if the officers agreed with her proposal in principle.

The Deputy Director for Children and Young People Strategy and Commissioning said that he did.

The Chair referred to the timeline within the terms of reference and suggested that if required members of the Panel should visit the centres over the summer to gain further knowledge. She then asked for members of the Panel to indicate if they wish to become part of the Task & Finish Group.

The Vice-Chair, Councillor Sarah Bevan, Councillor Liz Hardman and the Chair, Councillor Sally Davis agreed to form the Task & Finish Group.

Councillor Dine Romero asked if the Panel had considered co-opting someone from outside the Panel onto the Task & Finish Group.

The Chair replied that she would discuss the matter with the Early Years & Extended Services Manager.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to:

- (i) Agree the Draft Proposal and Terms of Reference with the following amendments.

Section 1.ii – At the meeting of Council on 19th February 2013 which agreed the budget 2013 – 2016 an amendment was agreed which deferred the implementation of budget reductions in Early Years and Children’s Centre Services until 2014 – 15. The revised proposed savings profile is set out below:

Section 2.ii – This timescale was identified because of the scale of the reduction to be made; the need to ensure a continuing focus on the most vulnerable young children and their families and those in danger of becoming so;

- (ii) Establish a Task and Finish Group to carry out the detailed work as proposed.

13 FUTURE BUDGET PLANS 2014 / 15 / 16

The Deputy Director for Children and Young People Strategy and Commissioning introduced this item to the Panel. He explained that the most significant budget reductions included in the Plan for 2014/15 and 2015/16 could be summarised under the following headings:-

- a) Early Years, Children’s Centres and Early Help Service
- b) Connexions Service
- c) Commissioned Services
- d) Management Savings
- e) School Improvement and Achievement Service

The Divisional Director for Preventative Services added that officers were due to meet with staff at Connexions later in the week to discuss transitional plans. He said that a report on Special Educational Needs would be likely to come to the Panel in September.

Councillor Liz Hardman commented that it appeared to be disabled young people who were going to be the hardest hit.

The Deputy Director for Children and Young People Strategy and Commissioning replied that £1.8m would still be available to that work area over 3 years.

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

14 CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

Councillor Dine Romero, Cabinet Member for Early Years, Children & Youth addressed the Panel. She wished to highlight the Special Olympics that were due to take place in Bath in August.

She also informed the Panel that she had visited the First Steps Nursery Open Day, the Topping Out Ceremony at Ralph Allen for their Post 16 Additional Resource Centre and an event showcasing the expansion of Paulton Infant and Paulton Junior schools.

The Chair thanked her for her update.

15 PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES STRATEGIC DIRECTOR'S BRIEFING

The Deputy Director for Children and Young People Strategy and Commissioning stated the three main priorities for the People and Communities Strategic Director in his absence.

- Delivering the Budget changes
- Follow up work after the Ofsted inspection
- Ensuring the new Management Structure is working

16 PANEL WORKPLAN

The Chair introduced this item to the Panel. She said that feedback from the Pupil Parliaments should be added to the agenda for July.

Councillor Sarah Bevan suggested the Panel received more information regarding the Special Olympics at their July meeting. She also mentioned a project called Bethlehem B@nes Links and asked if the founder Peter Downey could give an overview of the Youth Sports Festival he is organising for October.

The Divisional Director for Learning and Inclusion asked for the item entitled Exclusions and Admissions to be separated into two.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to make those amendments to their workplan.

The meeting ended at 6.35 pm

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services