

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL

EARLY YEARS, CHILDREN AND YOUTH POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Monday, 26th January, 2015

Present:- Councillors: Sally Davis (Chair), Liz Hardman, David Veale, Loraine Morgan-Brinkhurst MBE, Michael Evans and Nicholas Coombes

Co-opted Voting Members:- David Williams

Co-opted Non-voting Members:- Chris Batten

Also in attendance: Ashley Ayre (Strategic Director, People and Communities), Briony Waite (Strategic Planning Officer, Children's Health & Commissioning), Mike Bowden (Director, Children & Young People, Strategy and Commissioning), Richard Baldwin (Divisional Director, Children & Young People Specialist Services) and Lesley Hutchinson (Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance)

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

69 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

70 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chair drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

71 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Councillor Sarah Bevan and Ed Joseph, Member of Youth Parliament had sent their apologies to the Panel.

72 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

73 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN

There was none.

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

There were none.

75 MINUTES - 24TH NOVEMBER 2014

Councillor Michael Evans asked for part of Minute 59 to be amended as follows.

Councillor Michael Evans commented that he believed our education system was in *relative decline when compared* with developing countries.

He also requested that a question he had asked under Minute 63 be included in the minutes. The question was as follows.

Councillor Michael Evans asked if the Council found it easy to find foster carers.

The Divisional Director for Children & Young People Specialist Services replied that he felt that the Council do better than most authorities in that respect.

With those amendments in mind, the Panel confirmed the minutes of the previous meeting as a true record and they were duly signed by the Chair.

76 SUMMER OF FUN ACTIVITIES (SOFA) - BATH AREA PLAY PROJECT

Caroline Howarth, Director, Bath Area Play Project introduced this item to the Panel. She explained that the Activity Programme was designed to be as inclusive as possible for both disabled and non-disabled young people. She added that young people were involved in the planning of the programme so that the options available were diverse.

The Panel were then shown a video of activities from the previous year.

Councillor Liz Hardman said that it was great to see such an inclusive project and that she was aware that young people from outside of Bath were welcome to attend. She asked what funding would exist for the project from 2016.

Caroline Howarth replied that the project was in year one of a three year contract and that alongside the £20,000 the project receives from B&NES it regularly sought alternative sources of funding. She added that young people do need to pay a fee for some elements of the programme.

She said that should there be a reduction in funding that the length of the programme may have to be reduced, but stated that she believed it was a unique offer which should be maintained.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked if there was any provision in place to assist young people who could not afford to take part in the programme.

Caroline Howarth replied that both Curo and Sovereign helped to pay for young people who lived in their properties.

Councillor Loraine Morgan-Brinkhurst commented that she thought it was a superb scheme and had seen first-hand the impact an art event had had on young people.

David Williams asked the young people present what their most enjoyable part of the programme was.

Eden replied that she had made lots of friends through the events.

Sarah Sealy, the SOFA Development Worker commented that the programme was able to support transitions into Secondary School and that had really been of benefit to Emile as he had been able to meet students of the same school prior to starting in September.

The Chair said that she welcomed the work of the programme and thanked those present for attending the meeting.

77 NSPCC PRIMARY SCHOOLS PROGRAMME PRESENTATION

Councillor Loraine Morgan-Brinkhurst introduced this item to the Panel. She asked for the hand-out that had been circulated to be emailed to all Councillors.

Kevin West, Area Coordinator: BathNES, Bristol, Swindon and Wiltshire gave a presentation to the Panel on the ChildLine Schools Service. A copy of the presentation can be found online as an appendix to these minutes and on the Panel's Minute Book, a summary is set out below.

Background

- The service aims to reach every primary school in the UK once every two years
- The service was piloted between April and September 2010, and rolled out from February 2011
- Our resources have been produced in consultation with children, teachers and child protection specialists

Aims & Objectives

- To ensure children have an understanding of abuse in all its forms, including bullying, and an ability to recognise the signs of abuse.
- To ensure children know how to protect themselves from all forms of abuse.
- To make them aware of how to get help and sources of help (including ChildLine).

Why?

- On average, two children in every primary school classroom have suffered abuse or neglect
- A new study by YouGov shows ONLY 36% of adults taking part in the survey would have been able to recognise abuse if it was happening to them in school
- ONLY 38% claim they would have known who to ask for help

How?

- 30min Assembly presented to all Year 5 and 6 Children
- Return 1 – 2 weeks later to deliver a 60min workshop with the children in their classes

Buddy the Childline mascot is used in the assemblies to talk about the rights of children.

Buddy believes that children have;

- the right to be listened to
- the right to stay safe and not be hurt
- the right to get help when you need it

The five main aspects of the assembly were then discussed.

- Neglect
- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Bullying

Story so far...

- Across the UK, in 2012-13, we have visited 2,044 Schools, and over 138,000 children.
- BathNES: to date we have visited 11 schools and over 700 children.

Current / Future work

- Continued delivery of the ChildLine Schools Service
- Raise the profile of the service
- Exploration of other delivery methods
- Volunteer recruitment
- Appointment of new Area Coordinator for BathNES/Somerset

Councillor Loraine Morgan-Brinkhurst asked if he could explain the impact the programme has had on some pupils.

Kevin West replied by saying that staff had informed them that following on from the class workshops that some pupils had asked to talk about things further and disclose incidents.

Councillor Dine Romero asked if he was aware of the work already taking place in schools within the Council, such as anti-bullying.

Kevin West replied that as part of the programme they would contact schools prior to visits and then look to reiterate their key messages. He added that he was aware that some parents might not have raised these issues with their children yet and that they do have the opportunity to withdraw them from the assembly / workshop.

The Strategic Director for People and Communities replied that most pupils by this age would have had these matters raised within school.

The Chair commented that some of these issues are also raised at the Pupil Parliament events. On behalf of the Panel she thanked the NSPCC for the presentation and the work that they do.

78 CHILD FRIENDLY CITY INITIATIVE

The Strategic Planning Officer for Children's Health & Commissioning gave the Panel an update on this item. She informed them that a partnership had been agreed with the Cultural Forum and that young people were now directly involved in discussions over priority areas to work on and formed part of a steering group. She added that young people were seeking to become more involved in the decision making processes of the Council.

She said that a number of funding applications had been made in an attempt to be able to engage more widely with young people.

Councillor Dine Romero commented that she had discussed the matter of having young people as regular consultees with the Democratic Services department.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked how inclusive was the membership of the steering group.

The Strategic Planning Officer for Children's Health & Commissioning replied that it included representation of the Young People's Equalities Group, Youth Forum and the Member of Youth Parliament. New members included a young carer and young people from Mentoring Plus. She added that she expected the membership of the group to grow.

On behalf of the Panel the Chair thanked her for the update.

79 CHILDREN SAFEGUARDING AND SCHOOLS

The Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance introduced this item to the Panel. She explained that whilst the Council's general responsibilities in respect of schools have been changing in recent years and are different in respect of the different types of schools, the core duties with regard to safeguarding children remain paramount irrespective of the setting in which they are educated and are largely set out in *Working Together To Safeguard Children* and the *Education Act 2002* and *2004*.

She informed the Panel that since April 2013 the following support has been provided / made available to all schools in the B&NES area. The list below does not include all items but these are available in the report.

- A range of training sessions on Child Protection and related issues
- Access to advice and support on managing allegations

- A range of awareness raising information, resources, events and forums including Child Protection Forums for Designated Lead Officers covering current issues such as:
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Early Help – When to refer
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2014

She explained that the Council had facilitated at Pupil Parliaments and that in 2013 this included a key theme around Safeguarding and who to talk to if you are worried, with the implementation of 'Worry Busters' and a Little Tin of Big Worries being purchased and circulated to all primary schools.

She highlighted that it was important that the Council and NSPCC used the same terminology so as not to confuse children and young people.

She informed the Panel that the Council directly provides (and provides access to) support services when needed for staff and pupils in specific situations as required. For example the Council coordinate and make available a range of services such as Educational Psychology Services to schools when an unexpected child death may have occurred.

She went on to discuss the LSCB and that representation from schools was a concern but there is good engagement from the City of Bath College; also one secondary schools Designated Lead Officer sits on the Child Sexual Exploitation sub – group which is encouraging.

She explained that the LSCB had recently requested that schools complete a safeguarding self-assessment similar to a Section 11 Audit and that it is currently analysing the results of the returns. She added that it is encouraging to note a high response rate was given to the self-assessment request.

Councillor Liz Hardman commented that she was pleased to see the Council being pro-active in this work area. She asked if the Panel could be shown the results of the audit.

The Director for Children & Young People, Strategy and Commissioning replied that he would look into whether that was possible.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked if School Governors should be approached to gain a greater participation in the LSCB.

The Director for Children & Young People, Strategy and Commissioning replied that he had recently agreed with local head teachers to ask schools again about participation.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked if all schools, including academies were invited to take part in the audit.

The Director for Children & Young People, Strategy and Commissioning replied that they were.

The Strategic Director for People and Communities added that Ofsted were raising the profile of this work.

Councillor Michael Evans asked how independent schools were safeguarded.

The Strategic Director for People and Communities replied that they remained part of the Child Protection Forums. He added that they may be required to pay a charge for specific training.

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

80 CHILDREN'S CENTRE / STAFF MUTUAL UPDATE

The Director for Children & Young People, Strategy & Commissioning gave the Panel an update on this item, a summary is set out below.

Local Authority Children's Centres

- The formal staff consultation has now taken place and interviews held for permanent staff affected. There are a number of fixed term staff in Children's Centres (as part of the prudent planning ahead for service redesign) who will now have the opportunity to be considered for permanent appointments. These interviews will take place over February to ensure service delivery is as unaffected as possible. A further small number of fixed term posts in Children's Centres are being created to manage the demand for the traded services. Existing staff at risk will have the first opportunity to go for these jobs.
- The full implementation of the new structure takes place on 1st June.
- There have been a minimal number of redundancies and there will be a further small number of fixed term staff who will not have their contracts extended in Children's Centres.
- The 2 Children's Centre Service Managers are pursuing the development of the business plan for the staff mutual and are being supported in this by an initiative in the Cabinet Office.

First Steps

- First Steps have been reshaping the service over the last 18 months in preparation for the budget reduction and new model of service delivery. This includes moving towards running the nurseries as social enterprises.
- First Steps and the B&NES service are working closely to develop a joint vision and shared values for the Children Centre Service.

Early Years Foundation Stage Team

- This team has not replaced staff who have left over the last 18 months and therefore only have some minor adjustments to be made to current staff's working hours to fully implement their new model. They have begun trading 'at the margins' with the Early Years Sector and Schools.

Parent Support Advisers

- Staff are on fixed term contracts. Although Council funding ends at the end of May 2015, the service manager has made successful bids to schools and Behaviour & Attendance Panels which is looking promising for us being able to keep the small team working across the authority. This is subject to confirmation from schools who are just receiving their budgets for the year ahead.

Community Play and Specialist Family Support Services

- A review of the commissioned Specialist Family Support Service and two Community Play Services is underway with the engagement of stakeholders including the current service providers. A new integrated model of service delivery is being developed which aligns closely with Connecting Families and is based on a Think Family approach.
- A further update will be brought to panel when the proposed model is firmed up.

Commissioned Health-Related Services

- B&NES Early Years and Children's Centre funding has previously been used to support some health and public health-related services for young children such as breast feeding and infant mental health. This is no longer sustainable and discussions have been taking place with health/public health commissioners and service providers to plan how the services will be remodelled to continue to meet the needs of young children and their families within the available health/public health funding. For instance it is a requirement of the national Health Visitor service to deliver targeted breast feeding support and meet UNICEF standards.

Councillor Liz Hardman said that she was pleased to see that the redundancy figures were low. She asked if it was true that the staff mutual would be ready to commence in April 2015 and whether the Children's Centres could apply for charitable status.

The Director for Children & Young People, Strategy & Commissioning replied that he would look into the current process as regard to gaining a charitable status. He added that the staff mutual was still some way off and that a further Cabinet decision was required.

The Strategic Director for People and Communities added that a further Cabinet decision would likely be required in September 2015 and that a start date of April 2017 was probable. He added that test cases were currently taking place to enable the opportunity for services such as a crèche and baby massage to be provided in the future.

On behalf of the Panel the Chair thanked them for the update.

81 PEER CHALLENGE

The Divisional Director for Children & Young People Specialist Services introduced this item to the Panel. He stated that the Peer Challenge process is an integral part of the South-West Sector-led Improvement initiative which is hosted by the South West Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS).

He explained that B&NES chose Child Sexual Exploitation to be the issue we wanted to be "challenged" on. It was also agreed that Bournemouth Borough Council would be our "Challengers" and undertake the scrutiny of our practice in relation to CSE. He added that the purpose in choosing Child Sexual Exploitation was that we were aware that this was an issue that we were in the process of developing and wanted to improve.

At the conclusion of the two day challenge visit colleagues from Bournemouth provided feedback against the five key lines of enquiry we had given them.

He said that the Peer Challenge was felt to be a positive process for B&NES and that the slightly reduced scope of the process meant that staff did not feel that this impinged too much on their everyday tasks and responsibilities and also meant they felt more engaged and involved in the process.

He stated that none of the issues raised by the Challenge team were felt to be issues that we had not already identified as possible areas that we would need to address, and so it was re-assuring that the exercise did not highlight any surprises.

He explained that since the exercise we have undertaken the following actions to strengthen our position and understanding of the challenges presented by CSE for B&NES. The B&NES LSCB has approved the new CSE Strategy document, the CSE sub-group has also issued a CSE Practice Protocol and a draft referral workflow. He added that all of these documents are available to Council staff and staff in other agencies and will assist in providing the guidance and clarity in terms of the key issues on which professionals will need to remain vigilant, as well as providing guidance on what to do when concerns are identified.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked how confident were the Council on being aware of those children at possible risk.

The Divisional Director for Children & Young People Specialist Services replied that it was as confident as it could be at this moment in time.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked if any further explanation could be given as to why there was a lack of consistency of lead professional working with a young person had been identified.

The Divisional Director for Children & Young People Specialist Services replied that this referred to the high turnover of Social Workers that the Council was experiencing at the time.

Councillor Dine Romero commented that she felt that one element of the Challenge that was missing was a Cabinet Member to Cabinet Member discussion.

The Chair said that she welcomed the on-going work on this matter.

82 CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

Councillor Dine Romero, Cabinet Member for Early Years, Children & Youth addressed the Panel. She said that she had recently attended a conference on Child Sexual Exploitation and wished to highlight the need for everyone to be aware of the issue. She added that it could even be included in Councillor Induction programme following the elections in May.

She suggested that the Panel received a presentation from the Healthy Weight Forum on the work they do in schools.

83 PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES STRATEGIC DIRECTOR'S BRIEFING

The Strategic Director for People and Communities addressed the Panel.

Single Inspection Framework Outcomes

To date 41 LA's have had SIFs published with a further 7 in train at present. Of the 41 published, the following summarises the outcomes:

10 LA's judged 'Good' (25%)
7 LA's judged 'Inadequate' (17%)
24 LA's judged 'Requires Improvement' (58%)

Of those LA's judged to be 'Good', 9 are 'shire' authorities and only 1 is a unitary authority (Hartlepool, also the first unitary LA to be inspected).

Of those LA's judged to be 'Inadequate', 6 are unitary (85%) and 1 is a shire authority.

Of those LA's judged to be 'Requires Improvement', all are unitary LA's.

There are 145 LA's which are 'Children's Service Authorities' of which 33 would be described as 'shire' LA's. These represent 23% of such LA's but represent 90% of all LA's judged 'Good'. Unitary LA's make up 77% of LA's and of the inspections to date 75% of them are 'Requires Improvement' or below.

There has been no analysis of this apparent disparity by Ofsted or the Association of Directors of Children's Services. However, there is a need to understand why this is the case.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked if the larger authorities would have more of a budget to spend and therefore have more chance of achieving better results.

The Strategic Director for People and Communities that this would not be the case as they would have had the same % cut to their grant. He added that he felt that Ofsted should be concerned on how the public view these results.

Chris Batten commented that he welcomed the honesty of the Strategic Director for People and Communities and that he was worried what may occur following the General Election.

The Strategic Director for People and Communities replied that he believed that the Council does a good job for its children and associated services.

84 PANEL WORKPLAN

The Chair introduced this item to the Panel. She recalled that during the course of the meeting the following items had been raised.

- Healthy Weight Forum Presentation
- Review of Community Play and Specialist Family Support Services

The Panel **RESOLVED** to add these items to their workplan.

The meeting ended at 6.40 pm

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services