

## **BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET**

### **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

Tuesday, 17th May, 2016

**Present:-** Councillors Lisa Brett (Chair), Matt Cochrane (Vice-Chair), Karen Warrington, Colin Barrett (in place of Sally Davis), Alison Millar and Liz Hardman

**Also in attendance:** Ashley Ayre (Strategic Director, People and Communities), Richard Baldwin (Divisional Director for Children and Young People, Specialist and Targeted Division), Mike Bowden (Director, Children & Young People, Strategy and Commissioning) and Deborah Forward (Senior Commissioning Manager - Preventative Services)

**Cabinet Member for Children's Services:** Councillor Michael Evans

#### **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 Sally Davis and Peter Turner had sent their apologies to the Panel. Councillor Colin Barrett was present as a substitute for Councillor Davis for the duration of the meeting.

Andrew Tarrant, Diocese of Clifton, Co-opted Panel Member had sent his apologies to the Panel.

#### **4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Colin Barrett declared an interest in agenda item 13 (Education White Paper: Educational Excellence Everywhere) as he is a Governor at Weston All Saints Primary School.

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

There was none.

#### **6 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. She said that she had recently attended the Standing Agreed Syllabus Conference for Bath & North East Somerset

SACRE (Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education) where the proposed new syllabus was discussed.

She stated that the Bath & North East Somerset SACRE had unanimously approved an agreed syllabus for use in local authority schools from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2016 and she wished to commend it to the Panel for their approval prior to being approved by the Council.

The Chair stated on behalf of the Panel that they note and recommend the approval of the new RE syllabus.

Councillor Michael Evans, Cabinet Member for Children's Services said that he endorsed the syllabus and expected coverage of religions and beliefs to be followed up at a classroom level.

## **7 MINUTES - 22ND MARCH 2016**

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Councillor Michael Evans said that an amendment was required to the fifth paragraph on page 59 of the minutes relating to the Youth Justice Plan.

The sentence within that paragraph should read 'She added that the local *custodial* rate is currently zero....'

With that amendment, the Panel confirmed the minutes of the previous meeting as a true record and they were signed by the Chair.

## **8 CABINET MEMBER UPDATE**

Councillor Michael Evans, Cabinet Member for Children's Services addressed the Panel.

First Steps Moorlands Children's Centre: B&NES is willing to grant land for the much-needed rebuilding of this centre. He said that First Steps would finance the build. During the rebuild, temporary use of land at Moorlands School is needed and that negotiations are ongoing with the head and the governing body. He hoped that this could be resolved quickly so that work could start to give the young children of the area a healthy, dry building.

Academy of Trinity: He said that the Ofsted classification relating to this school required updating following its latest findings. He added that the B&NES Local Authority Designated Officer, responsible for Safeguarding, has sent the findings of the B&NES Safeguarding Review of Trinity to the Midsomer Norton Partnership Trust (Alun Williams) and the South West Regional Schools Commissioner (Rebecca Clark).

St. Martin's Garden Primary School: The school is becoming an Academy and joining the Palladium Trust (Ralph Allen). Negotiations are ongoing between B&NES and Ralph Allen about the terms of the transfer. He added that ageing play equipment at the Margaret Coates Centre, which is part of St. Martin's Garden had been put out of use. The equipment is 15 years old and had been supplied through a

government grant. The school has appealed for donations to replace it, and B&NES is looking to help, though it cannot cover the complete cost.

Health & Wellbeing Board – Inequalities Day Workshop: This was a very well attended day that brought together many partner organisations in the field of Public Health. He said that early intervention was key to reducing the troubling inequalities in longevity and healthy life which we have in B&NES as elsewhere.

IKB Studio School: He attended the opening ceremony of the IKB Studio School at Wellsway School. He said that it was significant that the guest of honour was Dame Glynis Breakwell, Vice Chancellor of Bath University, and shows the interest in which the university is taking in promoting vocational subjects and apprenticeships.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked when the Safeguarding Review of Trinity would be published.

The Strategic Director for People & Communities replied that a summary report would be published in due course and that Political Group Leaders would receive a briefing. He added that the full report would be sent to the Department for Education, the Regional Schools Commissioner and local Diocese.

Councillor Liz Hardman commented that the recent White Paper indicates possible changes for the roles of the Cabinet Member and Strategic Director. She asked if he had any thoughts on this at this stage.

Councillor Michael Evans replied that he had no comment to make at this time as the White Paper was in its relatively early stages.

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

## **9 UPDATE ON COMMISSIONED FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES**

The Chair said that she was pleased to see that there had been no decrease in targeted support following the remodelling of Children's Centre Services that had taken place. She asked what steps have been taken to ensure that the errors in the first tendering of Family Support and Play Services are not repeated.

The Senior Commissioning Manager for Preventative Services replied that officers now have more clarity of the procurement process and have been working with the Information Governance team.

Councillor Matt Cochrane asked if this would lead to any impact on service delivery.

The Senior Commissioning Manager for Preventative Services replied that services were not affected by this process taking place.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked if there was a danger that some of the centres could still be closed in the future.

The Senior Commissioning Manager for Preventative Services replied that a range of partners now use the centres including voluntary groups and health teams and

that work was ongoing to look at how their costs associated with the centres can be incorporated into future budgets.

The Chair asked how the charges for the Council run universal groups compare with other toddler groups.

The Senior Commissioning Manager for Preventative Services replied that the charges were set at a competitive rate.

Councillor Colin Barrett asked why there was such an increase in the percentage of families accessing targeted support 10 months pre and post 1st June 2015 in Keynsham / Chew Valley.

The Senior Commissioning Manager for Preventative Services replied that this was likely to be as a result of more effective targeting.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked if families from rural areas were entitled to any financial assistance in relation to transport costs to attend centres.

The Service Manager for 0-11 Outcomes replied that when there are targeted services running that restrict certain families from attending we will do all we can to enable a family to access the group and sometimes this might involve support with transport costs. She added that they now run groups in a number of rural areas such as Timsbury, Cameley, Longvernal so that families are served in some of our remoter parts.

Councillor Liz Hardman commented that there were no universal services currently available within Paulton.

The Senior Commissioning Manager for Preventative Services replied that some targeted services were still available and that 1-2-1 work was ongoing.

Councillor Alison Millar asked how Health Visitors felt about the changes that have occurred.

The Senior Commissioning Manager for Preventative Services replied that it was a culture shock for some to be based within the centres. She added that the levels of early support and interventions have improved from this form of partnership working.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to:

- (i) Note the updates provided in this paper.
- (ii) Receive an update on the new Family Support and Play Service one year on.
- (iii) Receive a paper on the evolving performance framework for Early Help Services in due course.

## **10 NEETS - YOUNG PEOPLE NOT IN EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT OR TRAINING**

Councillor Liz Hardman asked what the percentage of NEETs was in relation to Looked After Children.

The Divisional Director for Children and Young People, Specialist and Targeted Division replied that 66% of care leavers were in Education, Employment or Training compared with 56% in 2015.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked what work was being done with regard to the remaining 34%.

The Divisional Director for Children and Young People, Specialist and Targeted Division replied that it can take time to build relationships and that it was likely that this cohort would have had some previous issues relating to education. He added that he was proud of their current record

The Strategic Director for People & Communities added that the young people can opt not to work with us as other life events take priority. He added that research indicates that if a young person is not in Education, Employment or Training when they are 16 / 17 then they are likely to be in and out of casual employment by the time they are 18.

The Chair thanked the Divisional Director for Children and Young People, Specialist and Targeted Division for his update on behalf of the Panel.

## **11 EDUCATION WHITE PAPER: EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE EVERYWHERE**

The Chair stated that B&NES has a good record on running schools and a dedicated, talented workforce that provides excellent support to our local schools. She said however, as more schools are incentivized to convert to academies it is inevitable that eventually a critical mass will be reached when it is no longer considered viable for the Council to support the remaining Primary schools.

She said that the Panel do not want to lose the high quality experience and expertise of B&NES Council staff from its local educational service provision.

She added that Councillor Evans is also keen to ensure healthy competition exists between Multi Academy Trusts (MAT) and to avoid a local monopoly forming.

She explained that as an outcome of their pre-meeting the Panel would like help scope the setting up of a partner organisation, similar to Sirona, to act as a MAT for all B&NES primary schools who want to join.

She stated that in order to ensure the scheme is impartially compared against alternatives, she would like to ask officers to begin the process by conducting a SWAT analysis of creating a partner 'Sirona style' MAT, a SWAT of undertaking a 'do nothing' approach and a SWAT for facilitating a co-operative MAT.

She added that concurrently, she would like officers to sound out the level of interest amongst non-faith based Primary School Heads.

The Director for Children & Young People, Strategy & Commissioning replied that constructive conversations have taken place with some Primary Heads along these lines and that it was envisaged that they would disseminate this information to colleagues within the area.

Councillor Liz Hardman said that she felt it was wrong for schools to be forced into becoming an Academy especially as there was no evidence to support that standards would improve. She added that she remained concerned over lack of local accountability that leaves the Council powerless to intervene when problems are observed.

The Strategic Director for People & Communities said that a series of meetings with Head Teachers and Governors began last summer. He said that if a school decided to become either a Co-operative Trust or a Charitable Trust this would not prevent them from joining a MAT.

He urged schools to not get sucked into the marketing behind academisation and to make choices on behalf of their pupils. He said that officers were available to discuss their options.

He added that the team involved with the Chew Valley Educational Trust were doing a fantastic job.

Councillor Karen Warrington asked if it were possible for the Panel to see any documents relating to the Chew Valley Educational Trust.

The Strategic Director for People & Communities replied that he would check and circulate if possible.

Councillor Matt Cochrane asked if officers had any figures to hand relating to schools having become or considering becoming an Academy.

The Strategic Director for People & Communities replied that 11 had already become academies and that 9 were in the process of doing so.

The Chair asked that the Panel meet informally in one month's time to discuss the matter further and receive the requested analysis from officers.

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

The Strategic Director for People & Communities addressed the Panel, a summary of his briefing is set out below.

Social Work Recruitment: He said that following a recent question from the Chair that a report relating to Social Work recruitment could be prepared for a future meeting. He thought though that it would be helpful at this stage to outline the current position.

- 'Rolling' adverts in the professional press for Social Workers, Deputy Team Managers (DTMs) and Team Managers (TMs).

- Provision of a bursary / “golden hello” for new recruits and newly qualified Social Workers (£2k - £3k).
- Extensive professional and practice support for newly qualified Social Workers during their first year of practice.
- Support for accredited training to reach advanced practitioner levels with the opportunity to study to MSC/MA level.
- Opportunities to progress to Senior Practitioner level prior to or as an alternative to managerial promotion.

Councillor Matt Cochrane asked if the bursary was a suitable incentive.

The Strategic Director for People & Communities replied that it was in line with offers of other local authorities.

Councillor Matt Cochrane asked if the Council had considered offering a second year bursary.

The Strategic Director for People & Communities replied that he would be willing to examine that option.

Councillor Karen Warrington commented that she would like to see schools encouraged to provide more information on this career to pupils.

The Strategic Director for People & Communities replied that the Council is involved with Step Up to Social Work which is an intensive full-time training programme that covers everything trainee social workers need to know in 14 months. He added that we also work with the UWE and the universities in Bath, Bristol and Cheltenham.

Adoption Services: The Government have legislated to develop a series of regional or sub-regional Adoption Agencies that will incorporate the Adoption functions of the Local Authorities within a region.

B&NES has been working with North Somerset, South Gloucestershire, City of Bristol, Wiltshire and Gloucestershire on a proposal for a single Adoption Agency working in partnership with the Voluntary Adoption Agencies (all charities) that operate across the joint administrative area.

A report will be submitted to the Cabinet in July across all six Local Authorities requesting permission to develop a proposed single agency to become operational from April 1<sup>st</sup> 2018. A further report for decision will then come to Cabinet in late Autumn 2016. The Panel may wish to receive a report on this at their September meeting.

Councillor Alison Millar asked how many adoptions took place within the last year in B&NES.

The Divisional Director for Children and Young People, Specialist and Targeted Division replied that it was 12, which was a lot for a Council the size of B&NES.

The Strategic Director for People & Communities added that it is so important to find the right permanent solution for the child concerned.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked if support is provided to adoptive parents.

The Strategic Director for People & Communities replied that it was and as such there has not been a breakdown of relationships over the past ten years.

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

### 13 PANEL WORKPLAN

The Chair introduced this item to the Panel. She suggested that as it would fit well with other items that the Healthy Weight Forum Presentation be scheduled for July 2016.

The Divisional Director for Children and Young People, Specialist and Targeted Division said that as requested he had spoken to the Senior In Care Council about them addressing the Panel at a future meeting. He said that they would be happy to attend the next scheduled evening meeting in November.

Councillor Eleanor Jackson suggested that the Panel receive a report in September regarding Youth Work Development.

The Strategic Director for People & Communities said that the Panel could receive a report in the autumn on the issue of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to approve all of the above proposals.

The meeting ended at 7.30 pm

Chair(person) .....

Date Confirmed and Signed .....

**Prepared by Democratic Services**