

## **BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET**

### **CHILDREN, ADULTS, HEALTH AND WELLBEING POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

Tuesday, 17th May, 2022

**Present:-** Councillors Vic Pritchard (Chair), Michelle O'Doherty (Vice-Chair), Ruth Malloy, Andy Wait, Paul May, Liz Hardman, Gerry Curran, Rob Appleyard and Joanna Wright

**Co-opted Non-Voting Members:** Chris Batten and Kevin Burnett

**Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Communities and Culture:**

Councillor Dine Romero

**Also in attendance:** Dr Bryn Bird (B&NES Locality Clinical Chair, CCG), Suzanne Westhead (Director of Adult Social Care), Leigh Zywek (Assistant Director for Children and Young People), Rebecca Reynolds (Director of Public Health and Prevention), Mary Kearney-Knowles (Director of Children's Services and Education), Claire Thorogood (Head of Contracting & Performance), Christopher Wilford (Director for Education, Inclusion & Children's Safeguarding), Cathy McMahon (Public Health Development & Commissioning Manager), Milly Carmichael (Health Improvement Officer) and Richard Howroyd (Head of Strategic Procurement)

#### **1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

#### **2 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

The Chairman drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

#### **3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Gill Stobart had sent her apologies to the Panel and had informed them also that she would be standing down from her role on the Panel.

The Chairman, on behalf of the Panel, thanked Gill for the work she had carried out whilst being a member of the Panel.

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

Councillor Gerry Curran declared an other interest with regard to agenda item 12 (HCRG Care Group Options Appraisal) as he is an employee of HCRG.

Councillor Paul May declared an other interest with regard to agenda item 12 (HCRG Care Group Options Appraisal) as he is a non-executive Sirona board member.

## **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**

Paula Riseborough made a statement to the Panel on the subject of HCRG Care Group. A copy of the statement can be found as an online appendix to these minutes and on the Panel's Minute Book. A summary is set out below.

I'm speaking today to highlight one of the many issues that I object to regarding the outsourcing of BathNES health and care services to private provider HCRG Care Group (formerly known as Virgin Care).

Most recently we have objected to the behaviour of Virgin Care executives in secretly negotiating a takeover of their company by Twenty20 Capital, without informing the commissioners (the Council and BathNES CCG) of this until after they had approved a 3-year extension of Virgin Care's prime provider contract.

Protect our NHS members have raised questions with our local councillors and with the health scrutiny panel about the procedures involved in the contract negotiations and were reassured when the Council announced that due diligence work and a revised options appraisal would be carried out regarding this contract extension.

However, on reading the Scrutiny Panel's Agenda for its 17 May meeting, together with the HCRG Care Group Options Appraisal document, I was dismayed to find that the long awaited report is to be presented to the Panel 'in private session due to the commercial sensitivity of the decision to be taken'. This represents one of my major concerns about outsourcing of publicly funded health and care services to private companies – there is a breakdown of transparency in the functioning of democratic and statutory organisations when the commercial interests of private providers are placed ahead of essential public interest.

If the full Options Appraisal document is not to be published, then the commissioners should provide for public scrutiny, at the very least, a summary of the Options Appraisal document. This should include a list of the people consulted for their views (and their job roles), what criteria they were looking at when deciding on a recommended option and, if a decision is made to extend HCRG's contract, what measures the commissioners have in place to prevent the prime provider company being sold on again during the BathNES contract period.

Councillor Liz Hardman commented that the Options Appraisal had not yet been shared with members of the Panel and that they were not asked to be part of that process.

Paula Riseborough said that she found that alarming and felt there was a democratic deficit in the process.

The Chairman thanked her for her statement on behalf of the Panel.

Theresa Franklin made a statement to the Panel on the subject of the High Common, Bath. A copy of the statement can be found as an online appendix to these minutes and on the Panel's Minute Book. A summary is set out below.

My subject is the dangers of sharing golf with the public on The High Common which is a park. One of the things about golf being played in a public park is the obvious danger of golf balls.

Golf balls can travel up to 100miles per hour. We have known near misses on the golf course and certainly flying balls have hit houses on Cavendish Rd.

Should users of this public park, be subjected to these dangers on a daily basis.

The High Common reverted to parkland during the pandemic. Many rediscovered the High Common a place of sanity and sanctuary. We don't want it returned to golf.

Because, the truth is Golf on The High Common changes everything.

Where we walk, where we sit, and how we feel! We certainly can't linger. And our children cannot run free. You can't breathe comfortably. Always on the lookout for a flying golf ball.

Golf restricts that access physically and has an affect on us mentally. Why should we be afraid, and constantly looking out for danger in a public park?

I can understand how 60 years ago, golf, pitch and putt really, might have been acceptable. But, surely not in 2022.

60 years ago, life was very different - people never wore seatbelts in cars, people drove drunk, people smoked, a lot, everywhere. Women could get fired for being pregnant. You get the picture.... None of these things are acceptable now.

Councillor Joanna Wright commented that she felt this area could be used for forms of social prescribing and was aware of its increased use during the pandemic.

Theresa Franklin said that many of the local residents, especially those in flats, use the High Common now as their garden space. She said if golf were to return it could do solely on the 12 hole side of the course and that anything more would be detrimental.

Councillor Dine Romero suggested that the statement be passed to Councillor David Wood, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services.

The Chairman, on behalf of the Panel, thanked Theresa for her statement and requested that it be forwarded to Councillor Wood.

Councillor Joanna Wright addressed the Panel on the subject of the dentistry. She explained that a resident is unable to currently find a local NHS dentist and can't afford to have private treatment.

She said that the resident also has relatives that have problems with their teeth, including pain whilst eating. She asked the Panel to consider having a further discussion on this matter at a future meeting.

Councillor Paul May suggested that the Panel receives a review of local dentistry provision.

## **7 MINUTES: 8TH APRIL 2022**

Councillor Andrew Wait asked again for the RAG ratings in relation to the Community Mental Health Framework to be circulated to the Panel.

The Director of Adult Social Care apologised and said that she would send them to the Panel.

Councillor Joanna Wright asked if there was any update on whether the Wiltshire Adopters Networking, Development & Support (WANDS) can be used to support families in B&NES.

*The following reply also formed a response to a question asked by Councillor Wright at the 5<sup>th</sup> May Cabinet meeting.*

*A proposal is with Adoption West (AW) Board of Directors to commission WANDS to grow the service in other areas of the AW region, to include B&NES. B&NES Adopters can join groups commissioned by Adoption West in Bristol, via CSS Adoption <https://www.ccsadoption.org/>*

*B&NES adopters and residents are encouraged to contact AW duty team directly to discuss specific adoption support needs and to determine if the child / family need an assessment which they are entitled to request.*  
<https://adoptionwest.co.uk/>

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

## **8 CABINET MEMBER UPDATE**

Councillor Dine Romero, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Communities and Culture addressed the Panel. A copy of the update can be found as an online appendix to these minutes.

Councillor Liz Hardman commented that the OFSTED report on Children's Services is extremely pleasing and said that it highlights the excellent leadership we have in B&NES and how our services are good - well done to all. However, she said that from reading the report at agenda item 11, it is clear that substantial financial investment and increased capacity in the team is needed and asked what plans have been put in place to address this.

The Director of Children's Services & Education replied that the report makes recommendations in terms of the Council's Care Leavers Duty and said that new

legislation is expected later in the year with regard to extending the age range from 21 – 25.

She added that the Service Improvement Board will oversee all of the recommendations and that the team will be reviewed to consider what additional capacity is required to accommodate our post 21 offer.

Councillor Hardman asked if she was concerned about the increase in the number of children being electively home educated (EHE) in B&NES and if we have the right services in place to support these families appropriately.

Councillor Romero replied that she was concerned about the increase, though it has stabilised. She added however that we do not have an increase in the number of children EHE who are known to social care. She said that the EHE team provide support in line with the Council's responsibilities and have positive relationships with the EHE community. She stated that additional resourcing has been put into the team to manage increased numbers, however, we will need to look at this area again if the Education White Paper's proposals around EHE are implemented.

Councillor Hardman said she was very pleased to see that the three-year plan for social prescribing and an active travel program includes the Somer Valley and will include pop up hubs in places like her ward of Paulton. She asked when are these likely to happen.

The Director of Public Health and Prevention replied that we are expecting to hear from the DfT by the end of May, but can't guarantee that national timescales won't slip.

Councillor Andrew Wait commented that the report states that 97.9% received one of their up to five preferences in relation to School Admissions. He asked how many received their first choice and do you have comparisons with that statistic for previous years.

Councillor Romero replied that the following figures were recorded for 2021/22 and 2022/23.

Secondary:

2022/23		2021/22	
1 <sup>st</sup> Preferences	89.2%	1 <sup>st</sup> Preferences	84.2%

Primary:

2022/23		2021/22	
1 <sup>st</sup> Preferences	97%	1 <sup>st</sup> Preferences	93%

Kevin Burnett asked how the inspection of host families was being carried out with regard to the Ukraine refugees.

The Director of Children's Services and Education replied that this work was being carried out by a combination of teams. The Family Placement Team were leading on DBS checks and the Housing Team were assessing regarding Regulated Properties.

Kevin Burnett asked if information was available in terms of a national register for Home Education.

The Director for Education, Inclusion & Children's Safeguarding replied that details on this matter were expected to come in the White Paper.

Referring to School Admissions Kevin Burnett asked if there had been an increase in the number of people using all of their preferences when making their applications.

The Director for Education, Inclusion & Children's Safeguarding replied that yes there had been.

Kevin Burnett asked as part of the White Paper has the Council considered forming its own Education Trust.

Councillor Romero replied that at this stage she did not think the Council had had time to form a view on this matter.

Kevin Burnett asked if the Panel could be involved in some way with the response to the SEND Green Paper consultation.

Councillor Romero replied that she would try to include the Panel where possible.

Chris Batten asked if schools were going to be able to cope with the increasing costs of providing school meals.

Councillor Romero replied that she did not have any information to hand to be able to provide a response.

Chris Batten asked if there was funding available for new school buildings / repairs.

Councillor Romero replied that she was aware of a timetable of planned repairs that were due to take place.

The Director for Education, Inclusion & Children's Safeguarding added that pots of funding were becoming available in respect of maintained schools, SEND capital funding and the school building programme.

Councillor Ruth Malloy asked if there were sufficient school places available for Ukraine refugee children near to where they will be living and if they will have access to interpreters / resources given that English will not be their first language.

Councillor Romero replied that she believed that the current figure for Ukraine refugee children in the area was 30 and that there was capacity at this stage to cope with this number.

The Director for Education, Inclusion & Children's Safeguarding added that there were no current capacity concerns and that positive discussions had been held with local schools in terms of the education support that was to be required. He added that if children were to be placed within the Chew Valley, schools there might struggle in terms of places.

He said that online resources were available with regard to interpretation services.

The Chairman asked what would happen if families were to be placed within the Chew Valley.

The Director for Education, Inclusion & Children's Safeguarding replied that they would seek to find the nearest school with capacity and if needed provide transport.

Councillor Romero said that schools that are to receive refugee children will also put in place emotional and trauma support.

Councillor Paul May asked if she would support a report from the Schools Standards Board to a future meeting of the Panel.

Councillor Romero replied that she would.

The Chairman thanked her for her report on behalf of the Panel.

## **9 BSW CCG UPDATE**

Dr Bryn Bird, B&NES Locality Clinical Chair addressed the Panel. A copy of the update can be found as an online appendix to these minutes, a summary of the update is set out below.

### **Pressure on health and care services continues in BaNES**

Pressures related to Covid-19, staff absence and high demand for hospital beds have continued across BaNES over the past few weeks. A number of measures remain in place to help address these issues.

The main messages being for people to use our health services appropriately, support hospitals by collecting loved ones as soon as they are ready to go home, using our pharmacies for help and support wherever possible and using the online 111 service in the first instance.

He said that currently the RUH was operating under OPEL 4 (Operations Pressure Escalation Levels) and that cross-working meetings have been held to discuss how to relieve pressure.

### **BSW ICS and ICA update**

The Health and Care Bill which set out plans for the formation of Integrated Care Systems received Royal Assent at the end of April. The Bill will now pass into law as the Health and Care Act 2022 and paves the way for the BSW Integrated Care

Board (ICB) to become a statutory body on July 1st and the formation of the BaNES locality Integrated Care Alliance (ICA).

The Health and Care Act introduces measures to tackle the COVID-19 backlogs and rebuild health and social care services following the pandemic. It will also contain measures to address health inequalities and create safer, more joined-up services that will put the health and care system on a more sustainable footing.

The latest version of the BSW Partnership System Development Plan for 2022/2023 has been submitted to NHS England. The plan has been developed by lead and programme support teams from our key workstreams and focuses on the continued development of our BSW Integrated Care System and the transition activities that will be required during 2022/23 to align with the legislative changes planned.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked if any update could be given on the crisis affecting the ambulance service locally.

Dr Bird replied that support for the hospital discharge is intended over the coming year.

Kevin Burnett referred to the Healthy Start Scheme and asked if anything further could be done to support those in receipt of the paper vouchers to transfer to the prepaid card now being offered.

The Public Health Development & Commissioning Manager replied that an automatic registration process would be welcome, but this was not currently possible. She added that a lot of support and awareness is being carried out locally to make people aware of the changes.

Kevin Burnett asked how are messages about accessing GP services being managed given that more people will now likely want to return to face to face appointments.

Dr Bird replied that communications work has been carried out on this matter and that from his point of view he has always been willing to see people when required. He added that 111 still has a role to play, but that we need to make sure that those who need to meet can do so.

Councillor Andrew Wait asked about the number of Covid patients currently within the RUH.

Dr Bird replied that there was currently less pressure in terms of patients being admitted to the RUH with severe complications due to Covid.

Councillor Joanna Wright suggested that all Councillors be sent information relating to the NHS Healthy Start Scheme so that they are in a position to advise and assist residents if necessary. She referred to the BSW ICS and ICA update and asked for examples of who formed the Partnership and how are the decisions they make ranked.



Dr Bird replied that members of the Partnership will include representatives from Local Authorities, Public Health, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector, RUH and AWP amongst other bodies that have a role in health care provision. He added that decisions are taken on what provision would best support the wider community and that consideration is given as to what would be fairest across B&NES, Swindon and Wiltshire.

The Chair thanked Dr Bird for his report and attending on behalf of the Panel.

## **10 FOOD EQUITY PLAN**

The Public Health Development & Commissioning Manager introduced this report to the Panel and asked for their feedback on the proposals.

Councillor Liz Hardman wished to congratulate the B&NES officers who with the Fair Food Alliance group, have put in place a structure to drive the strategic direction and coordination of food insecurity work locally. She asked as the B&NES Fair Food Alliance does not have an operational budget, would this hinder its future work especially in developing income maximisation.

The Public Health Development & Commissioning Manager replied that the Co-ordination role carried out by the Health Improvement Officer gives us significant benefit and has been crucial to the success of the work. She added that the Co-ordination role was secure until July 2024 and additional funding would need to be found to secure this role longer term.

The Chair asked if it was sustainable for this work to rely on public support.

The Public Health Development & Commissioning Manager replied that the support received through the Voluntary Sector is fantastic, but that there is a need for solutions to become more sustainable through, for example, provision of better paid jobs or available healthy products at affordable prices. She also added that we need to ensure that our local services are accessible and dignified and support the voluntary sector in their response.

The Chair asked how would a member of the public approach a Food Bank if they needed to.

The Public Health Development & Commissioning Manager replied that people need to get a referral to a food bank before they can use it. Referrals can be made from, eg, a Health Visitor or Children's Centre.

Kevin Burnett asked for any further comment on the Poverty Proofing Schools Audit.

The Health Improvement Officer replied that the Audit is being piloted through 10 schools in B&NES and that the plan is to then to give all schools access to it to help them to recognise where students may need support.

Kevin Burnett asked if Free School Meals (FSM) was the only measure available to use.

The Public Health Development & Commissioning Manager replied that receipt of FSM would identify those on a low income, but that the Audit tool would seek to show schools how they can identify those in need and to work with other agencies where necessary.

Kevin Burnett asked if they have worked with SACRE on any projects.

The Public Health Development & Commissioning Manager replied that SACRE are part of the Fair Food Alliance, but that they have not been that active currently.

Councillor Rob Appleyard said that there was much to commend about the work that has taken place so far and that the Council needs to provide support to enable it to carry on.

Councillor Joanna Wright asked how residents can be helped to identify the support they are able to receive.

The Public Health Development & Commissioning Manager replied that Citizen's Advice will have a role to play in this process as there will be families that are not able to manage despite being in receipt of benefits. She added that effective lobbying of Government was also needed to be carried out.

Councillor Andrew Wait commented that in his role as Chair of Keynsham Town Council he was aware that the Food Club had approached the Town Council with regard to seeking some funding. He asked if this work was linked to the Fair Food Alliance.

The Public Health Development & Commissioning Manager replied that the Food Club had been set up independently to provide support to the local community by accessing excess food products from local supermarkets and Fare Share SW.

Councillor Wait asked if they would need to close if no funding was received.

The Public Health Development & Commissioning Manager replied that they do receive income through membership, £3.50 per week per family (around 50 families in each club) and funding through other bodies. She added that the Council do not provide them with any funding.

Councillor Ruth Malloy asked if the Council were able to identify any places that should have additional provision put in place and would they be able source a building if required.

The Public Health Development & Commissioning Manager replied that this would require discussions with departments such as Property Services.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to;

- i) Note the progress since the last report (May 2021) and endorse the new Food Equity Action Plan 2022 – 2025 and future priorities for the B&NES Fair Food Alliance.
- ii) Support the ambitions of the B&NES Fair Food Alliance by considering ways in which other Council and partnership strategy and policy can help to increase income equality and food security locally.

## **11 CHILDREN'S SERVICES OFSTED INSPECTION**

The Director of Children's Services & Education introduced this report to the Panel. She said that she was pleased to have received such a positive report and thanked all officers within Children's Services for their work.

Councillor Liz Hardman gave her congratulations to the Children's Services officers and management in receiving a really excellent report. She stated that all areas are judged to be good with recommendations on three areas of our practice. She added however that the report states that to carry out the recommendations of the OFSTED report, and our new statutory duties from April 2022, substantial financial investment and increased capacity within the team will be required. She asked what plans are being made to ensure that this financial investment is made and that capacity is increased.

The Assistant Director for Children and Young People replied that Children's Services have considered the recommendations in the Ofsted ILAC Report and that the Service has taken some immediate actions following the Ofsted Inspection and the Deputy Team Manager is acting up in a Team Manager capacity.

She added that the Service Improvement Board will oversee all of the recommendations and we will review the team to consider what additional capacity is required to accommodate our post 21 offer and this will be worked through in our ongoing finance planning.

The Chair on behalf of the Panel wished to commend all staff for their work.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to;

- i) Recognise the improvements made within Children's Social Care as outlined within the Inspection report.
- ii) Acknowledge the recommendations made within the Ofsted report and work collaboratively with Children's Services to address the recommendations identified.
- iii) Agree the proposal for overseeing ongoing progress within Children's Services.

## 12 HCRG CARE GROUP OPTIONS APPRAISAL

The Director of Adult Social Care introduced this report to the Panel and gave an outline of the timeline that had taken place so far.

- The Commissioners each took a decision on 11 November 2021 (through the Council's Cabinet and the CCG's Governing Body) to approve exercising Option 3 to extend the contract term for the three-year period until 31 March 2027.
- On 1 December 2021, the Virgin Care Services Limited notified the Commissioners that the business it formed a part of had been sold to T20 Pioneer Holdings Limited which is in turn ultimately held by Twenty20 Capital Limited (via another company) (T20). T20 is a private equity investor.
- The change took effect from 30 November 2021 with the formal change of control notice referred to above. The change in ownership is several steps removed from the Provider with intermediate companies being retained but names changed. The Provider is now known as HCRG Care Services Ltd. The Provider has stated that it "has no intention or proposal to make a consequential change to its operations".
- Following the announcement on 1st December 2021, the Commissioners paused formal confirmation and notification of the extension decision until the Council and CCG had undertaken a full due diligence review of the change in control and understand its legal implications.
- The Commissioners instructed BDO LLP (BDO), to undertake due diligence on T20 and the implications of the acquisition of the Provider for the Contract, the Commissioners, and the delivery of services.
- On 8 March 2022, it was agreed to defer the notification of the contract extension decision deadline until 30th June 2022 (subject to CCG and HCRG Care Group mutual agreement) and for a new options appraisal to be undertaken which will allow for discussion of other extension options with supporting rationale for each.
- On 4 April 2022, BDO facilitated an Options Appraisal Workshop in order to gather views and opinions from Commissioner representatives as part of the options appraisal process of the Contract based on the following four options:
  - Option 1 – Extend the Contract term for the 3 year period (until 2026/27)
  - Option 2 – Extend for an alternative period
  - Option 3 – Allow contract to end with no Contract extension beyond 31 March 2024
  - Option 4 – Termination of the Contract before 31 March 2024

Paula Riseborough said that it was difficult for her to add to her previous statement as the Options Appraisal report itself has been classified as exempt.

Councillor Joanna Wright asked for an explanation of the legal advice that the Council had received on this matter.

The Director of Adult Social Care replied that she was not able to share that information in the public domain. She added that the decision to hold an exempt session is not to protect the commercial aspects of HCRG but to safeguard the future decision that the Council and CCG make.

Councillor Wright asked if the decision regarding the contract was primarily about the Council obtaining best value for money as the Council's funds are in essence public funds.

The Director of Adult Social Care replied that the decision would not solely be based on finance as it also has to ensure that safe services are provided to the public.

Councillor Paul May said that he considered the decision to not be able to discuss the four options in public as undemocratic.

Councillor Liz Hardman said that she felt that a fifth option should be considered and that was to bring the contract back in house to the Council.

Councillor Paul May said that whilst recognising the CCG involvement he would support consideration of a fifth option.

The Director of Adult Social Care replied that this option had been given due consideration in recent months.

The Panel, having been satisfied that the public interest would be better served by not disclosing relevant information, **RESOLVED**, in accordance with the provisions of the Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 that the public should be excluded from the meeting for this item of business, because of the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act as amended.

## 13 PANEL WORKPLAN

The Panel approved their current workplan as printed.

The meeting ended at 1.25 pm

Chair(person) .....

Date Confirmed and Signed .....

**Prepared by Democratic Services**

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## **Statement from Paula Riseborough on HRCG Care Group Options Appraisal**

**(Re: prime provider contract extension for BathNES community health and care services)**

I'm speaking today to highlight one of the many issues that I object to regarding the outsourcing of BathNES health and care services to private provider HCRG Care Group (formerly known as Virgin Care).

I'm a Bath resident and part of campaign group Protect our NHS BANES. Our many concerns regarding the handover of our community health and care services on 2017 to a private provider are well known to the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel. Most recently we have objected to the behaviour of Virgin Care executives in secretly negotiating a takeover of their company by Twenty20 Capital, without informing the commissioners (the Council and BathNES CCG) of this until after they had approved a 3-year extension of Virgin Care's prime provider contract.

Protect our NHS members have raised questions with our local councillors and with the health scrutiny panel about the procedures involved in the contract negotiations and were reassured when the Council announced that due diligence work and a revised options appraisal would be carried out regarding this contract extension.

However, on reading the Scrutiny Panel's Agenda for its 17 May meeting, together with the HCRG Care Group Options Appraisal document, I was dismayed to find that the long awaited report is to be presented to the Panel 'in private session due to the commercial sensitivity of the decision to be taken'. This represents one of my major concerns about outsourcing of publicly funded health and care services to private companies – there is a breakdown of transparency in the functioning of democratic and statutory organisations when the commercial interests of private providers are placed ahead of essential public interest.

As a tax payer and retired NHS professional, I consider that both commissioners and providers of publicly funded health and care services should be transparent in the information they provide to the public. If private providers are unable to be clear and open in their procedures and documentation, they should not be considered for public service contracts. The fact that BathNES Council and the CCG needed to commission a new due diligence process and HRCG Care Group Options Appraisal, at great expense to the commissioners and the public, following Virgin Care's lack of transparency in its proceedings, is a clear illustration of what can happen if transparency and information sharing is not a key value in statutory health and care partnerships.

If the full Options Appraisal document is not to be published, then the commissioners should provide for public scrutiny, at the very least, a summary of the Options Appraisal document. This should include a list of the people consulted for their views (and their job roles), what criteria they were looking at when deciding on a recommended option and, if a decision is made to extend HCRG's contract, what measures the commissioners have in place to prevent the prime provider company being sold on again during the BathNES contract period.

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Use of the High Common, Bath – Theresa Franklin

My subject is the dangers of sharing golf with the public on The High Common which is a park. One of the things about golf being played in a public park is the obvious danger of golf balls. Golf balls can travel up to 100miles per hour.

We have known near misses on the golf course and certainly flying balls have hit houses on Cavendish Rd.

Here is a photo of a window in home in St James's Square which backs onto Cavendish Rd, and the golf course. The owner claimed from the GLL who were running the Approach Golf course at the time.



Should users of this public park, be subjected to these dangers on a daily basis.

The High Common reverted to parkland during the pandemic. Many rediscovered the High Common a place of sanity and sanctuary. We dont want it returned to golf.

We, the users of this park, are again pondering how it would affect our behaviour, should golf return.

Because, the truth is Golf on The High Common changes everything.

Where we walk, where we sit, and how we feel! We certainly cant linger. And our children cannot run free. You can't breathe comfortably. Always on the lookout for a flying golf ball.

It is no longer the experience one would expect from a park. Statutory definition of a Public Park  
FREE AND OPEN ACCESS TO ALL THE PUBLIC.

Golf restricts that access physically and has an affect on us mentally.

Why should we be afraid, and constantly looking out for danger in a public park?

My question is -

Has anyone from BANES Health and Safety ever been asked to evaluate the risks to non golfers in this park environment, from both a physical and mental health perspective?

I can understand how 60 years ago, golf, pitch and putt really, might have been acceptable. But, surely not in 2022.

60 years ago, life was very different - people never wore seatbelts in cars, people drove drunk, people smoked, a lot, everywhere. Women could get fired for being pregnant. You get the picture.... None of these things are acceptable now.

This will more or less form the basis of my statement.

Regards  
Theresa Franklin

**Children, Adults, Health and Wellbeing Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel  
Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2022, 10.00 am**

**Lead Member PDS Report**

**Independent Care Review**

The findings for the Independent Care Review have been collated and will be published at the end of May. B&NES has played an integral part in this review and the B&NES case study that will be nationally publicised was in relation to some of the excellent work taking place in our Family Placement Team.

**Ofsted**

The Ofsted report was published on 19th April which found that Children in Bath and North East Somerset receive a good service. Despite the challenges of COVID-19 and increasing demand, senior leaders have been effective in strengthening services since Ofsted's last inspection in 2017. Substantial investment by political and senior leaders and an effective model of social work practice have played a key part in this. The report reflects the dedication and commitment of the workforce and the excellent service that we provide to our local community.

Community Care have featured an article on B&NES inspection report, please see link.

<https://www.communitycare.co.uk/2022/04/22/councils-pre-proceedings-prevent-children-enter-care-ofsted-good-grading/>

**Civic Centre**

The Keynsham Civic Centre refurbishment is scheduled to be completed on 16th June and Children's Services are looking forward to returning to the office space while also continuing with the hybrid ways of working.

**Children Missing Education Service**

The Service is responsible for:

- supporting B&NES schools with attendance, which can lead to issuing Penalty Notices and court action
- issuing chaperone licences for performances
- issuing work permits for young people
- Body of Persons Approval (BOPA) in relation to performances
- Performance Licences for school age children and young people
- Fair Access requests – under the new attendance guidance there is a requirement that the LA considers the fair access requests to ensure that they meet the prescribed criteria.

In an average year, the team receive approximately 1300 referrals related to poor school attendance and around 1000 tasks associated with Performance Licences, Chaperone Approvals, Employment Permits and Penalty notices.

In addition, the CMES Manager has allocated one part-time Officer to support the asylum seeker families with school applications. This has involved coordinating with the translation service, completing forms, liaising with schools, establishing funding routes, and liaising with other professionals, e.g. around transport, free school meals.

The Service will also support the Ukraine host families who have offered accommodation to those families seeking shelter from the conflict in their home country. To date, we are aware that 73 children will arrive in B&NES. 27 have arrived in date. The council is not the in-year admissions authority for the vast majority of schools in B&NES. However, we are working with Multi-Academy Trusts and Academies to support them in their role of offering school places. The DFE will provide funding to help these children in their school placements. We are awaiting the final guidance from the DFE on how this can be utilised.

### **Attendance in B&NES Schools**

Overall, school attendance in B&NES is currently 92.48%. This is slightly down on where we would expect the regional average to be; however, the attendance for the whole year has been affected by Covid absence which was much higher in terms 1, 2 & 3. However, we are seeing rates in primary and secondary schools return to normal.

More families have elected to home educate since the pandemic, and there are currently just under 200 children electively home educated in B&NES. This is up from 128 in January 2020.

The LA's Alternative Learning team continues to provide a range of services to support these families appropriately and where necessary, we liaise closely with our colleagues in social care.

### **School Admissions**

Applicants applying for a secondary school place in B&NES are able to select 5 preferences. For 2022/23 school admissions, 97.9% of B&NES residents received one of their overall secondary school preferences.

Primary school place applicants can select 3 preferences. For 2022/23 school admissions, 99% of B&NES applicants received one of their overall primary school preferences.

All families are provided with information on how they can formally appeal for a school place.

## **Education Reform**

Since my last report, an education white paper and a SEND green paper have been released. These two papers are potentially significant pieces of education reform. Both papers' details are found in the links below:

### **Education White Paper**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/opportunity-for-all-strong-schools-with-great-teachers-for-your-child>

A helpful summary produced by the NGA is located in the link below.

<https://www.nga.org.uk/getmedia/1c2159b5-a2ff-4a33-a74d-2b639fa3a328/nga-white-paper-summary-20220401.pdf>

The final details of how this reform will be delivered are not known. However, additional responsibilities around school admissions and clarity over the future of the Local Authority's role in education are two areas that we will consider closely.

### **SEND Green Paper**

This is an overdue and much needed green paper expected to address significant difficulties in the support provided for our Children with SEND. The link below takes you to the paper, a summary and a formal consultation on the proposals.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-and-ap-green-paper-responding-to-the-consultation>

This paper does not relate to education alone and covers health and social care; it also indicates significant reform to the delivery of Alternative Education Provision.

Our SEND Strategy Group is working through the paper and will submit a formal response in time for the July consultation deadline. Some of the proposals are very welcome but require significant legislation to be implemented. However, on the face of it, we are welcoming a lot of the proposals to standardised some parts of the system and the drive to seek more accountability and clarify for families, children, and young people.

### **Rough Sleeping Drug and Alcohol Treatment Grant (RSDATG)**

B&NES is in phase 3 of the national rollout of the Rough Sleeping Drug and Alcohol Treatment Grant (RSDATG). The funding is managed and coordinated nationally by the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) within DHSC. The purpose of the grant is to improve drug and alcohol treatment support and outcomes for people experiencing, or at risk of, rough sleeping who have drug and alcohol dependence needs. The funding will be for 2022-25, with bids asked for to cover 2022-24 in the first instance.

A working group that included LA commissioners for housing and drug and alcohol services, HCRG care group commissioners, DHI directors, Julian House, Reach (housing support



service), Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership, and DHSC/OHID was created to identify need, consult with the target population and workers, and design a model to meet gaps identified. As a result of this work, a funding bid has been submitted that focuses on improvements in the following areas:

- Access and engagement in drug and alcohol treatment
- Continuity of care – engagement is maintained as clients move into longer term accommodation
- Resilient and sustainable models of care – build resilience based on the needs of B&NES population

The application was for approx. £2.1m for 2022-24. We hope to hear in the next few weeks how much of the funding applied for we will actually receive, and the DHSC want to see progress in implementation from July. This funding will be of great benefit to our drug and alcohol services and their clients who are, or are at risk of, rough sleeping.

### **Social prescribing in B&NES**

Our community provider (HCRG Care Group) works collaboratively with local Primary Care Networks to provide an integrated social prescribing service through DHI using NHS and council funding.

The offer from DHI follows the national specification for social prescribing, and is primarily advertised through B&NES GP surgeries and the Community Wellbeing Hub. Patients and social prescribers work together to identify services and activities that best match the patients' needs, and through conversations and information build patients' confidence to access community groups and support. There is one PCN, Three Valleys, that is in the process of employing their own social prescribing link workers, and a focus for the PCN in 2022 is social prescribing.

In B&NES, social prescribers work closely with the Community Wellbeing Hub, for example by supporting the transition of complex patients to Wellbeing Coaches in the Community Wellbeing Hub, who in turn spend more time working through their needs and coordinating the right package of community support.

As well as information about socially prescribed activities being available via health professionals, information about all activities are available on the B&NES [Wellbeing College](#) website, and includes activities such as arts activities, creative writing, gardening/allotment growing, mindfulness, cookery, healthy eating advice, and a range of physical activity options.

### **Active travel and social prescribing feasibility study - bid for Department for Transport (DfT) funding**

B&NES Council was successful in being awarded £100k from DfT to carry out a feasibility study to develop plans for a three-year Social Prescribing and Active Travel programme in the Somer Valley area as part of a national pilot. The feasibility study was submitted to DfT at the end of April by the public health and sustainable communities directorates in collaboration with many partners, and we will hear whether we have been successful in being awarded funding in June.

The feasibility study needed to demonstrate how an active travel and social prescribing offer can meet the needs of underrepresented groups and reduce health inequalities, actively promote increased levels of physical activity through cycling and walking, support a shift in peoples travel choices to active travel, and demonstrate clear links between infrastructure development and the proposed social prescribing schemes.

The funding bid is for £1.6m over three years (2022/23 – 2024/25). If successful, the project will initially focus on an offer in Midsomer Norton, Radstock, Westfield, Paulton, though with the option of expanding the offer across the Three Valleys PCN area.

The proposal is to set up and operate a 'Walking and Cycling Hub' in the Healthy Living Centre in Radstock. It will be a 'one stop shop' for walking and cycling support, activities, cycle hire, cycle repair, and information on active travel routes. As well as the main hub in Radstock there will be regular 'pop-up' hubs in high-street locations in Midsomer Norton, Radstock and Paulton offering the same interventions. The pilot will take referrals from community services, health professionals, self-referral, and a range of other routes.

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## Report for the Children, Adults, Health and Wellbeing Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2022

### Health and Wellbeing Board development

The Local Government Association is supporting two new development groups for the BaNES Council Health and Wellbeing Board to facilitate discussions and actions for the future.

The first group has been tasked with incorporating the health and wellbeing focused Joint Strategic Needs Assessment into the Council and BSW CCG's Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

The second group will look at the wider functioning of the Health and Wellbeing Board to examine future working following the establishment of the BSW Integrated Care System (ICS) and BaNES locality Integrated Care Alliance (ICA) on July 1<sup>st</sup>. This process is being completed using 1-2-1 interviews with Board members to assess how things are working at the moment and how they could be improved in the future.

### BSW ICS and ICA update

The Health and Care Bill which set out plans for the formation of Integrated Care Systems received Royal Assent at the end of April. The Bill will now pass into law as the Health and Care Act 2022 and paves the way for the BSW Integrated Care Board (ICB) to become a statutory body on July 1st and the formation of the BaNES locality Integrated Care Alliance (ICA).

The Health and Care Act introduces measures to tackle the COVID-19 backlogs and rebuild health and social care services following the pandemic. It will also contain measures to address health inequalities and create safer, more joined-up services that will put the health and care system on a more sustainable footing.

As we approach the 1st of July deadline, there has been a renewed focus on recruitment to our ICB Board. Seven executive roles to the BSW ICB have now been confirmed:

- Gill May, currently the BSW CCG Director of Nursing and Quality, has been appointed as **Chief Nurse**.
- Richard Smale, currently the BSW CCG Director of Strategy and Transformation, has been appointed as **Director of Strategy and Transformation**.
- Dr Amanda Webb, currently the Swindon Locality Clinical Chair for BSW, has been appointed as the **Chief Medical Officer**.
- Jasvinder Sohal will join BSW as **Chief People Officer**. Jasvinder currently works at Solent NHS Trust where she has been Chief People Officer.

- Gary Heneage has been appointed as **Chief Finance Officer**. Gary joins us from NHS England and Improvement in the South West Region, where he is currently Interim Director of Operational Finance.
- Rachael Backler has been appointed as **Director of Planning and Performance**. Rachel joins BSW from Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust where she has been Executive Director of Performance.
- Dr Jane Moore has been appointed as **Director of Equalities, Innovation and Digital Enterprise**. Jane is Director of Strategy, Planning and Performance for the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent CCGs.
- Offers have been made to successful candidates for the **Directors of Place** roles for BaNES and Wiltshire with a second round of interviews due to take place for the Director of Place role for Swindon.
- Interviews for **Chief of Staff** took place in early May. A Successful candidate will be announced shortly.

NHS England is also supporting a number of development sessions for our BaNES ICA to drive forward the development of a vision for our new organisation and finalise plans for areas such as governance and finance.

The latest version of the BSW Partnership System Development Plan for 2022/2023 has been submitted to NHS England. The plan has been developed by lead and programme support teams from our key workstreams and focuses on the continued development of our BSW Integrated Care System and the transition activities that will be required during 2022/23 to align with the legislative changes planned.

It includes progress updates in relation to activities set out in the previous version of the plan, as well as our BSW response to recently released national guidance on ICS Development.

## Update to Healthy Start scheme

Some changes are taking place to the national NHS [Healthy Start Scheme](#) to help women who are pregnant or have young children and are receiving benefits buy foods such as milk or fruit.

The Healthy Start scheme now offers a prepaid card to those applying for Healthy Start to replace the previous Healthy Start paper vouchers. The cards are topped up every 4 weeks with a payment. Those who were in receipt of the paper voucher scheme will need to apply for the digital scheme if they have not already done so.

Healthy Start A5 posters have been sent to GP surgeries and other health settings in BaNES to display along with leaflets for dissemination to eligible parents and carers of children under 4 or to people who are pregnant.

## HCRG Healthy Weight courses

HCRG Care Group will be running a series of healthy weight courses throughout May and June at leisure centres in Bath and Writhlington.

The courses are open to families with children aged between five and 10-years-old who are above a healthy weight.

Topics covered include healthy food and drink swaps, physical Activity / active play, the impact of screen time and why we make certain food choices.

Final dates have yet to be confirmed but flexible one-to-one sessions can be arranged for families unable to make any of the group sessions.

## **Covid vaccination update**

Our covid vaccination programme continues at pace with a focus on booster shots for over 75s, pregnant women and children aged 5-11.

BSW CCG has been calling on people aged 75 and over yet to come forward for their second Covid-19 booster to do so without delay.

Latest figures show that almost half (46 per cent) of all those in the age group have so far had the recommended top-up dose, which is being offered to prolong the immune-boosting effects of previous coronavirus vaccines.

Unlike previous rounds of vaccinations, people no longer need to wait to be contacted to come forward, with those due a booster now encouraged to proactively book their appointment, either online or over the phone.

Latest figures show that in BSW 2,225,000 vaccines have been delivered. In BaNES 173,586 people have received first doses and 166, 092 received second doses.

Players from Bath City FC have also helped push the vaccine message over recent weeks telling fans not to miss their shot in a new film from Bath and North East Somerset Council.

The film can be watched online by clicking the link below: <https://youtu.be/6rPwL5wT65U>

## **Pressure on health and care services continues in BaNES**

Pressures related to Covid-19, staff absence and high demand for hospital beds have continued across BaNES over the past few weeks. A number of measures remain in place to help address these issues.

Appeals to the public to support services during this difficult time are ongoing. The main messages being for people to use our health services appropriately, support hospitals by collecting loved ones as soon as they are ready to go home, using our pharmacies for help and support wherever possible and using the online 111 service in the first instance.

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