

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET

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

Monday, 18th September, 2023

Present:- Councillors Dine Romero (Chair), Liz Hardman (Vice-Chair), Alex Beaumont, Paul Crossley, Dave Harding, Michelle O'Doherty and Joanna Wright

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

Also in attendance: Rebecca Reynolds (Director of Public Health and Prevention), Mary Kearney-Knowles (Director of Children and Education), Christopher Wilford (Education and Safeguarding Director), Ceri Williams (Policy Development & Scrutiny Officer), Sally Churchyard (Head of Young People's Prevention Services), Paul Scott (Associate Director, Public Health) Sophia Mckenzie (Violence Reduction Unit Coordinator) and Sgt Heather Anderton (Avon & Somerset Police)

14 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

15 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chair drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

The Democratic Services Officer announced that apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Lesley Mansell, Councillor Paul May and Laura Ambler (Place Director, B&NES, Swindon & Wiltshire Integrated Care Board).

17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

18 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN

There was none.

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

There were none.

20 MINUTES: 10TH JULY 2023

Kevin Burnett asked if the Panel could be updated on how the service at the Royal United Hospital Urgent Treatment Centre was progressing following their amendments to it which began on September 4th 2023. He also asked if a response could be provided on whether a high percentage of students use the Urgent Treatment Centre as they may not be registered with a local GP.

He informed the Panel that he had been advised that the study into Long Covid was likely to come to their January 2024 meeting.

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

21 CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

Councillor Joanna Wright commented that from figures presented to Council in July it showed that Children's Services were £2.3m over budget and that this was mainly due to Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children. She asked for a report to be brought to the November meeting to detail how this figure will be addressed.

She added that she would also like information on the SEND School's Budget and Home to School Transport costs to be included in the report.

The Director of Children's Services & Education replied that a report will be prepared for the November Panel meeting.

Councillor Paul Crossley said that he would welcome an update on the former Culverhay site.

The Director of Education & Safeguarding replied that an update could be prepared a future meeting.

Kevin Burnett commented that he would like to know how the proposed savings of £1.2m this year will be achieved and questioned what effect this will have on staff and the standards of the service.

The Chair, on behalf of the Panel, wished Councillor May well. She added that the Panel also expressed a wish to have an appropriate Cabinet representative present at the meeting if the Cabinet Member was not able to attend.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to note the update that had been provided.

22 B&NES, SWINDON & WILTSHIRE INTEGRATED CARE BOARD (BSW ICB) UPDATE

Kevin Burnett asked if any significant changes had been noticed since the Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire (BSW) ICB, with the support of the NHS South West Dental Commissioning Hub, became responsible for the commissioning of dental services across England as of 1 April 2023.

He asked if any mobile dental services have been considered to help with coverage of the B&NES area.

He asked what remedies have been considered to address the falling numbers in adults accessing NHS dental services in B&NES.

He asked for confirmation that the BSW ICB have a SEND representative and asked what their role was and how they liaised with other agencies.

The Director of Children's Services & Education replied that Gill May, Director of Nursing & Quality has this role and sits on the Board.

Councillor Joanna Wright informed the Panel that she had been made aware that if a patient did not attend their NHS dentist within a three-year period they would lose their place at that practice. She added that following Covid many dentists changed their working arrangements and she felt that this has led patients believing that they could no longer attend the same practice as they used to. She questioned whether this had caused the reduction in numbers that has been seen.

The Chair commented that it was important to find out the underlying causes for the drop in attendance and suggested whether a Panel member could discuss this matter directly with the ICB and report back.

The Policy Development & Scrutiny Officer replied that he had been invited to an informal discussion with the ICB and would have this topic in mind for when they meet.

Councillor Liz Hardman commented that having asked a number of local dentists why they were no longer able to provide a service under the NHS their response was that they were not paid enough. She added that they had also said that in terms of payment per units of dental activity, one unit could sometimes involve 12 treatments and that was all that they would get paid.

She asked the ICB to explore with the Government whether the pay for B&NES NHS dentists can be improved. She added that she welcomed the focus on the areas of greatest need and inequality of access.

The Director of Public Health replied that with regard to identifying areas in greater need this was an opportunity in time now that the ICB have taken on this role.

Councillor Joanna Wright suggested that a cross party motion be raised with Council on this matter to highlight the issue as it was so important to all local residents. The Chair asked if the Panel agreed with this proposal. They indicated that they were in agreement.

The Policy Development & Scrutiny Officer advised that the Panel itself could not lead on taking a motion to Council but suggested that the Cabinet Member could be approached to seek a way forward on this proposal.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to note the update that had been provided.

23 YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN 2023 - 24

The Head of Young People's Prevention Services introduced the report to the Panel. She explained that the Local Authority has a statutory duty, in partnership with Health, Police and Probation, to produce an annual Youth Justice Plan. She said that the Plan sets out how services will be organised and funded and what functions they will carry out to prevent youth offending and re-offending across Bath and North East Somerset.

She informed the Panel that this year's plan incorporates a number of work streams commenced last year and includes work that will continue beyond March 2024.

The Development Plan is shorter this year, to enable sufficient attention to be given to each action and because it is accompanied by an Anti-Racism Plan.

It is set out according to the strategic priorities that have been agreed with the Partnership Board and the Youth Justice Service:

1. Strengthen participation – a continuing priority as youth justice work is most effective – perhaps only effective – when it accurately addresses the needs and views of children, carers and those harmed by children's offending.
2. Address disproportionality – a continuing priority as children from some ethnic backgrounds and with Special Educational Needs are still over-represented in the youth justice system (locally and nationally).
3. Embed Child First principles – a new priority, but not new work. This reflects the YJB's strategic approach and central guiding principle.
4. Address serious violence – a new priority, but not new work. This also marks the introduction of the Serious Violence Duty.

She stated that much of this work can only be undertaken in partnership with other organisations and with the active support of the Partnership Board. The plan will be reviewed regularly by the Partnership Board at its business meetings and it will report on successes and escalate issues to the Community Safety and Safeguarding Partnership.

Kevin Burnett commented that he felt that the figures in relation to Looked After Children that reoffend were high and asked who led on this work and what preventative measures were in place.

The Head of Young People's Prevention Services replied that it was important to remember that the figures in reality are a small number of children. She said that Social Care would have the main responsibility for them, but that support would be provided by a lead worker from Youth Justice to assist with custody work.

She added that projects such as Compass (B&NES) and Turnaround (Ministry of Justice) are in place to attempt to prevent youth offending alongside a range of other workstreams across the Council.

Councillor Liz Hardman commented that it was good to see that the number of First Time Entrants continued to be low and that no custodial sentences have been required. She referred to page 61 of the agenda pack and asked how disproportionality issues for children with SEND in the youth justice system had been progressed.

The Head of Young People's Prevention Services replied that this has been a concern for a number of years and that this work follows on from the national report by David Lammy in 2017 into the criminal justice system which addressed disproportionality.

She added that the Avon & Somerset Criminal Justice Board commissioned a specific piece of work across all of its services and a report entitled 'Identifying Disproportionality' was published. She stated that around 80 recommendations were made within the report and that a framework was being developed to address them.

Councillor Hardman asked if there was work ongoing with the Police with regard to pupils that become permanently excluded that are likely to offend.

The Head of Young People's Prevention Services replied that children that are excluded from school are vulnerable and at greater risk of offending if unsupervised. She added that there are supervision arrangements in place, but if they choose not to accept them there is a risk that they can mix with people that can lead them astray or be exploited.

She explained that work was ongoing in relation to Out of Court Disposals and how children are treated before they come to a court. She said that this was taking place across the five Local Authorities to see if any processes can be streamlined, in particular use of Outcome 22.

Kevin Burnett asked if funding for a pilot through the Home Office was in place to support schools in avoiding exclusions.

The Head of Young People's Prevention Services replied that this could have been linked to work that is now taking place through the Violence Reduction Partnership. She added that a Strategic Worker had been appointed locally to work schools and their young people who have been excluded or at the risk of exclusion and that Local Authority have within the past month confirmed this role as a permanent position. She said that a Key Worker had also been appointed for a period of time to work directly with children and their families.

Councillor Joanna Wright asked for clarification as to whether this work was carried out in all schools, state and private. She added that she felt that there is an element of socio-economic pupil interaction to be understood as this issue moves forward.

The Head of Young People's Prevention Services replied that they do work with all schools and that the issue raised could be picked up as part of the upcoming Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

The Chair asked for the Corporate Parenting Group to also discuss the issue of the disproportionality of Looked After Children within the Youth Justice System at a future meeting.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to:

- i) Approve the annual Youth Justice Plan 2023-24.
- ii) Note that Council will be asked to agree the Youth Justice Plan fulfils the requirements of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and can be submitted to the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales.
- iii) Note that Council will be asked to adopt the Youth Justice Plan as part of the Council's Policy and Budget Framework that can be accommodated within the Council budget.
- iv) Note that the Youth Offending Service Partnership Board is responsible for ensuring delivery of the Plan.

24 VIOLENCE REDUCTION UPDATE

The Head of Young People's Prevention Services introduced the report to the Panel. She stated that Bath and North East Somerset continues to be an area of comparatively low reported serious violence. Nevertheless, the impact of serious violence when it occurs is devastating for individuals, families and communities.

She explained that a 'hub and spoke' model was adopted locally, with the lead 'hub' role being undertaken by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner who convenes an Avon and Somerset-wide multi-agency strategic Board.

She informed the Panel that delegated funding was made available to each of the five Local Authority 'spokes' to appoint Co-ordinators and Administrators and develop their own needs assessments and response plans, introduce new processes for addressing risk and for procuring services. These outputs are monitored and reported to the Home Office by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

She stated that in Bath and North East Somerset, this cross-cutting agenda is overseen by a multi-agency Serious Violence Steering Group which reports to the Community Safety and Safeguarding Partnership's Exploitation sub-group via quarterly reports which are also sent to the Prevention and Early Intervention sub-group, the Domestic Abuse Partnership and the Youth Justice Partnership Board. She added that there is a particular focus on sharing information at a multi-agency level about individuals, networks and places of concern in relation to exploitation and the risk of serious violence.

She highlighted the following two sections of the report to the Panel.

3.7 Implementation support: The Home Office then awarded a contract to Crest Advisory to deliver national implementation support for the Serious Violence Duty. This began with a review of all Police areas and in Avon and Somerset, Crest

reported that partners were “ready and engaged to deliver on the Duty.” Tailored implementation support is now being received here and in all areas through thematic workshops to ensure suitable partnership arrangements are in place.

3.8 Avon and Somerset transition: At the same time, recognising that specific work was needed in Avon and Somerset to move from Violence Reduction Unit arrangements to new Serious Violence Duty arrangements, Crest Advisory was appointed following a competitive process, to support the transition. The purpose of this was to understand how the new arrangements should work both strategically and operationally and review the respective roles and responsibilities between the Police and Crime Commissioner ‘hub’ and the five Local Authority ‘spokes.’

Kevin Burnett asked if the consultation of Young People regarding the Bath and North East Somerset Strategic Needs Assessment was due to take place this October / November and did they already have a database of contacts to be used.

The Head of Young People's Prevention Services replied that the consultation is planned to take place over the next couple of months and that the deadline for completion of the Strategic Needs Assessment was 31st January 2024. She added that two staff focus groups have already been held and they were discussing with colleagues in Social Care, Probation and Youth Justice as to the best way to consult Young People.

The Associate Director for Public Health added that gathering a wide range of insights was really important and that he hoped this would lead to areas of work that can be progressed following the publication of the Strategic Needs Assessment.

Kevin Burnett asked if the consultation would be confined to those that are currently known within the system or would it be on a wider scale to include education representatives and Youth Connect workers.

The Head of Young People's Prevention Services replied that they would be looking to consult with as wide a range of people as possible. She added that the Violence Reduction Unit Coordinator would be leading on this work and that they planned to talk with Mentoring Plus, Project 28, Youth Connect, Off The Record and in house statutory services.

The Violence Reduction Unit Coordinator said that surveys would also be sent to all schools as part of the consultation.

Councillor Paul Crossley commented that he would like to see in future reports some goals, targets and achievements so that the work can be analysed and progress measured. He asked if it was known whether incidents involving knife crime were linked to particularly distressed families or those considered to be most in need.

He also asked how much of the violent crime that does take place within B&NES is carried out by those who do not live in the area and whether more harmful weapons than knives were becoming a factor that needed to be addressed.

The Head of Young People's Prevention Services replied that national measurements are included within the report, such as homicide rates and hospital admissions. She added that they are invited to form local targets and these can be progressed following the Strategic Needs Assessment.

She added that the young people known to them who have been involved in knife crime and serious violence would likely be from a stressed family background and not engaged well with school.

She said that it was difficult to talk about the three recent fatal incidents, but informed the Panel that no B&NES young person was being investigated as part of these proceedings. She added that they do work alongside other Local Authorities and their Police to see why young people would travel here and commit these offences and why might young people within B&NES travel outside of the area to do the same.

She explained that further information could be included in any future report as they have a local Steering Group that meets quarterly that reports on their in-year workplan.

The Chair commented that it felt like a number of the points that have been raised could be taken forward if the Knife Crime Task Group is to be approved later on the agenda.

Councillor Liz Hardman acknowledged that there is a Public Health approach to this work, but asked what involvement does the Police have as well as their Early Intervention Team in terms of identifying known hot spots and gathering the voice of the children.

The Head of Young People's Prevention Services replied that Public Health were leading the work by consent, but assured the Panel that the Police have a very active role within it. She said that the identification of areas of concern was carried out through multi-agency work and that monthly meetings are held to discuss these matters and to attempt to identify possible solutions. She added that some joint work would take place with Wiltshire Council.

She added that they were aware of certain networks of young people who could potentially exploit / influence each other or encourage bad behaviour.

Councillor Hardman asked if this information is directly fed to the Police and then shared with other agencies.

The Head of Young People's Prevention Services replied that the Police have an active role in this work and that they will be sharing the role of Chair of the information sharing group with the Violence Reduction Unit Coordinator on a monthly basis. She added that some young people are identified directly through their records and notifications are also received from the Police.

Sgt Heather Anderton added that the Early Interventions Team consists of a Sergeant, two PCs and two PCSOs per Local Authority district and currently the one within Avon & Somerset does not have any PCSOs. She added that within Avon &

Somerset officers use an app called Click Sense that records all of our data, including the use of knives, weapons and hot spot locations.

She informed the Panel that until around six months ago there was also a dedicated Violence Reduction app. The app is no longer compatible with their laptops so a bespoke one is being developed. The app gives a harm score for children and young people, up to the age of 25, and identifies if they are on the cusp or well entrenched in areas of serious violence. Referrals into the Violence Reduction Partnership are then made based on these scores.

She said that another app used was Business Objects and this delivers reports directly to her team from analysts on missing children under the age of 18 in B&NES.

She added that the local Neighbourhood and Response Teams will also contact us directly if they have concerns over any individuals or groups. She added that her team has a particular focus on the 11 – 17 age range.

She said that she and the Violence Reduction Unit Coordinator 1-2 times a week and share data on a regular basis.

The Chair asked if membership of the Partnership was prescribed.

The Head of Young People's Prevention Services replied that there were a number statutory partners that have a duty to collaborate and these were Police, Local Authority, Fire & Rescue, Youth Justice Services, Probation and Integrated Care Board. She said that they also welcome the involvement from other agencies, including education settings and the Voluntary Sector.

The Chair asked if representatives of the Knife Crime Task Group could have sight of the surveys to be given to young people as part of the Strategic Needs Assessment.

The Head of Young People's Prevention Services replied that they would be happy to share the question content with them.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to:

- i) Note the progress made in transitioning partnership arrangements from a Violence Reduction Unit to a Violence Reduction Partnership that works to fulfil the Serious Violence Duty.
- ii) Note the local initiatives being undertaken to address concern about serious violence including knife crime.

25 CREATION OF A TASK GROUP TO REVIEW KNIFE CRIME

The Chair of the Panel introduced this item and explained that the proposal to form a Task Group had been agreed at a meeting of full Council on 20th July 2023. The Chair stated that work agreed by the Task Group would need to fit in with the work of the Serious Violence Partnership.

The Policy Development & Scrutiny Officer addressed the Panel and said that the benefits of working within a Task Group format was that it can be flexible and dynamic in its approach. He added that the meetings would not be held in public and would therefore be able to deal more appropriately with any sensitive information that may need discussing.

He explained that the Group does not have to be configured politically and that it would elect its own Chair at its first meeting. He added that on conclusion of their work they would report back their findings to a public meeting of the Panel before passing on any recommendations to the Cabinet Member.

Councillor Alex Beaumont asked if the Task Group was only to be formed of members of this Panel or could Councillors from wards that have been affected by these recent incidents be involved.

The Policy Development & Scrutiny Officer replied that membership was not constrained to Panel members, but stated that no member of the Cabinet would be able to take part.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked if Council would be involved in any further stage of the process.

The Policy Development & Scrutiny Officer replied that any recommendations would be made to the Cabinet Member or the Cabinet as a whole. He added that if there were to be any policy changes as a result then they would come before Council.

Councillor Paul Crossley commented that he thought that this was an excellent proposal. He questioned whether the timing of the report back to the Panel would have an impact on the budget setting process if further resources were decided to be required.

The Policy Development & Scrutiny Officer replied that the feedback timeline of 6 months within the report was a guide in order to try to keep momentum in place and was not set in stone. He added that during the evidence gathering process they could advise the Cabinet Member of any potential budget discussions.

The Chair added that Lead Officers would also be advised to take any early findings into account. She asked if the evidence that the Task Group receives can be broad and include local external partnership groups as well as from within the Council.

The Policy Development & Scrutiny Officer replied that they could and that is what he would advise.

The Head of Young People's Prevention Services reminded the Panel that there was a legislative deadline of 31st January 2024 for submitting the Strategic Needs Assessment and publishing a supporting strategy and that they should have that in mind when commencing this work.

The Chair commented that the Task Group would take into account the work of the Strategic Needs Assessment. She also wished to thank the Head of Young People's Prevention Services for all the work she has done for the Council and wished her well in her retirement.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to;

- i) Agree to establish a Knife Crime Task Group;
- ii) Endorse the proposed terms of reference, as detailed in para 3.8;
- iii) Delegate authority to the Panel Chair and Vice Chair to finalise the task group membership;
- iv) Request that the task group's findings and recommendations are reported back to the Panel for endorsement within six months of its first meeting.

26 SUPPORT FOR YOUNG CARERS

The Director of Children's Services & Education introduced the report to the Panel and highlighted the following sections.

- Bath & North East Somerset Council has commissioned the Carers Centre to deliver a Young Carers Service, which holds the Councils' delegated authority to provide statutory needs assessments for young carers on request as per The Children and Families Act (2014). The Young Carers Service has a dedicated Team to assess and support young carers locally. The Young Carers Service, in partnership with other services, promote awareness of young carers and ensure that their needs are identified through Early Help assessments, with clear guidance for practitioners.
- The Young Carers Service delivers a wide range of short breaks and youth activities for different age groups throughout the year, which provide opportunities for young carers to have a break from their caring role and spend time with their peers. The activities are informed by young carers and their families.
- The Young Carers Service delivers *Wellbeing Groups* for young carers, providing emotional support and strategies for coping with the stresses that come with caring.
- The Young Carers Service delivers *Family Events* for young carers and their families, giving them the opportunity to spend quality time as a family and meet and connect other families who may have similar needs.
- The Young Carers Service provide training, advice and information to schools. Schools are encouraged to offer proactive support to Young Carers in their settings, such as Young Carers Support Groups, a 'Delegated Lead' for young carers so that they know who the 'trusted adult/s' are that they can talk to, and ensure there are processes in place for staff to know who the young carers are in their school and guidance on how they can be supported.

- If a young carer is bereaved, the Carers Centre would support them to find a relevant service such as *Winston's Wish* or *We Hear You*, who are experts in providing this support. A very small proportion of Young Carers in BANES have had a parental bereavement or are caring for a parent with a terminal condition.
- The Children and Families Act 2014 gives young carers and young adult carers in England a right to a carer's assessment and to have their needs met (if the assessment shows this is needed).
- B&NES Council outlined its commitment to young carers in The B&NES Young Carers Strategy 2022–2024. The Strategy is an excellent example of co-production by B&NES Council, Young Carers and The Carers Centre which set out six priority areas covering Recognition of young carers; What Young Carers Need - Deliver young carers needs assessments on request for all young carers; Support for Young Carers; Help others understand Young Carers; Always involve Young Carers and their families; Growing and changing with Young Carers – Transition primary – secondary- tertiary – adult services as a carer.

Kevin Burnett asked how Young Carers were identified.

The Director of Children's Services & Education replied that information is available to all schools to enable them to help identify those young people who are undertaking this role. She added that the Carers Centre would then carry out an assessment when notified. She said that any young person could also self-refer themselves to the Carers Centre.

She said that schools are encouraged to identify a designated lead for this area and that information is available via the Early Help app and the Council's website.

Councillor Dave Harding asked if any information was available as to the gap in time between a young person beginning to provide care and them being formally identified as a Young Carer.

The Director of Children's Services & Education replied that she did not have that information to hand and would seek a response for the Panel.

Councillor Joanna Wright asked whether, as Corporate Parents, the age range of this provision should be extended up to 25 from 18.

The Director of Children's Services & Education replied that when a young person, who is known to the service, becomes 18 or prior to that date they would work with Adult Services to oversee a transition as to what their needs would be post-18.

Councillor Liz Hardman said that she would like to encourage schools to have a more active role in this process. She suggested whether an indication could be if they are missing school on a regular basis to carry out their carer role. She stated that the service needs to be funded appropriately and that to be using reserves was not sustainable.

The Director of Children's Services & Education replied that the Young Carers Service visit schools on annual basis to provide training. She added that information is available also through our Early Help Services and our Commissioned Services.

The Director of Education & Safeguarding added that the Children Missing Education Service will be aware of this service and can advocate to schools if they become aware of any issues. He added that it is also promoted by School Nurses and GP Practices.

Councillor Hardman said that further ways to raise awareness should be considered and explained that recently her local GP had sent an all patient text message on this subject in the hope that those young people can be made aware of the support that is in place should they need it.

The Director of Children's Services & Education said that the budget setting process was ongoing and that this would be included as part of those discussions.

Kevin Burnett suggested that the matter is also raised with the BSW ICB.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to note the update provided.

27 SCHOOLS CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The Education Business Manager introduced the report to the Panel. He explained that there was now a changing nature to the Schools Capital Programme because our pupil numbers have plateaued and we therefore receive a low allocation of funding in terms of the basic need element.

He added that the Council is still responsible for maintenance for the four remaining maintained non-VA schools and has a budget of £179,000 for any such works.

He stated that the big change has been the increased allocation of SEND funding which has been primarily linked to financial pressures being faced and that this has enabled the SEND Capital Strategy to be put in place for more local provision to be allocated.

He added that an agreement was in place for a new Free Special School and they were awaiting a decision on whether a new Alternative Provision School within B&NES will be approved. He said that further projects were also detailed within the report.

Councillor Paul Crossley commented that the additional SEND funding was excellent for our disadvantaged children and young people. He asked how the size of the projects listed in sections 3.7 and 3.8 were decided, whether the sites were to come from existing Council owned land and if there was enough funding in place for these specific projects.

The Education Business Manager replied that the SEND Small School with Residential unit is planned to hold 16 residential placements and around an

additional 20 day placements and therefore was not on a large scale. He added that they were in the process of assessing if there were any local sites available for refurbishment. He stated that the funding received is very welcome, but there would still be a challenge to complete the project with the allocated funds.

Councillor Crossley asked if B&NES children would have a priority over the allocated places at these new provisions.

The Education Business Manager replied that they would not as place allocation can't be controlled on that basis and that if pupils from other Local Authorities applied and were allocated a place it would have to be honoured. He added that across the South West of England, through the SEND Capital Strategy, multiple Free Schools are being built in a number of locations in collaboration with the DfE.

Kevin Burnett asked for clarification that the mainstream projects were all being funded through either Section 106 agreements or Government grants.

The Education Business Manager replied that all the projects listed were being funded through Government grants or a Section 106 agreement apart from the Bath College, Somer Valley Campus, Radstock Residential Unit which was to be funded (£4m) through Council borrowing paid for by savings from existing costs.

Kevin Burnett asked if further investigations were expected to take place on school sites within B&NES with regard to RAAC. He asked if the expenditure on these investigations nationally would have any effect on future funding provision.

The Education Business Manager replied that it has been stated that any funding that has already been allocated and notified will be retained, but we don't know at this stage what the impact will be on any future allocations. He added that as far as he was aware there is no RAAC within schools within B&NES, but said further investigations are to be carried out in the four maintained non-VA schools.

The Director of Education & Safeguarding added that he was aware that MATs were also being advised to carry out further investigations following the latest advice from the DfE. He stated that the Council are not responsible for the condition or day to day running of those buildings.

The Chair asked for both of the Cabinet Members associated with the Panel to provide an update in due course following the completion of any investigations.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked if the former Culverhay site was being considered as a future site of one of the Free Schools.

The Education Business Manager replied that the site for the Free Special School was being identified by a company named Located, which is part of the DfE, and two possible sites are within the Keynsham area. He added that if the bid for the Alternative Provision School is successful that will be located on the former Culverhay site.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to note the update provided in the report.

28 PANEL WORKPLAN

The Policy Development & Scrutiny Officer introduced this item to the Panel. He informed them that the following items were scheduled for their meeting on October 9th.

- Adult Social Care Transformation Update
- Peer Review
- Update on the Staffing Position across our Care Homes

Councillor Joanna Wright commented that she would like the workplan to show more future items for the upcoming meetings.

The Chair replied that she would meet with officers and the Vice-Chair to discuss forthcoming items that can be added to the workplan. She added that at a previous meeting they had expressed that they would like to receive reports on Child Exploitation and the Covid vaccination process for young people.

Councillor Dave Harding said that he would like the Covid report to include how schools will manage future infections and maintain good air quality within their schools.

Councillor Liz Hardman requested that the Schools Attainment report be scheduled for March 2024.

The Chair asked that this report includes reference to what impact Covid will have had on results, especially for those pupils in Key Stage 4.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to note those requests made for future reports and approved the workplan as printed.

The meeting ended at 11.57 am

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services