

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL

EARLY YEARS, CHILDREN AND YOUTH POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Monday, 14th October, 2013

Present:- Councillors: Sally Davis (Chair), Liz Hardman, David Veale, Michael Evans, Nicholas Coombes (In place of Loraine Morgan-Brinkhurst MBE), Lisa Brett (In place of Sarah Bevan) and Ian Gilchrist

Co-opted Voting Members:- David Williams

Co-opted Non-voting Members:- Chris Batten

Also in attendance: Ashley Ayre (Strategic Director for People and Communities), Tony Parker (Divisional Director for Learning and Inclusion), Mike Bowden (Divisional Director for CYP Strategy and Commissioning) and Sara Willis (Service Manager 0-11 Outcomes)

29 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

30 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chair drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

31 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Councillors Sarah Bevan and Loraine Morgan-Brinkhurst had sent their apologies to the Panel. Councillors Lisa Brett and Nicholas Coombes were their respective substitutes for the duration of the meeting.

The Liberal Democrat Group currently has a vacancy on the Panel, Councillor Ian Gilchrist was their representative on this occasion.

32 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

33 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN

The Chair announced that a revised Appendix 4 had been circulated to the Panel.

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

The Chair explained that a number of people had registered to make a statement and that they would be heard as part of agenda item 7.

35 RE-STRUCTURING OF THE EARLY YEARS, CHILDREN'S CENTRE AND EARLY HELP (0 - 11 YEARS) SERVICES 2014 - 2016

John Hack, Chew Valley Children's Centre Advisory Board addressed the Panel. A copy of the statement can be found on the Panel's Minute Book.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked if Chew Valley were to be linked to a hub in Keynsham would the same level of service be provided.

John Hack replied that he feared it would not and felt it almost inevitable that services for Chew Valley would cease to exist.

Tony Crouch, Chairman of Keynsham Children's Centre Advisory Board addressed the Panel. He asked the Panel to be mindful in any recommendations they make that the population of Keynsham was due to grow by 25 – 30% in the coming years.

Gemma Day, Toybox Toy Library, Weston Children's Centre addressed the Panel. A copy of the statement can be found on the Panel's Minute Book.

Gemma also handed in a petition of over 200 signatures and the handprints of 30 children showing support to keep the Children's Centre open along with the services it offers.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked if the proposed cuts went ahead would the service you provide stop.

Gemma Day replied that the charity would still exist but expected it would only be able to offer a reduced service.

Councillor Michael Evans asked if the charity currently received any financial support from the Council.

Gemma Day replied that it did not. She added that it would be the support from the staff at the Centre that would be lost.

Elisabeth Markall addressed the Panel on behalf of her friend Fiona Day. A copy of the statement can be found on the Panel's Minute Book.

Sarah Ford addressed the Panel regarding Keynsham Children's Centre. A copy of the statement can be found on the Panel's Minute Book.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked if the services she received were from volunteers at the Centre.

Sarah Ford replied that the services she accessed were from staff at the Centre.

Nettie Williams, Somer Valley Children's Centre addressed the Panel. A copy of the statement can be found on the Panel's Minute Book.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked what provision was available at the Centre now for post-natal depression.

Nettie Williams replied that the invaluable 'My Time, My Space' group was in place at the Centre with a crèche facility provided.

Ailsa McKenzie and her daughter Isobel addressed the Panel regarding Somer Valley Children's Centre. Ailsa said that she felt she would not be here without the support she had received through 'My Time, My Space'. She added that she had made so many friends through the group and that the services they provide are un-measurable.

She informed the Panel that she was the Assistant Head Teacher at Camerton School and spoke of how much value the school places on the back up that the Centre provides.

Isobel said that stay and play was good for her and that the toys and ladies at the Centre are lovely.

Marita Sherwood addressed the Panel regarding Parkside Children's Centre. A copy of the statement can be found on the Panel's Minute Book.

Gemma addressed the Panel regarding First Steps Nursery, Bath. A copy of the statement can be found on the Panel's Minute Book.

Councillor John Bull addressed the Panel. He stated how important the first few years of a child's life were. He said that he felt that if the service was to be staffed by volunteers and run through other agencies it would leave it in a vulnerable position.

He informed the Panel that he anticipated the Labour Group would produce a minority report ahead of the Cabinet meeting in November seeking them to reconsider the current proposals.

Councillor Eleanor Jackson addressed the Panel with regard to the Radstock Youth Partnership. She said that a non-viable service would be left if as a whole it were to be made to save £2.3m over the next two years.

She said from 2010 in Radstock a properly trained and resourced programme for young people had been made available. She stated that she believed it was essential to maintain a universal service.

She urged the Cabinet to find the savings from other areas within the Council or to provide the same level of service in another form.

Councillor Lisa Brett asked if she was aware that the Government had announced proposals to recruit a further 4,000 Health Visitors.

Councillor Jackson said she was aware but did not believe that it would be the potential problems.

Councillor Michael Evans asked if she knew how many people were accessing the services provided within Radstock.

She replied that when they commenced there were 64 and that now including Westfield it totalled around 250. She added that the Partnership needed core funding to produce an integrated service for the area.

The Chair announced that a written statement had been provided by The Enrich Youth Project, All Saints Centre, Weston. A copy of the statement can be found on the Panel's Minute Book.

The Democratic Services Officer outlined the next steps of the process following the conclusion of this meeting. He stated that the Panel only had the power to make recommendations and that an actual decision on the matter would be taken at the Cabinet meeting on November 13th 2013.

The Chair wished to thank the Councillors, officers, organisations & service users that took part in the Task & Finish Group.

Councillor Liz Hardman commented that the service would look very different if the proposed level of cuts were maintained. She added that it was inevitable that the Centre buildings would be retained because if they were not money would have to be paid back to the Government. She said that she was aware of some potential service providers that would only need to cut services by around 10%.

Councillor Nicholas Coombes commented that he felt the published report did not contain enough financial information.

Councillor Liz Hardman stated that she could not agree with Recommendation 1 because of bullet point five in Appendix 2. She added that it was key that preventative services were retained.

Councillor Lisa Brett commented that a frontline service must be maintained.

David Williams commented that flexibility would be required in any new model and that provision should be needs lead.

The Service Manager for 0-11 Outcomes replied that the service is predominantly needs lead and aimed to be targeted within a universal base.

The Strategic Director for People & Communities added that the Council would provide a core service as stated within the duties of a Local Authority. He added that the proposals in no way could be described as efficiencies and were clearly a service reduction.

Councillor Michael Evans commented that he felt a hub and spoke model should be the basis for the delivery of Children's Centre Services.

Councillor Liz Hardman stated that she disagreed with the comment as she believed that model would see a reduction in staff.

The Chair commented that three options were proposed to the Task & Finish Group and that it was the role of the Panel to make a recommendation to the Cabinet.

Councillor Michael Evans asked how our level of proposed cuts compared with other Local Authorities.

The Deputy Director for CYP Strategy and Commissioning replied that he could not give a definitive answer. He added that nationally a cut of 14.8% was anticipated in terms of Early Years Centres. He said that he believed that 4 out of 14 Centres were due to close in Swindon and that a cut of around 30% was anticipated in Stoke.

The Strategic Director for People & Communities added that a cut of around 15 – 20% would take place in South Gloucestershire. He added that all services are funded through the Early Intervention Grant and that Government have imposed a cut of 27% to that grant.

Resolution:

The Panel notes that there remain a number of questions over what services will be provided at the Children's Centres under the proposed new model, who will run the various Children's Centres, and to whom these services will be available. Noting these continued uncertainties, the Panel agrees:

Recommendation 1 was moved by Councillor Lisa Brett and seconded by Councillor Michael Evans with the following amendments. Councillor Brett proposed to amend the wording at the beginning of Appendix 2. She asked for the word 'for' to be removed from the heading 'Service Design & Commissioning Principles for:'

She also proposed that the sub-heading 'The Children's Centre Hub Models' and bullet point five 'All Children's Centres are available and all Children's Centre Hubs are open full time' be deleted.

- (1) That the design and commissioning principles set out in the amended Appendix 2 are adopted and applied to any future model of service delivery.

Voting: 5 in favour, 2 against, 1 abstention. Motion carried.

Recommendation 2 was moved by Councillor Michael Evans and seconded by Councillor David Veale.

- (2) That the approach to Play; Specialist Family Support and the Early Years Foundations Stage are dealt with separately from Children's Centres.

Voting: 6 in favour, 2 against. Motion carried.

Recommendation 3 was moved by Councillor Michael Evans and seconded by Councillor Sally Davis with the following amendment. Councillor Evans proposed that

the word 'any' be inserted after the word 'That' at the beginning of the recommendation.

- (3) That any funding reductions for these services are considered separately in line with service models.

Voting: 7 in favour, 1 against. Motion carried.

Recommendation 4 was moved by Councillor Michael Evans and seconded by Councillor Lisa Brett with the following amendment.

- (4) To recommend a hub and spoke model as the basis for delivery of Children's Centre Services, whilst recognising that the number of hubs, and the level of service at the non-hub Children's Centres, will be dependent upon the scale of budget reductions ultimately agreed by Council in February 2014.

Voting: 6 in favour, 2 against. Motion carried.

Recommendation 5 was moved by Councillor Lisa Brett and seconded by Councillor David Veale.

- (5) To retain all existing Children's Centre buildings.

Voting: 7 in favour, 1 against. Motion carried.

Recommendation 6 was moved by Councillor Michael Evans and seconded by Councillor David Veale with the following amendment.

- (6) To further explore the potential of a commissioned model and/or an integrated model with health services, acknowledging the need for further market testing of the potential providers.

Voting: 7 in favour, 1 against. Motion carried.

Recommendation 7 was moved by Councillor Lisa Brett and seconded by Councillor Liz Hardman with the following amendment.

- (7) To fully undertake a cost benefit analysis of any service changes.

Voting: 7 in favour, 1 abstention. Motion carried.

Recommendation 8 was moved by Councillor Nicholas Coombes and seconded by Councillor Liz Hardman.

- (8) To propose that Cabinet reconsiders the overall Council budget to determine if alternative areas of saving can be identified. The reasons being:
 - a) Information gained by the Task & Finish Group shows that early support to vulnerable people can lead to savings overall, There is concern that such significant cuts could lead to more costly interventions by statutory services of the council at a later stage.

- b) A commitment by the Panel to recommend some changes to services to meet part of the potential savings if the Cabinet are prepared to do likewise.

Voting: 7 in favour, 1 abstention. Motion Carried.

The Chair asked the Democratic Services Officer to explain the process of constructing a minority report.

She also reiterated that the next step in the process would be the Cabinet meeting on November 13th and highlighted to the public that if they wished they could also make a statement at that meeting by registering with the Democratic Services department.

The meeting ended at 6.55 pm

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services