

## **Minutes of the Meeting held**

Tuesday, 11th July, 2017, 5.30 pm

**Bath and North East Somerset Councillors:** Alison Millar (Chair), Steve Jeffries (in place of Matt Cochrane), Sally Davis, Liz Hardman, O'Doherty, Peter Turner and Jasper Becker

**Co-opted Voting Members:** Andrew Tarrant (Diocese of Clifton)

**Co-opted Non-voting Members:** Chris Batten

**Officers :** Richard Baldwin (Divisional Director, Children & Young People Specialist Services), Lesley Hutchinson (Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance), Kate Murphy (Drug & PSHE Consultant) and Sarah McCluskey (Strategic Commissioning Officer)

**Cabinet Members in attendance:** Councillor Paul May

### **1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### **2 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

The Chair drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

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

Councillors Cochrane and Warrington had sent their apologies to the Panel. Councillors Jeffries and Becker were present as their respective substitutes for the duration of the meeting.

David Williams, Co-opted Member of the Panel had also sent his apologies.

### **4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

### **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**

There were none.

## **7 MINUTES - 14TH MARCH 2017**

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

## **8 CABINET MEMBER UPDATE**

Former Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Councillor Michael Evans was in attendance alongside Councillor Paul May, the new Cabinet Member for Children & Young People.

Councillor Michael Evans addressed the Panel, a summary is set out below.

- Schools National Funding Formula: B&NES schools are set to benefit by an average of 5.7% per pupil with the proposed changes planned for April.
- Farmborough Church of England Primary School: £775,000 building and refurbishment programme completed, providing a new classroom and other facility improvements.
- Private Early Years Providers: This important group will now have their own representative on the Schools Forum – Clare Crowther of Atelier Nursery.
- HR and Payroll services to schools: As the academisation process continues, this service has become uneconomic. It is relatively easy for schools to buy in from other providers; B&NES officers will help the transition.
- Camerton Church of England Primary School (federated with Shoscombe and St Julian's): The governors have asked for the school to close, because a good education cannot be provided to children in a school with such very small numbers. The legal process of closure will take until Sept. 2018, but the five pupils should all be accommodated by the Federation from Sept 2017.
- SEND High Needs Provision and Funding: Two pressures on this budget – rising demand and lack of local school places. Plans are in place to address both of these pressures by exploring potential ways of increasing school SEND places within B&NES as well as changing some of the transport arrangements for some young people.

He said that he had enjoyed attending the Panel and thanked them for their continued work.

The Chair thanked him on behalf of the Panel for his work whilst in the role of Cabinet Member.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked when the proposals in relation to SEND would come into effect.

Councillor Evans replied that some changes would be made almost immediately. He added that a Free School on the former BCA site has been mentioned

The Divisional Director for Safeguarding & Social Care added that transport solutions are coming on stream and that additional school SEND places will be available from September 2018. He said that any Free School proposal would be two to three years down the line.

Councillor Paul May said that it was his intention to listen to and engage with the Panel to provide the best services for Children & Young People.

## **9 SECONDARY & PRIMARY SCHOOL PARLIAMENT DAYS**

The PSHE & Drug Education Co-ordinator introduced this item to the Panel. She explained that the B&NES Secondary Parliament had taken place at Norton Hill School on February 2nd 2017. She said that the theme for the day was Get Inspired Get Involved and that over 100 young people attended from 12 different secondary schools, one special school and from a range of settings including Mentoring Plus, the Youth Forum, Senior In Care Council and Off the Record.

She highlighted that the event in 2018 would take place on February 8<sup>th</sup> at Hayesfield School.

Jasmin Miller, MYP for B&NES commented that it had been a really good day and that there were a lot of achievements made to be proud of.

The Strategic Commissioning Officer addressed the Panel in relation to the Primary Parliament. She explained that the report should be ready in the next week and that she would circulate it to them. She requested that the Panel at their September meeting notes that they have received and read the report so it can be recorded in the minutes.

She informed the Panel that children from 24 Primary Schools had attended this year's event and that they had received presentations from Equalities Teams, Castle Primary School and St. John's Primary School. She said that the pupils of Roundhill Primary School hosted the event which took place at Somerdale, Keynsham.

She said that a number of workshops took place during the day on the following topics.

KS1: Go For It, Get Creative – Pupils were asked in the workshop to describe what makes them feel good on the inside and good on the outside. The pupils decided to follow up this work by talking to their teachers when back in school about the use of creative activities in the classroom.

KS2: Go For It, Get Going – As the title suggests this workshop was all about exercise. The children said that they would follow up by looking at how to make activities more accessible and to take part in more exercise with their families.

KS2: Go For It, Get involved in Equalities – The young people from this group highlighted the importance of the right to be equal and to celebrate difference.

KS2: Go For It, Make a Change – This workshop discussed how young people can help each other to feel supported and included through the work of E-teams and playground buddies. They also talked about how to be safe online and the effects of cyber bullying.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked what information schools retain regarding volunteering.

The PSHE & Drug Education Co-ordinator replied that she was aware that a number of schools take part in the Duke of Edinburgh Awards. She added that she could send a list to schools of groups or individuals that could speak to young people in assemblies.

Councillor Liz Hardman spoke of how important these days were for the young people involved and recalled that the Gem Project was created at a previous day and that this had been very successful in helping with the emotions of young people.

The Chair on behalf of the Panel thanked all involved for taking part in and organising both events.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to note the report from the Secondary Parliament 2017 held in the academic year 2016/2017 and that they looked forward to receiving the Primary Parliament 2017 report in due course.

## 10 MAKE YOUR MARK UPDATE

Jasmin Miller, Member of Youth Parliament for B&NES gave a presentation to the Panel on this item. A copy of it can be found online as an appendix to these minutes and on the Panel's Minute Book, a summary is set out below.

### Senior In Care Council (SICC) Update

- What do we do? - We are a group of young people aged 11-18 who campaign to better the lives of young people in Foster Care.
- Our campaigns:
  - The Pledge – We monitor the Pledge and discuss with B&NES what we think they are doing well and what needs to be built on. We feed this back to corporate parents and the Children in Care and Moving Team.
  - Mental Health – We attended a London trip with other young people in foster care/care leavers around the UK to discuss Mental Health and how we can improve services for young people in care.
  - We engaged within the Ofsted process by delivering a presentation about what SICC and JICC do. We also asked questions to develop our understanding of how services receive feedback from Ofsted and what difference it makes. The Ofsted Inspector was impressed with our commitment to campaigning whilst juggling school and our home lives. There are several positive comments about our group in their report.

- I created a bank of all interview questions we have written - these are going to be used across B&NES services for recruitment. Examples of positions we have recruited for are Virtual Head and LSCB chair.
- What next?
  - We will be developing our initial plans to create a resource for schools based on foster care, in the media of film.
  - To enable us to do this successfully, we will be holding a 'have your say' session to engage with young people who may not want to commit to attending our bi-weekly sessions - including care leavers and the JICC.
  - Create a 'model' Confidentiality Policy around working with young people in Care that can be used in BANES and beyond...
  - SICCs are currently working as part of a team of young people analysing over 1,000 responses to a Mental Health Survey written and circulated by BANES Youth Forum.
  - Support Social Workers to ensure they are confident in delivering life story work to young people
  - Ensure Social Workers are trained in helping young people with their mental health, including anger management.

### **Youth Forum Update**

- Our campaigns:
  - Worked within the 'Your Care, Your Way' commission, taking part in scoring the bids. We then met with new provider - Virgin Care.
  - Designed a Young Parliament Day workshop on the benefits and barriers to volunteering
  - Met local MPs about Don't Hate, Educate campaign, focusing on tackling racism and religious discrimination, gender equality campaign and mental health. I wrote a 'Don't Hate, Educate' workshop that was used by MYPs across the UK
  - We created a widget ballot paper of Make Your Mark that was used nationwide.

### **Make Your Mark Update**

- Make Your Mark is the UK's largest youth lead ballot
- Last year 969,992 young people expressed what matters most to them through Make Your Mark. This year we are striving for one million.
- Every year the MYPs from across the country meet in the House of Commons to discuss the things that are most important to young people. From this, next year's campaigns are decided.
- We informed each school of the breakdown of the results from their school as well as locally, regionally and nationally to enable teachers to deliver these in PSHE lessons to their pupils

How you can support Make Your Mark this year: Encourage schools to sign up and highlight the importance of young people taking part in this democratic process.

### **My Goal**

By the end of my term, I would like to have created a PSHE pack based on the results of Make Your Mark and in consultation with B&NES young people. So far, flyers for various youth groups, the SICC podcasts, the Youth Forum Gender Equality Film and SICC's what makes a good LAC teacher are part of the proposed contents.

The Chair thanked Jasmin on behalf of the Panel for her presentation.

Councillor Liz Hardman praised Jasmin for being an inspiration to many young people. She asked if she had considered enhancing the work of the Leaving Care Group.

Jasmin replied that this was an area she was considering looking into.

Lisa Mukherjee, Participation Development Worker, Off the Record added that three sessions a year are offered to care leavers.

The Chair read aloud the following quote from the recent Ofsted inspection report and said that they should feel very proud of all the work they do.

*'Political leaders are aspirational corporate parents and work hard to ensure that children looked after have a voice. They actively seek the views of children through the junior and senior Children in Care Councils. These groups are making a real difference for children looked after in B&NES and actively influence service developments. They campaign effectively on relevant issues to ensure that children looked after are well supported.'*

## **11 YOUTH CONNECT**

Councillor Richard Samuel addressed the Panel. He informed them that the Riverside Youth Centre was within his ward of Walcot.

He said that the report was in response to the Council budget of February 2017 that agreed that it would need to reduce the budget of the Youth Service by 500k as part of the response to continuing Council budgetary pressures.

He stated that he was concerned when he read that *'We are presently exploring options that would allow these buildings to be leased to one or more organisations that can take on delivery of agreed youth services in the future.'*

He said that he felt that the Panel were being asked to comment on decisions that had already been made or at the very least proposed and that they had received no options appraisal documents.

He added that he was worried that services would be externalised and privatised and that he felt that the public would not want this to happen. He said that Ward Councillors had not yet been consulted either.

He called for the Panel to request a contextualised report that includes financial information and that wider consultation be carried out with Councillors, Young People and Stakeholders.

The Chair thanked him for his statement.

Councillor Liz Hardman commented that the views of young people should be harnessed through this piece of work.

The Divisional Director for Safeguarding & Social Care said that the rationale for embarking on this process was that the Council feel that this is an area where we can seek assistance through community groups.

The Chair asked if it was indeed a fait accompli.

The Divisional Director for Safeguarding & Social Care replied that consultation was still ongoing and that he would be happy to bring back an options paper in the future.

Councillor Richard Samuel stated that for the scrutiny process to be effective the Panel must be involved at the most appropriate stage.

The Divisional Director for Safeguarding & Social Care commented that initially staff were not ready to discuss the matter.

Councillor Sally Davis said that she felt that the report before the Panel today was an overview of the process to inform them prior to the options stage.

Councillor Liz Hardman commented that we are told that there is a good level of interest across the majority of B&NES for community groups to take on the running of Youth Services. She asked which services are these and which services do you anticipate will no longer be provided once the new model is implemented.

The Divisional Director for Safeguarding & Social Care replied that we can confirm that the Council has received a number of initial expressions from a range of community organisations. He added that they are planning an information evening for any organisation that may be interested for September. He said that it is hoped that the event will outline some of the key areas for which the Council is seeking to enable these groups to assist with the running of the current Youth Connect services.

He explained that invitations to the event will go out to a broad range of groups so that all potentially interested groups can receive the same information and at the same time. He said that as the expressions of interest are still tentative, it would not be appropriate to share details of these organisations at this time.

He said that it is hoped that services such as Open Access and Mentoring can be retained. He added that Youth Connect also delivers the Council's statutory function of tracking and reporting on the number of young people who are not engaged in education, training and employment.

The Chair stated that she felt that this particular area should be seen as a priority.

The Divisional Director for Safeguarding & Social Care said that their performance in tracking and reporting was currently higher than the national average, although figures had dropped slightly from previous years.

Councillor Jasper Becker asked if any work from other Local Authorities on this issue had been analysed.

The Divisional Director for Safeguarding & Social Care replied he has asked staff to carry out some research as a number of Councils have had similar discussions around 6 or 7 years ago.

The Chair acknowledged that other questions had been submitted in writing and asked if the Panel could receive answers to these outside of the meeting.

The Divisional Director for Safeguarding & Social Care replied that he would do so. He said that he would supply as much information as possible to their September meeting.

## **12 CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMPLAINTS AND REPRESENTATIONS ANNUAL REPORT**

Councillor Liz Hardman stated that the timeliness of complaints handling is a concern for all stages and there is now a backlog. She said that we have been told that other Council Departments have been contacted to help the situation. She asked how successful has this been and will these extra people be sufficiently trained to deal with the backlog. She also questioned whether there is there a resource implication.

The Head of Safeguarding & Quality Assurance apologised if the report had been misleading as there is not a backlog of complaints handling, there is however a backlog of subject access requests waiting for us to respond to but we do now have plans in place to address this. She added that officers are going to keep monitoring the progress with these and are going to keep the Strategic Director for People & Communities aware.

She said in relation to the people being sufficiently trained the answer is yes as the additional help is coming from the Corporate Information Governance team and we have made the computer programme they need to use available for them. She added that there isn't a financial implication to People & Communities but it does mean that Resources are indirectly funding this short term.

Councillor Liz Hardman said that the report shows that the highest proportion of complaints was due to the "attitude or behaviour of the staff". She said that she realised that this can be due to difficult decisions being made by social workers, but asked is this being addressed as part of the ongoing training for social workers.

The Head of Safeguarding & Quality Assurance replied that both the Divisional Director for Safeguarding & Social Care and the Principal Social Worker are aware and have been looking into ways of addressing this. She added that the Complaints and Data Protection Team Manager did a session last week on complaint handling and learning from complaints so this will hope to improve communication.

The Chair asked generally how areas of development are identified.

The Head of Safeguarding & Quality Assurance replied that Team Plans are in place and that progress against these is monitored.

The Chair asked if the Council responds to the compliments received.

The Head of Safeguarding & Quality Assurance replied that they do.

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

### **13 OFSTED - CHILDREN'S SERVICES REPORT**

The Chair on behalf of the Panel congratulated all concerned on receiving a very positive report.

The Divisional Director for Safeguarding & Social Care commented that when this current process of inspections began in 2013 we were informed that the bar had been raised so it was very pleasing to receive such good feedback.

He said that the headlines are that the Local Authority's Children's Services were found to be Good overall, which immediately places us in the top 30% in the country. He added that in the South West, only Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly have reached that threshold under the current inspection regime (with all but 2 authorities having now had their inspections published).

He informed the Panel that the LSCB were also graded as 'Good' and is only the second in the South West to achieve that standard.

The Chair asked how these levels of achievement would be maintained.

The Divisional Director for Safeguarding & Social Care replied that the best way will be to retain all of the good staff within the Council and to support them as much as possible.

The Chair asked for the Panel to receive a progress report every six months on the suggestions made within the report that would make the service even better.

The Divisional Director for Safeguarding & Social Care replied that this could indeed be added to the workplan and that the action plan and governance arrangements will be shared.

Councillor Michelle O'Doherty commented that she realised that the number of private fostering arrangements is small, but asked can we be assured at this present time that services are now in place to ensure children currently in these circumstances have their needs robustly assessed and both children and carers are being supported.

The Divisional Director for Safeguarding & Social Care replied that they could be assured of this and that there is a member of staff identified to take the lead on this, there is an action plan in place and the LSCB are monitoring the delivery of this.

Councillor Liz Hardman noted that the Ofsted report referred to a number of young people, aged between 16-18, not engaged in education, training or employment. She said that whereas the numbers again are small and many of these young people are in complex and challenging situations, we are seen as not being pro-active enough. She asked which organisation will be charged with improving this situation and what plans are currently in place to deal with these young people.

The Divisional Director for Safeguarding & Social Care replied that the group of young people at risk of NEET that the inspectors took particular interest in were care-leavers at risk of NEET. Therefore the young peoples "Moving On" team will be primarily responsible to working with this group. He added that in response to the recommendations of the inspection a "Development Board" will take issues forward and they will monitor the progress of this work by the Leaving-Care-Moving On team. He added that the wider work with NEETS outside of the care system will continue to be led by the Youth Connect team.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked to what extent do you think the current level of performance can be maintained given the scale of funding cuts to Children's Services.

The Divisional Director for Safeguarding & Social Care replied that this is going to be a challenge as stated in the report staff are at their capacity and there is limited resilience. He said that the Council are committed to maintaining the performance and to striving for further improvements in all areas but it is not going to be easy especially as we have reached the peak in terms of the number of children on Child Protection plans.

Councillor Sally Davis commented that although our Children Looked After do better at school than nationally, the number of fixed term exclusions has risen for these children in B&NES. She asked what the current figures were and what were the reasons.

The Divisional Director for Safeguarding & Social Care replied that progress on this issue will also be monitored by the Development Board. He said there remain a variety of reasons for these exclusions, but broad themes continue to centre around such concerns as persistent absence, bullying or threatening behaviour. He added it should also be noted that these are small cohorts.

The Chair stated that it is worrying that Risk Management Plans are consistently not in place, again for a small minority of care leavers when their needs escalate. She asked if the Panel can be assured that as a matter of urgency, that support is now in place for these young people.

The Divisional Director for Safeguarding & Social Care replied that we will continue to work with young people to ensure both the number and quality of Risk Management plans are appropriate. He explained that where plans were not in place this was often due to problems in meeting with the young person, or at the point of the case transferring into the Care-Leaving team. He added that there is a wider challenge about how we improve the transfer of cases to reduce drift which the Development Board will need to monitor, and this particular aspect of the challenge will need to be part of this area of improvement.

**14 PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES STRATEGIC DIRECTOR'S BRIEFING**

Councillor Liz Hardman asked in the light of services such as HR and Payroll now not being offered to schools, what services do we continue to provide and which of these will be likely to disappear in the near future.

The Divisional Director for Safeguarding & Social Care replied by saying services are likely to diminish as Academy numbers rise.

The Chair asked if he could comment on the two spikes identified in the Youth Justice Plan in reference to first time offenders and re-offending.

The Divisional Director for Safeguarding & Social Care replied that one particular family had been active locally in terms of first time offenders and in relation to re-offending it can be difficult to judge these figures as in some cases their original offence had taken place in 2014.

He added that the Youth Justice Board, Police & Crime Commissioner and the Police had all reduced their funding to the Council. He said that discussions were due to take place with the Police to challenge their rationale.

The Chair thanked him for the briefing on behalf of the Panel.

**15 PANEL WORKPLAN**

The Chair introduced this item to the Panel. She reminded them that they had already agreed to add a further report on Youth Connect for September 2017 and a report in January 2018 for a six month update on the Ofsted report to the workplan.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to approve these additions.

The meeting ended at 7.50 pm

Chair(person) .....

Date Confirmed and Signed .....

**Prepared by Democratic Services**