

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

**Minutes of the Meeting held**

Tuesday, 21st November, 2017, 5.30 pm

**Bath and North East Somerset Councillors:** Alison Millar (Chair), Matt Cochrane (Vice-Chair), Sally Davis, Liz Hardman, Michelle O'Doherty, Peter Turner and Lizzie Gladwyn

**Co-opted Voting Members:** David Williams

**Co-opted Non-voting Members:** Chris Batten (ATL) and Kevin Burnett (NAHT)

**Officers :** Richard Baldwin (Divisional Director for Safeguarding & Social Care), Mike Bowden (Strategic Director - People & Communities), Sally Churchyard (Head of Young People's Prevention Services), Helen Hoynes (School Organisation Manager), Richard Morgan (Education Business Manager) and Sam Plummer (Somer Valley Youth Connect Team Leader)

**Cabinet Member for Children & Young People:** Councillor Paul May

**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**

Co-opted Panel Member Andrew Tarrant had sent his apologies to the Panel.

**32 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Kevin Burnett declared an other interest in agenda item 12 (Youth Services) as a member of his family works for the department of the Council.

**33 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN**

There was none.

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

There were none.

**35 MINUTES - 19TH SEPTEMBER 2017**

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

**36 CABINET MEMBER UPDATE**

Councillor Paul May, Cabinet Member for Children & Young People addressed the Panel. A copy of the update can be found on their Minute Book and as an online appendix to these minutes, a summary of the update is set out below.

He informed them that he had recently attended a meeting between the Council and the Chief Executives of the local Multi Academy Trusts and how important it is to keep good lines of communications open.

He explained that a replacement temporary classroom for Twerton Infants School was being sourced by moving one from St Saviour's Infant School.

He said that officers were working on an in house bid for Youth Services that could involve the universities / voluntary sector.

He stated that there were no guarantees in place yet over the forthcoming budget, but in his opinion he did not think that further cuts to Children's Services should be made.

He informed that some discussions had taken place with representatives of the voluntary sector regarding future SEND provision. He added that a business case was being worked on for current out of county provision.

He explained that the local Health & Wellbeing Board had announced that the next twelve months would be a Mental Health Year.

He said how positive the recent Foster Carer Celebration Event had been.

He informed the Panel that the Department for Education is introducing a new National Funding Formula (NFF) for Schools by April 2020. He said that for the next 2 financial years the DFE will use the NFF to allocate funding to the Local Authority, but will allow flexibility to retain our existing local formula arrangements should the transition to the NFF be difficult and the LA would like time to transition.

He explained that a single member decision will be needed to determine the way forward.

He said that all schools have been consulted and the results considered by the Schools Forum who have recommended that I decide to move to the NFF from 1 April 2018.

He added that he acknowledged that many schools are feeling under financial pressure and the choice of formula will affect individual schools in different ways. He said though it is important to note that the overall 'pot' for B&NES is increasing by 3.9% in 2018-19 (3rd highest increase in the country) and is unaffected by the choice of formula – and that every school is guaranteed a 0.5% per pupil uplift.

He explained that the counter argument to moving straight to the NFF is that a small number of schools, including some of those serving our more vulnerable communities, will miss out on the short term opportunity of greater increases in funding which they could have received during the coming two years, under the local formula.

He addressed the Panel on his priorities for the service and said that he had a good sense of the work of our children's services and the challenges and issues that they face. He said he was beginning to describe a set of priorities to focus on with the service in the coming year and would welcome feedback on these.

#### Budgets vs Standards

- Examine demand solutions, including where possible promotion of Early Help/Early Intervention to prevent escalation to specialist services
- Promote actions to address growing demand pressures in SEND, including development of an investment business plan

#### Deal with demand / growth

- Promote parent 5 placement options system to ensure all school places are filled within the existing school network with a Banes first policy.
- Continue to plan for school expansion/build projects
- Work with MATs to reduce demand re SEND

#### Implement Ofsted Children Services Review

- Promote extending local fostering network.
- Research health/care commissioning coordination?
- Visit with care workers to understand their pressures.

#### Value added education

- Develop the role of the LA as a champion of the parents' voice
- Publicise value added/progress measures table
- Promote schools additional funding and benefits for students
- Promote MAT/Parent focus group

## Changing Role of LA in Education

Prepare a delivery plan to

- Promote academies by 2020
- Target withdrawal of all uneconomic and non-statutory services by year 2018/2019

Working in partnership

- Explore HE research opportunities
- Offer “excellent” services to others at a commercial rate.
- Promote Joint commissioning with CCG
- Coordinate with private sector on common issues.

Seek innovation

- Explore options to provide statutory support to last few remaining non-academy schools
- Positively seek in county opportunities with partners for new SEND provision
- Examine joint commissioning costs of child and adult services post YCYW.

He said that it is his intention to bring a forward plan to the Panel early in 2018.

Kevin Burnett asked how are you going to support vulnerable schools who are not yet in MATs or are unable to become members of a MAT (as in the case of some of our Voluntary Aided schools) during this transition time and beyond?

The Strategic Director for People & Communities replied that ongoing discussions do take place between the Council and the Catholic Head Teachers and we will continue to support them for as long as is possible. He added that the current focus of the Regional Schools Commissioner is on West Somerset.

Kevin Burnett commented that he had been informed recently that it could take up to 12 months for a school to become an academy and then be able to join a MAT. He asked if this was true.

The Education Business Manager replied that it should take around 3 – 4 months for a school to become an academy.

The Chair asked if support was able to be provided to Head Teachers who are feeling additionally stressed through this process.

The Strategic Director for People & Communities replied that support arrangements are in place.

Kevin Burnett commented that he and other union representatives were willing to support Head Teachers as much as they could.

Councillor Peter Turner commented that it was a big challenge for poor performing schools to become an academy.

The Strategic Director for People & Communities replied that it was possible though and that should their performance fall below a threshold they would have no option and will be found a sponsoring MAT by the DfE.

Councillor Liz Hardman commented that she appreciated Councillor May's long term views and supported Early Years funding and expanding SEND provision. She said that school finances were at crisis level and that in real terms there would be a decline of 4.6%.

Councillor May replied that the Council must make sure that we do the best we can with what we have. He added that the single member decision relating to the funding formula would need to be made in as fair a manner as possible.

The Education Business Manager said that the earliest date a decision could be made was December 14<sup>th</sup> 2017 and that the final date that the DfE could be notified was January 20<sup>th</sup> 2018.

The Chair asked if this decision was independent of schools receiving Pupil Premium.

The Strategic Director for People & Communities replied that the figures quoted exclude Pupil Premium which is unaffected by the changes to the formula.

The Chair thanked Councillor May for his update on behalf of the Panel and said on their behalf that they were broadly in agreement with his priorities for the service.

## **37 CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSAL TO CLOSE CAMERTON CHURCH SCHOOL**

Councillor Liz Hardman asked would transport be provided to whatever local school parents choose for their children, subject to places at those schools being available.

The School Organisation Manager replied that it would need to be the nearest appropriate school and that then the Home to School Transport Policy would be applied.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked if the pupils concerned could remain at Shoscombe if Camerton were to close.

The School Organisation Manager replied that if it was decided to close the school, the seven pupils would be able to remain at Shoscombe School and formally transfer onto the roll should they wish to.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked why pupils were attending Shoscombe and not Timsbury in the interim.

The Strategic Director for People & Communities replied that Camerton and Shoscombe were part of the same Church Valley Schools Federation with St Julian's in Wellow.

The Chair asked has the Diocese given any indication of what the site might be used for in the future.

David Williams replied that he believed that the Board of Finance for the Diocese would seek to sell the site at its earliest opportunity should the decision to close the school be made.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to note the proposal to close Camerton Church School and the resulting consultation process being undertaken.

## **38 OFSTED ACTION PLAN**

The Chair asked if consideration had been given to having a member of the Panel on the Development Board to oversee the Development Plan.

The Divisional Director for Safeguarding & Social Care replied that he felt it would be more appropriate to bring updates to the Panel as the plan is progressed.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked is there any way the Council could ensure the fixed-term exclusion of a Looked After Child would trigger an immediate response, before the fixed-term exclusion takes place. She acknowledged that this might be seen as interfering in what happens in schools, but asked is there a role for the Virtual School Head here.

The Divisional Director for Safeguarding & Social Care replied that the Council could look to strengthen the role of the Virtual Head and improve the role of the Behaviour & Attendance Panel.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked if there is money to support improving the quality of pathway plans through Back to Basics workshops and will these happen in December as planned.

The Divisional Director for Safeguarding & Social Care replied that there is no additional funding for this work as the department see it as business as usual. He added that the training will be delivered in bitesize form by Principal Social Workers and Frontline Managers at lunchtimes and within team meetings.

Chris Batten asked if the restructuring of the duty team had taken place.

The Divisional Director for Safeguarding & Social Care replied that it did take place in the middle of September and seeks to respond to the challenges raised within the Ofsted inspection.

Councillor Sally Davis asked if aside from improving the liaison with Language Schools, are there any other ways of ensuring we know of private fostering arrangements – do we ask schools, nurseries, GP surgeries etc. for this information.

The Divisional Director for Safeguarding & Social Care replied that the Council was quite reliant on self-reporting on this matter. He said that leaflets and posters have been distributed to GP surgeries and that following the appointment of a Private Fostering Lead Social Worker these were refreshed and redistributed.

Councillor Matt Cochrane asked when the exemption from Council Tax for Care Leavers will be implemented.

The Strategic Director for People & Communities replied that the Council motion on this subject will be responded to as part of the 2018 budget process.

The Chair asked how often the Divisional Director's Caseload Challenge takes place.

The Divisional Director for Safeguarding & Social Care replied that it is carried out on a quarterly basis and that the number of cases of teams and individual social workers are assessed to allow for a better flow and to avoid bottlenecks.

The Chair asked if there were any social worker vacancies currently.

The Divisional Director for Safeguarding & Social Care replied that they were currently advertising for some permanent positions and therefore filling the vacancies temporarily with agency social workers. He added that turnover rate for social workers within B&NES were low.

The Chair asked what the Council would do if there were to be a sudden flood of cases.

The Divisional Director for Safeguarding & Social Care replied that staff would need to be hired to deal with the situation appropriately.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to note the content of the Development Plan and the progress made in respect of addressing the Ofsted recommendations.

## **39 CHILDREN'S SERVICES STAFF SURVEY**

The Chair said that she felt staff were still unhappy at not having a specific desk or the guarantee of one to work from.

The Divisional Director for Safeguarding & Social Care replied that there is an existing offer to work flexibly at home following the 2016 survey and that from July 2017 access to Liquid Logic at home has been possible. He added all social workers were due to be offered an iPad that would have access to Liquid Logic.

Councillor Matt Cochrane spoke concerning the possibility of attempting to resolve some parking issues, particularly for social workers who have difficulty in finding spaces to park in Keynsham and to avoid the process of having to claim back expenses. He suggested whether they could be issued with a badge that would allow them to park anywhere when on visits.

Councillor Paul May replied that he had raised the matter with Councillor Charles Gerrish, Cabinet Member for Finance and Efficiency and the Group Manager for Transport and Parking and that there may be a possibility of providing 4/5 designated spaces. He added that he would enquire about the provision of badges.

The Chair commented that she was concerned that Children's Social Care Services generally scores lower than other areas. She asked if the survey results are acted upon.

The Divisional Director for Safeguarding & Social Care replied that he believed that they did and showed this within the 'You said, We did' section of the presentation.

Councillor Liz Hardman stated that part of the survey had shown a huge drop in "Managers communicating more effectively by service" for Children's Social Care Services from 73% in 2016 to 56% in 2017. She asked if there were anything in place to begin to address this.

The Divisional Director for Safeguarding & Social Care said that managers were being asked to maintain a level of quality supervision and to make time to see their staff.

The Chair asked if he was satisfied with the figure of 62% of staff were secure in reporting concerns. She added that she felt it was more important than ever to have trust in colleagues.

The Divisional Director for Safeguarding & Social Care replied that he was satisfied with the figure received.

The Chair commented that following her recent meeting with a number of social workers she sensed that there was a wish for them to be valued.

Councillor Paul May stated that he greatly valued the role that they do.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to note the results of the Children's Services Staff Survey for 2017.

## 40 YOUTH SERVICES

The Divisional Director for Safeguarding & Social Care introduced the Somer Valley Youth Connect Team Leader and the Head of Young People's Prevention Services who were present for this item. He explained that progress was being made on developing what the service will look like in the future. He said that consultation had begun in February / March 2017 and that current thinking is often fed back to staff.

He said that he had discussed proposals with the Cabinet Member and that two engagement events with community partners had been held to assess their levels of interest and the use of the three associated buildings. He added that as of November 2017, 8 groups have given firm expressions of interest.

He said that a successful bid to the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport had secured funding of £20,000 to assess the potential to create a staff mutual to take on the delivery of Youth Connect. He added that he had met with colleagues earlier in the day and that the feeling was there was potential in the project and that viability / feasibility reports would be carried out.

The Chair asked what the current thoughts were in respect of the buildings.

The Divisional Director for Safeguarding & Social Care replied that he felt that some middle ground would have to be met as it would not be possible for all of them to remain in the control of the Council.



The Head of Young People's Prevention Services confirmed that there has been a wide consultation of staff regarding this matter and officers were intent on seeking the best service for our young people.

Councillor Liz Hardman commented that she was concerned that potentially a substantial number of posts could be lost during this process and that Paulton and other areas of the Council do need a functioning Youth Service.

The Divisional Director for Safeguarding & Social Care replied that a staff mutual was likely to be the best long term option to be able to access funding and grow and develop as a business.

The Somer Valley Youth Connect Team Leader said that should a staff mutual be formed there could be the potential to increase services by working with Parish Councils.

The Cabinet Member for Children & Young People commented that if successful he felt that other local areas would like to use our services.

The Head of Young People's Prevention Services explained that an informal consultation on a new model was likely to take place in January 2018 followed by formal consultation in March 2018.

The Somer Valley Youth Connect Team Leader said that early feasibility work was ongoing and that a decision regarding a staff mutual would be made in December /January as to whether or not to go forward. He added that if the project moved forward it could open opportunities for staff that may initially be at risk of redundancy.

The Chair asked for a written update report to be submitted to their January 2018 meeting.

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

The Strategic Director for People & Communities gave a briefing to the Panel. A copy of the briefing can be found on their Minute Book and as an online appendix to these minutes, a summary of the briefing is set out below.

### **Bath Community Academy (BCA)**

I reported in September that we had submitted an expression of interest to secure additional resources to support the development of a vision for the future of the BCA site, through the One Public Estate initiative (Cabinet Office/LGA). As a result of the initial expression of interest we are in to the second stage of that bidding process and await news of the outcome. Subject to the funding/capacity available, we hope to bring to Panel in January a timeline and proposed process for engagement and development of a vision for the future of the site, including seeking appropriate ways to ensure wider member engagement.

Parents of the current Year 8 and 9 pupils have now been invited to express preferences for new schools for Year 9 and 10 in September 2018 and have had the opportunity to attend an open evening meeting with head teachers of other local secondary schools to understand what they can offer.

The Chair asked if Year 8/9 pupils / parents could choose whatever school they wish for September 2018.

The Strategic Director for People & Communities replied that they could express a top three preferences.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked if the pupils would receive transport to their new school.

The Strategic Director for People & Communities replied that normal Home to School Transport policy rules would apply.

### **Schools landscape**

The number of schools that are now academies has risen slightly to 44 out of 82 (representing 64% of pupils). There are 10 further schools that are officially 'in the pipeline' and have had 'Academy Orders' issued by the DfE. These 10 do not yet have a confirmed date for conversion, but we expect that to take place by 1 April. A further 11 schools' governing bodies have indicated that they have confirmed plans to join Multi-Academy Trusts and are likely to do so during the current academic year, taking us to 79% of schools and 84% of pupils in academies. This would leave the 3 Catholic schools and 14 other maintained schools in Bath and North East Somerset. We have been engaging with Heads and Chairs of Governors of those schools as well as with the local Multi-Academy Trusts to share this evolving picture and some of the challenges of working together in this 'mixed economy'.

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

## **42 PANEL WORKPLAN**

The Panel approved the current workplan as printed.

The meeting ended at 7.40 pm

Chair(person) .....

Date Confirmed and Signed .....

**Prepared by Democratic Services**