

## **BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET**

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

Tuesday, 20th March, 2018

**Present:-** Councillors Alison Millar (Chair), Matt Cochrane (Vice-Chair), Sally Davis, Liz Hardman, Michelle O'Doherty, Peter Turner and Lisa O'Brien (in place of Lizzie Gladwyn)

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

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

**Also in attendance:** Richard Baldwin (Divisional Director, Children & Young People Specialist Services), Mike Bowden (Strategic Director - People & Communities), Helen Hoynes (School Organisation Manager) and Sarah McCluskey (Strategic Commissioning Officer)

#### **64 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

#### **65 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

The Chair drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

#### **66 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Councillor Lizzie Gladwyn had sent her apologies to the Panel, Councillor Lisa O'Brien was present as her substitute for the duration of the meeting.

#### **67 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Paul May, Cabinet Member for Children & Young People declared an other interest as he is a Governor at Bath College.

#### **68 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN**

There was none.

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

Councillor Eleanor Jackson addressed the Panel. She spoke of the disappointment regarding the recent Cabinet Member decision to close the nurseries situated in St. Nicholas Primary School, Radstock and St. Martin's Garden Primary School, Bath.

## 70 MINUTES: 16TH JANUARY 2018 & 30TH JANUARY 2018

Councillor Eleanor Jackson referred to the statement she made at the Panel meeting on January 16<sup>th</sup> 2018 to say that it should read that she 'was' a governor.

The Panel confirmed the minutes of the two previous meetings, with this amendment as a true record and they were duly signed by the Chair.

## 71 CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

Councillor Paul May, Cabinet Member for Children & Young People addressed the Panel, a summary is set out below.

### **Working with other Local Authorities on Sector Led Improvement:**

I have been representing the South West regional Lead Members network in meetings to discuss regional Sector Led Improvement work for Children's Services, working with DfE, LGA and Chief Executives and alongside Mike Bowden who is the lead Director for this work in the South West. We will be able to report further on this in the near future once a regional improvement plan has been finalised.

He said that he had also met with the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) and discussed mixed economy and provision.

### **Longvernal Primary School:**

He said he had given approval and authorisation to proceed with a capital project to remodel existing accommodation at Longvernal Primary School in Midsomer Norton.

### **Schools Forum:**

He informed the Panel that vacancies existed on the Forum for LEA school representatives.

### **Way Forward Action Plan:**

Following the proposals I previously shared with the Panel about the way Children and education should develop this has been converted into a positive officer plan by working with the Director. Copies are available for members if they would like to see them. It provides a structure for future development in a rapidly changing education environment and is achievable despite the known financial pressures. This is about doing things better and I will provide updates to the Panel on progress through these briefings.

### **School Places:**

The service has faced a significant challenge this year to ensure that every Bath pupil could be offered a place in a Bath secondary school on National Offer Day. Whilst there are sufficient places in Bath schools to meet the local need, the high standard of local schools (all of which are rated by Ofsted as either Good or Outstanding) means that they are also popular with families from neighbouring areas. We brought in a new 5 preference system this year to help to ensure that Bath parents received priority in Bath schools and explained that they should use all 5 preferences. This means that parents from outside the area who did name Bath schools have been offered places in Bath and take priority over parents who didn't name those schools. The team has been working with the schools to take additional

pupils and has succeeded in ensuring that all Bath children will be accommodated in Bath schools. Our first choice success percentage is still above the national average.

Councillor Peter Turner asked if he was aware of the Children's University project. Councillor May replied that he was not.

The Strategic Director for People & Communities said that he was aware of the project and that it had been initiated by Weston All Saints Primary School.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked how parents can be made more aware of the need to make the most of their five school preferences.

Councillor May replied that advice regarding the number of preferences had been well publicised, but that a high number of parents had not used them wisely. He said that 114 children had initially not been allocated a school in Bath and that a substantial amount of work had taken place to source further places.

He added that if a child has been allocated a school more than three miles from their home then Home to School Transport rules will apply.

He wished to state that a number of children have been allocated St Mark's School and that it must be recognised that it has been rated as Good by Ofsted.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked how many children exactly had been allocated St Mark's School.

The Strategic Director for People & Communities said that he would need to reply in writing with that information. He added that over the course of the next few months shifts in numbers will occur as parents may choose to take up places at Independent Schools.

Councillor Michelle O'Doherty commented that in terms of future secondary schools for her son she has two in mind that will be best for him, so what is the rationale for using all five preferences.

The Strategic Director for People & Communities replied that six secondary schools within B&NES are rated as either Good or Outstanding. He added that if only two preferences are made and the application is unsuccessful on both counts there is a risk that the child will then be allocated a school further away from home in, still in Bath or outside the city in either Radstock or Keynsham. He said that further promotion to parents regarding the use of preferences will take place.

The Chair asked if there was wording on the application form.

The Strategic Director for People & Communities replied that it was, that press releases had been issued and there was supporting information on the Council's website. He added that liaison work could be scheduled with Primary Schools to raise awareness.

Councillor Lisa O'Brien asked how the applications are processed.

The Strategic Director for People & Communities replied that it is a national process that is followed and this commences once the deadline for applications is reached on October 31<sup>st</sup> each year.

He explained that each school has its own admissions criteria that they will follow, but that most will allocate in this order;

- Children in Care (Priority)
- Siblings of current pupils
- Straight line distance from home to school

Councillor Liz Hardman asked if children from B&NES received priority over those from neighbouring authorities.

The Strategic Director for People & Communities replied they do not receive a priority as allocation is based on distance from the preferred school.

Councillor Paul May commented that the timing of the message to parents regarding the admissions process was key.

The Strategic Director for People & Communities commented that in terms of home to school transport provision for pupils in receipt of free school meals or those with SEND this would be paid for by the Council and therefore there would be budget implications.

Councillor Paul May stated that he wished to acknowledge that St. Mark's School has been rated as 'Good' by Ofsted and that the performance of the Headteacher and staff should be commended.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member for his update.

## **72 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN**

The Strategic Commissioning Officer introduced this report to the Panel. She explained that the report is drafted on behalf of the Children and Young People's (CYP) Sub-group of the Health and Wellbeing Board. She said that the sub-group replaced the previous Children Trust Board and reports directly to the Health and Wellbeing Board on delivery against the plan.

She added that the sub-group takes the strategic lead in developing a new local Children and Young People's Plan 2018-2021 and ensuring that the priorities identified in the existing Children and Young People's Plan 2014- 2017 (now extended to cover 2017-2018) are met.

She stated that the sub-group are working on a delivery plan with an intention to review the Plan on an annual basis.

Councillor Liz Hardman commented whether the size of the new plan reflected the reality of the Council no longer being able to take the lead in the provision of services. She asked if the Children and Young People's Voluntary and Community Sector Workforce were essentially volunteers.

The Strategic Commissioning Officer replied that this was the case and that alongside that there was a robust CYP network of (around 175) organisations working with Children and Young People, some of whom were existing commissioned services. She added that elements of training and support are still available through the Council.

The Chair asked how the Plan will be monitored.

The Strategic Commissioning Officer replied that it is reviewed annually and the reviews are published on the website. A six monthly report is also given to the Health & Wellbeing Board in June and December.

The Strategic Director for People & Communities commented that Panel members could be invited to the Board meeting when this matter is next considered. He also suggested that the Panel be sent the minutes of the Board meeting from 30th January 2018 when this matter was also discussed.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked if the attachment awareness training was ongoing.

The Strategic Commissioning Officer replied that it was and that funding children aged 2-5 years with complex emotional/behavioural needs were supported through Theraplay interventions.

The Divisional Director for Safeguarding & Social Care added that the Virtual School Headteacher was an Attachment Champion.

Councillor Lisa O'Brien asked if there were enough staff with appropriate training to meet additional needs.

The Strategic Commissioning Officer replied that Off The Record support Young People with SEN through its advocacy service. The SEND Partnership Service also offers support to children and their families. She added that in terms of training, to support children and young people with SEND this is being reviewed by the SEND team for 2018/2019.

Councillor Lisa O'Brien commented that she was concerned that bullying and mental health issues of 5, 6 and 7 year olds were being recognised.

The Strategic Commissioning Officer replied that a great deal of positive work was carried out on these issues by the Equalities Teams within schools. She added that their work is celebrated at the Primary / Secondary Parliament Days.

Councillor Peter Turner asked if the Council had signed up to the UN Children's Charter.

The Strategic Commissioning Officer replied that the Council signed up to the Charter in 2000. She suggested that Hannah Powell, the new MYP for B&NES attend either the May or July meeting of the Panel to provide feedback on the Secondary Parliament Day.

She advised the Panel that the Primary Parliament was due to take place on June 13<sup>th</sup>.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to:

- i) Support the delivery of the plan and to support and promote the outcomes and priorities of the service to children, young people and their families across Bath and North East Somerset.
- ii) Note that the final Children and Young People's Plan (which will include a year 1 delivery plan) will be signed off by both the Bath and North East Somerset Health and Wellbeing Board and the Bath and North East Somerset LSCB in June 2018.
- iii) Note the changed approach to this CYPP, wherein we are moving towards a greater focus on Outcome Based Accountability with absolute focus on the key priority areas, rather than 'business as usual' that all agencies are asked to prioritize so as to reduce inequalities across Bath and North East Somerset.

### **73 PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL ORGANISATION PLAN 2017 - 2021**

The School Organisation Manager introduced this item to the Panel. She explained that the Council has a statutory duty to secure sufficient schools are available for their area to provide primary and secondary education. She stated that the Primary and Secondary School Organisation Plan 2017 – 2021 covers in detail the current level of primary and secondary school provision in the Authority and detailed projected pupil numbers over the next four years up to admissions in September 2021 based on births and resident population data.

She added that estimated pupil numbers as a consequence of the future planned housing development expected to be delivered within the Adopted Core Strategy and Placemaking Plan period up to 2029 and the emerging Local Plan period up to 2036 are also outlined. She said that estimates for the number of school places likely to be required as a result and proposals as to how and where these might be provided are also included.

Councillor Liz Hardman commented on the thoroughness of the report and asked if meeting future need is based on displacing pupils from outside the area.

The School Organisation Manager replied that the needs of pupils within the Chew Valley / Bishop Sutton may change but that this is expected to be a gradual process. She added that an assessment will also be carried out of the five preference system.

Councillor Lisa O'Brien asked how proposals referenced in the Joint Strategic Plan, the relocation of the Brislington Park & Ride and subsequent building of homes on what would be the former P&R site would affect B&NES.

The School Organisation Manager replied that our plan has been shared with neighbouring authorities and that it was the responsibility of Bristol to house their pupils.

Councillor Paul May asked if there was a timescale in relation to the provision of a further Special School.

The Strategic Director for People & Communities replied that this did not form part of the published plan. He added that the Panel could receive a future report on the projection of needs and associated special school places.

Councillor Eleanor Jackson asked if further information was available on the issue of the increase in Home Schooling.

The Divisional Director for Safeguarding & Social Care replied that this was a growing national issue and that a report on Elective Home Education was debated recently at the Council's LSCB. He added that work was planned to take place with schools on this matter before reporting back to the LSCB in September.

The Chair asked that a report be added to the Panel's workplan.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to:

- i) Note the proposed strategy for the provision of school places within the 2017 – 2021 plan period
- ii) Note the proposed strategy for the provision of school places over the longer term within the Core Strategy period and the emerging approach for the Local Plan period.

## **74 YOUTH CONNECT**

Councillor Eleanor Jackson addressed the Panel, she explained that her participation in the local youth club had begun 2006 prior to her election to the Council. She informed the Panel that provision for a centre for young people had been in place since the 1960's.

She stated that its popularity has ebbed and flowed over the years, but that the work of officers associated with it has been fantastic.

She said that the centre's satellite unit in Westfield has 75 regular attendees.

She commented that she was disappointed to not read within the report any indication of what the young people want in terms of services and support. She added that she would have liked the contribution of the local church to also have been acknowledged.

She stated that youth work should continue so that a level of stability is provided for those that use the service and that skill based work would be much welcomed.

She explained that Westfield Parish Council has given a priority to Youth Work in its current budget precept.

She said that in her experience young people want 'a place that is ours' and somewhere to feel 'secure'.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked what the effect would be locally if there were to be a change in provision.

Councillor Jackson replied that regardless of whether the Council runs the service or a Staff Mutual comes to fruition it needs to have the appropriate professionals in place, Sam Plummer being one example. She added that she believed that volunteers will continue to help, but only under guidance.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked when the decision will be made about the Staff Mutual.

The Divisional Director for Safeguarding & Social Care replied first of all by addressing comments made by Councillor Jackson in her statement. He said that it was his understanding that this report was to update the Panel regarding the removal of the £0.5m from the budget and the subsequent implications to the service structure.

He explained that a report had been discussed in January at a meeting of the Council's Senior Management Team (SMT), at which they had challenged officers to carry out due diligence tests regarding the Staff Mutual in terms of pensions, VAT and back office support.

He added that he had responded to SMT following consultation with Sally Churchyard and Sam Plummer and that further comments were expected over the next three to four weeks.

He commented that the service structure under discussion, that has been developed by Sam Plummer and Tracey Pike would fit both options, in house or Staff Mutual.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked has a decision already been made to dispose of the buildings, if not what will happen to them.

The Divisional Director for Safeguarding & Social Care replied that no decision has yet been made and that a Cabinet Member decision would be required in due course.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked was there an assumption that a single agency would manage all three buildings.

The Divisional Director for Safeguarding & Social Care replied that as the three buildings are not geographically close it is not anticipated that they will be managed by one single agency.

Councillor Lisa O'Brien commented that Keynsham Town Council runs its own Youth Service at a cost of around £70,000 per year. She said that a mix of qualified Youth Workers and volunteers is required to be able to run it effectively. She added that she was aware of a commercial organisation within Bristol that she believed was running successfully.

The Divisional Director for Safeguarding & Social Care commented that the benefit of a successful Staff Mutual is that it would allow the service to grow and subsequently be able to commission and contract services. He added that research had been carried out on different models from Bristol & Devon and he had seen that they can succeed.

Councillor Paul May commented that this is an important service to attempt to maintain in the best way we can. He stated that other Councils have made further cuts to their budgets in this work area. He said that he was supportive of the Staff Mutual concept and saw potential for it to succeed in B&NES and possibly expand within the local area.

The Chair said that a way forward needs to be found to benefit the young people of B&NES.

The Divisional Director for Safeguarding & Social Care commented that work has been ongoing for around a year, including consultations with staff, Unions, HR, Voluntary Sector and Parishes. He added that it was hoped to have a structure in place by October 1<sup>st</sup>.

Councillor Lisa O'Brien commented that she felt young people were seeking to learn a range of skills as part of this provision and that officers need to be mindful of related Mental Health / Public Health issues.

Councillor Paul May said that WECA could be approached as a possible source of funding.

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

## **75 SEND UPDATE**

The Divisional Director for Safeguarding & Social Care introduced this agenda item. He handed out a briefing note to the Panel, a copy of this can be found on the Panel's Minute Book or as an online appendix to these minutes, a summary set out below.

Demand for places: This continues to be high. B&NES currently has 1062 (January 2018) young people with an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP), this has risen from a figure of 748 (September 2015). Because of this the High Needs element of the Direct Schools Grant (DSG) continues to experience considerable strain. The Council continues to manage these demands through the co-operation of the local Schools Forum. In December 2017 all 13 South West LA's highlighted the rising demand for SEND places and associated costs as a priority for action.

In response to these pressures B&NES is currently developing a strategy to fund up to 107 additional SEND places across main-stream schools and Bath College. We are also in the process of discussing with two local MAT's the option of locating some of these places within these schools. The funding for these additional places will be through a combination of money from the DfE and a matched amount from the Council.

The intention is that through the funding of additional local places we can not only increase capacity, but also begin to reduce the reliance on 'out of county' places. This should prove beneficial to young people who would no longer have to travel excessive distances as well as enabling the Council to reduce transport costs and target resources more positively on activity that can add value for these young people. We hope to identify the first number of new places in time for September 2018.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked if the Council were seeking to increase capacity within its current Special Schools as well as capacity within mainstream schools.

The Strategic Director for People & Communities replied that increased capacity would be sought where possible across B&NES.

Councillor Paul May commented that the Council should seek to identify more areas for capital investment and that he was willing to argue within the Council for further funding in this area.

Councillor Lisa O'Brien commented that children with needs are now living longer and that it was unfair for a child with complex needs to be denied Special School expertise. She asked if consideration had been given to building a new Special School as part of the new Somerdale development.

The Strategic Director for People & Communities replied that discussions of this nature were held but that developers were not able to make enough of a financial contribution and plans for a Free School on the site were not achieved.

Councillor Sally Davis commented that the funding impact on small schools was cause for concern and that assessments regarding an EHCP were timely and costly.

Kevin Burnett said that decisions on provision should be taken in the best interest of every child and every school leader wanted to do their best for each child in their care. As Councillor Sally Davis mentioned, funding was having a direct impact on their ability to meet these children's needs.

Chris Batten stated that he felt it was a curriculum problem as in the case for a certain section of our pupils it was not appropriate.

Preparation for inspection: Ofsted and the CQC are roughly halfway through a three year programme of inspecting all Local Authorities and CCG's in relation to their joint provision for young people with SEND. Only four LA's in the South West area have not received this inspection, therefore it is likely that this inspection will take place within this calendar year.

The local SEND Strategic Board has been actively preparing for the inspection for the past 12 months. This has involved developing and updating the 'local offer' to parents as well as focusing on improving the quality of timeliness of plans for young people.

The Chair thanked the Divisional Director for Safeguarding & Social Care for his update on behalf of the Panel.

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

The Strategic Director for People & Communities addressed the Panel, a copy of his briefing can be found on the Panel's Minute Book or as an online appendix to these minutes, a summary set out below.

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

We continue to be engaged with Cabot Learning Federation to ensure a smooth transition for current pupils and to pick up our responsibilities for the site once the academy closes. Arrangements are being put in place for extension of lease arrangements for sub-tenants as appropriate, for the immediate period following closure of the school. Longer term planning for the site is still at an early stage and more information will be brought to a future Panel meeting as soon as it is available.

### **Discussions with Schools about the future educational landscape:**

We have been continuing to have a constructive dialogue with schools about what the future might hold. In particular we recently hosted an event for head-teachers and chairs of governors of the remaining maintained schools to meet with an officer from the Regional Schools Commissioner's office. All schools that previously used our HR and payroll service have put new arrangements in place and the majority have already decided to seek alternative meals providers, leading to the decision for the Council to discontinue offering a catering service after the current academic year.

### **World Social Work Day:**

Today (Tuesday 20th March) is World Social Work Day. Launched by the International Federation of Social Workers in 1983, every March World Social Work Day has become a highpoint in the social work calendar with social workers all over the world celebrating and promoting the contributions of the profession to individuals, families, communities and wider society.

Here in Bath and North East Somerset we have a highly skilled and committed workforce of social workers in both children's and adult services, working tirelessly to protect, support and empower families and individuals across our area, often having to travel further afield, for instance to connect with family members or children in care. They provide wide-ranging support, care and protection to the most vulnerable in society through services from pre-birth right through to end of life care.

The quality of the work of local social work staff was praised in a number of aspects of last year's Ofsted inspection report.

I would therefore ask the Panel, on this day, to record their recognition and support for the fantastic, dedicated social work workforce in B&NES, who demonstrate immense compassion and commitment to those in need of help, protection or care.

Councillor Paul May thanked the Panel for continuing to keep the issue of BCA live through these meetings as the site is an asset that should be utilised for future use.

Councillor Lisa O'Brien suggested that a future use for the site could be for dedicated SEND provision given the discussion from earlier in the meeting.

The Chair thanked the Strategic Director for People & Communities for his update on behalf of the Panel and also acknowledged the work of our local social work staff.

## **77 PANEL WORKPLAN**

Councillor Eleanor Jackson suggested that as a follow up to the Youth Connect item earlier in the agenda that the Panel hears from the Westfield Radstock Youth Partnership at a future meeting. She also proposed that the Panel be updated on the RE syllabus that has been in effect for two years.

The Chair recalled that the Panel would like to hear from the new MYP and representatives involved in the Primary and Secondary Parliament Days.

Kevin Burnett wished to make the Panel aware of the wellbeing toolkit that has been produced by Kate Murphy and Judy Allies in conjunction with the local Teaching Unions and the Diocese and was due to be launched at an event on April 12<sup>th</sup>.

The Chair said that these proposals would be noted and discussed at the next agenda planning meeting.

The meeting ended at 12.35 pm

Chair(person) .....

Date Confirmed and Signed .....

**Prepared by Democratic Services**