

Lead Member PDS Report – March 2024

I attended a **Community Summit “Addressing children’s needs: Socio-economic deprivation, mental health, education & justice in Bath and North-East Somerset”** at Bath University on 02.02.2024

This was a comprehensive conference dedicated to exploring the critical issues surrounding children's well-being and poverty in our region, especially in the areas of mental health, education, justice and discrimination. This event was a call to action for academic researchers, educators, policymakers, community leaders, and concerned citizens to come together to share knowledge as well as professional, personal experiences to inform policies and practices towards a better future for the children in BANES.

It was well attended , with approximately 200 people in attendance. It was agreed to set up a socio economic Observatory to build capacity using current evidence, data infrastructure, exploring gaps in collective knowledge and coproduction in research and policy.

A year ago our equality and diversity team set up a race equality charter for schools and we have just been reviewing this in a podcast with schools across banes. The webinar showcased the enormous amount of progress made since they signed up and widening the opportunity to other schools.

Budget

The budget process has been challenging and I wish to thank the committee for its role in scrutinising our proposals. The financial pressures still exist regarding the community sector but any review will be carried out with them. The children services saving in addition to the committed saving of £1.3m was £300k around early help which is contrary to our requirement to invest in early intervention so this means some careful work moving forward.

The new finance and data system is due for implementation from April. This will assist management in having real time information to manage services. Due to the demand pressures the officers have contracted with EY to work with children's services to produce a medium term finance and service plan based upon evidence and benchmark data. This plan will be submitted to the committee for scrutiny when ready.

Care Experienced Young People

The next council meeting will have an item on the agenda regarding the protected characteristics for care experienced young people. There is a reminder for the next corporate parent meeting going out to all members. This will be an early evening meeting in Bath. At this stage we are considering meetings going from day time to early evening (in Bath?)so young people can attend from school. We trialled working in small groups at the last meeting and will continue to do this in future. We are going to invite the national lead Mark Riddell later in the year to inspire new ways of working and commitment. I welcome any ideas the committee has to make the sessions more attractive to councillors?

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Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND)

The Local Authority hosted an all-day Special Education Needs and Disability & Alternative Provision Conference on the 22nd of Feb. This was really well attended with settings and schools across B&NES, and included wider Education, Health and Social Care colleagues, to include the DFE Regions group and the Integrated Care Board.

Knife Crime Awareness Event's

The B&NES Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP) are running a series of knife crime awareness events throughout February and March. The Bath & North East Somerset Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP) is a multi-agency partnership that aims to prevent and reduce violence in the area. They work to understand and address the root causes of violence, to prevent further violent crimes from occurring in the future. The VRP provide resources and support the work of professionals and community groups who help children at risk or involved in serious violence.

These events will take place in schools across the area. The first event was held at Writhlington School on February 22nd (17.30-19.30), followed by Hayesfield Girls School on February 29th (18.00-20.00) and Cameley CEVC Primary School on March 18th (18.00-20.00).

The events are aimed at parents and carers who would like to know more about the dangers of knife crime or are concerned that their children are at risk. They aim to increase awareness of key issues surrounding knife crime, empowering you and your children to make informed and positive decisions to stay safe.

For queries, please email VRU_Events@bathnes.gov.uk. Or book you ticket now on Eventbrite.