

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET

CHILDREN, ADULTS, HEALTH AND WELLBEING POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Monday, 10th June, 2024

Present:- Councillors Dine Romero (Chair), Liz Hardman (Vice-Chair), Paul Crossley, Dave Harding, Ruth Malloy, Lesley Mansell and Joanna Wright

Co-opted Members (non-voting): Kevin Burnett and Chris Batten

Cabinet Member for Adult Services: Councillor Alison Born

Also in attendance: Suzanne Westhead (Director of Adult Social Care) and Ceri Williams (Policy Development & Scrutiny Officer)

1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and those present introduced themselves.

2 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chair drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

There were none.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair, Councillor Dine Romero informed the Panel that she was standing as a candidate in the General Election on 4th July 2024.

5 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN

There was none.

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

There were none.

7 MINUTES: 13TH MAY 2024

Kevin Burnett referred to page 9 of the minutes and commented that it was his recollection that Councillor May would also use his Cabinet Member Update to include relevant information from the meetings of the Health & Wellbeing Board.

He also made the following observations on the minutes.

The Panel are still waiting to receive:

- A Community Summit summary from the Education team.
- Information relating to pupils involved in the Language for Life project.
- A response to his question regarding changes to the HERS (Hospital Education Reintegration Service).

The Panel, with the above amendment in mind, confirmed the minutes of the previous meeting as a true record and they were duly signed by the Chairman.

8 CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

Councillor Alison Born, Cabinet Member for Adult Services addressed the Panel and highlighted the points below from her update report. A copy of the report will be attached as an online appendix to these minutes.

Community Support Services

The review of community support services started in April 2024, with a view to re-commissioning services over the period 2024/26. This work is being overseen by the new Community Services and Early Help Strategic Board which is chaired by Mandy Bishop (Chief Operating Officer), with input from relevant lead members and officers. Cllr Paul May and I are both permanent members of the board, with input from Cllr McCabe as required.

The Board monitors progress and supports decision making and risk management, with a focus on the successful procurement of contracts and delivery of planned savings over a two-year period.

Representatives of 25 local community service providers attended a meeting with lead members and senior officers on 14th May to discuss the work of the Board and the process and timescales of the review and re-commissioning processes. Further engagement meetings will be held with the sector in the coming months.

CQC Inspection

The government has recently introduced a new local authority inspection regime for adult social care and B&NES was told in April that along with South Gloucestershire and Wilshire Council, we will be inspected within the next 6 months. This means that B&NES will be one of the first 15 councils to be inspected by the CQC. To help inform the inspection team in advance of their visit to B&NES, officers were required to submit a significant amount of data by May 3rd which they did. We now await confirmation of the inspection date.

Visits to Services

Following the transfer of adult social care services back to B&NES Council, I have been visiting services with Suzanne Westhead and meeting with staff and service

users. To date, I have visited the learning disability day services at Connections and Carrswood and the supported living services. I have also met people working in social work and occupational therapy teams. Staff have generally been very happy with the transfer process, are highly motivated and are pleased to be working for the Council.

Following implementation of planned changes to the Community Resource Centres, we also visited Cleeve Court and were delighted to see how the service is developing expertise as a specialist centre for people with dementia. We were also pleased to meet with some members of staff who had transferred from Charlton House and who have settled well in Cleeve Court.

Kevin Burnett asked if a timescale for the conclusion of the review of Community Support Services had yet been agreed.

The Director of Adult Services replied that they were not fully able to announce that at this stage, but said it was hoped that the specification details would be ready by September / October 2024 in advance of contracts needing to be in place by 31st March 2025.

She added that there was still a lot of work to do and was pleased with the level of engagement from partners so far.

Councillor Joanna Wright referred to the Public Health element of the update and asked if the Panel could be informed of the aims and outcomes for the Women's Health Hub funding of £54,000 in regard to sexual and reproductive health.

Councillor Born replied that she did not have that information to hand and would therefore seek a response for the Panel.

Councillor Wright acknowledged that GLL's 'Better' brand had been endorsed by Which? as a recommended provider for leisure centres and gyms. She commented that she would like to see cycle storage and infrastructure improved at the Bath Leisure Centre as she felt that it was currently difficult to access.

Councillor Born replied that she would enquire as to whether this was an issue for either GLL, the Council or both to pursue.

Councillor Lesley Mansell also asked for further information on the funding that has been received for sexual and reproductive health. She referred to the drugs and alcohol update and asked if the Panel could be informed of other ongoing work in relation to this across the Council.

She also asked if further details of the outcomes expected from the tackling inequalities work could be shared with the Panel.

Councillor Born replied that she would take these points away and discuss them with Public Health officers and respond to the Panel. She said that a further announcement on the tackling inequalities work was due to be made soon.

Referring to the issue of drugs & alcohol she said she had recently spoken with the Director of Public Health and explained that a lot of partnership work was ongoing across the Avon & Somerset area.

Kevin Burnett asked if the re-procurement of public health nursing was to include school nursing and will the services be run to the same specification as the old contracts.

Councillor Born replied that she felt it was unlikely that there would be no changes to the contracts as they were last in place around seven years ago. She added that school nursing was to be included in this work and would ask officers to provide a fuller response.

Councillor Ruth Malloy asked what could be done to encourage primary schools that didn't take part in the Schools Health and Wellbeing Survey (SH&WS) to do so. She also asked what percentage of secondary schools had taken part in their survey.

Councillor Born replied that she would consult with officers for a reply on this matter.

Councillor Liz Hardman referred to the Community Services and Early Help Strategic Board and commented that despite none of the 3SG representatives being part of the Board it was pleasing to hear that discussions remain ongoing with them.

She asked if the Panel could be updated on the budget position, in relation to the £802,000 savings that were initially proposed in the recent budget, in light of receipt of some additional funding.

She asked if it was known how the initial list of new CQC inspections was drafted and how prepared is the Council for when it will take place.

The Director of Adult Services replied that 3SG have scoped and led our current work in this area, in particular on work for our smaller providers. She added that the £802,000 saving still sits within her budget, but is not directly attributable to Community Services and that she has discussed with the Chief Executive of B&NES how this will be progressed.

Referring to the CQC inspections, she stated that she did not know why B&NES was listed as one of the first fifteen to be inspected and said that no criteria had been shared with any Local Authority. She added that three Councils have published their inspection results and all had received a 'Good' rating. She explained that they have completed the self-assessment forms and shared that with the CQC, 187 pieces of evidence.

She informed the Panel that representatives from the LGA were currently addressing frontline staff to prepare them for the inspection which will have to take place by the end of October this year.

Councillor Hardman asked if the recently developed two-year sexual and reproductive health action plan to support the attainment of improved sexual health outcomes for the communities of B&NES would be targeted and could the plan be shared with the Panel.

Councillor Born said she would reply following discussing the issue with Public Health officers.

Kevin Burnett asked how much B&NES had received from the additional Social Care Funding that was announced in February.

Councillor Born replied that B&NES had received around £1.5m of short-term / one-off funding to enable some of our strategic work to be carried out.

Kevin Burnett asked if the funding had been specifically allocated to an area of work.

The Director of Adult Services replied that it was being used at the moment for Provider Services to provide an uplift to them on a one-off basis. She added that the underlying Adult Services deficit was also being supported by this funding.

The Chair, on behalf of the Panel, thanked the Cabinet Member for her update.

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

9 ADULT SOCIAL CARE TRANSFER - EVALUATION REPORT

Councillor Alison Born, Cabinet Member for Adult Services introduced the report to the Panel. She explained that the safe transfer of Adult Social Care Services took place on 1st April 2024 for Adult Social Work (including Direct Payments team) and Adults with Learning Disabilities and their Families Day Services (including Shared Lives, Employment Inclusion and Supported Living) from HCRG Care Group to B&NES Council.

She stated that the transfer of ASC services saw a compliment of 237 staff from HCRG Care Group transfer to B&NES and that the Adult Social Care Directorate now represents 19.5% of the Council's total workforce.

She informed the Panel that there were no disruptions to services that are provided and that the support from staff in Corporate Services was very welcome, especially IT, HR and Payroll Services.

She said that the overall feeling she has is that it went very well and that positive feedback had been received from many members of staff.

Kevin Burnett asked how the project had been able to cost less than anticipated and what were seen as the key benefits to the transfer of services.

He also referred to section 5.2.3 of the report and asked for clarity on the numbers shown in the table, whether the training was compulsory and when should it be completed by.

The Director for Adult Services replied that it was difficult to know when the project began how much it would cost in total which is why the initial figure was granted by

the Council. She added that they had been able to reduce costs by using our own staff for a lot of the project work instead of consultants.

She said that officers were currently working through to establish the overall benefits of the transfer, but initially felt that one of the main benefits was the area of purchasing budgets. She added that the staff satisfaction was also a key guide as to how beneficial the transfer has been.

With regard to training, she accepted that it would be clearer to give the figures as a percentage and said that for all the mandatory training, in time, it would need to be 100%.

She said that further information on the transfer and its progress could be shared with the Panel in the early part of 2025.

Councillor Hardman asked if there was anything that they would have liked to have done differently during the project.

The Director of Adult Services replied that they would have preferred to have known the names of all the staff involved and their contract / terms & conditions details prior to March, ideally two months before the transfer took place. She added that she would now wish that they had had involvement with more middle tier managers during the process.

Councillor Born added that TUPE legal requirements were met by HCRG.

Councillor Lesley Mansell asked if the Infection Control training will be given as a priority to those frontline staff who need it. She also referred to risk assessments and asked how many were there, are there any action plans associated with them and can these be shared with the Panel.

The Director for Adult Services replied that all frontline staff will need to complete the Infection Control training and that they would be happy to share the risk register with the Panel.

Councillor Joanna Wright asked if anything could be learnt from the way HCRG ran the services that the Council could continue to do or look to establish in the future.

The Director of Adult Services replied that some of the feedback from staff has been that the decision making structure is more complicated within the Council and that they would see if steps can be taken for introducing any degree of flexibility.

Councillor Wright asked how the Unions have been involved in the transfer process.

The Director of Adult Services replied that HCRG had 'Staff Champions' that sat in on union meetings. She said that staff wellbeing was paramount from a union point of view and that they had provided a challenge when they felt they needed to. She added that they continue to meet with the unions on a monthly basis and said that they would like all staff to be on B&NES terms & conditions, which unfortunately is not possible.

Councillor Wright asked if the matter of Pensions was an issue as part of the transfer.

The Director of Adult Services replied that this was not a problem for those staff that were in the Avon Pension Fund already. She added that this may get picked up as part of the Be Our Best (BOB) work which was ongoing, but said that it was complicated in terms of TUPE.

Councillor Wright asked if there was anything for the Pensions Committee to need to be aware of at this stage.

The Director of Adult Services replied that there was not.

Kevin Burnett referred to section 5.5 of the report and asked how many queries around individual pay and terms and conditions need to be resolved.

The Director of Adult Services replied that these were a small number.

Kevin Burnett asked what were seen as the key risks now moving forward with the service.

The Director of Adult Services replied that this was retention of staff and maintaining their wellbeing and happiness. She added that she would like to see the Social Worker apprenticeship programme carried on by the Council.

Kevin Burnett asked how any increase to Care Workers pay might be funded.

The Director of Adult Services replied that there is a new Adult Social Care Workforce Strategy that she has been involved with nationally and this included looking at the pay of Care Staff. She added that they have been lobbying hard through ADASS (Association of Directors of Adult Social Services) to increase funding into the sector and that the Workforce Strategy was due to be published on 16th July.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to note the evaluation of the Adult Social Care transfer of services to B&NES Council on 1st April 2024 and lessons learnt.

10 PANEL WORKPLAN

The Chair introduced the workplan to the Panel and the following subjects were noted as potential future items of discussion.

- Further feedback on Adult Social Care transfer of services – January

Kevin Burnett raised the following issues for consideration that had been mentioned at previous meetings.

Public Health:

- Public Health Update (include Care Homes / Infection Control / Covid Planning learning points)
- System Improvement Framework – Public Health – September
- Schools Health and Wellbeing Survey – January

BSW ICB:

- Children’s Health Services & Young People’s Programme
- Birth Trauma
- SEND representative
- Partnerships for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS)
- Pharmacies (Capacity / Strategy)
- Primary Care Access Plan
- Dental Services / Provision / Vans

Cabinet Member for Children’s Services:

- School Streets
- Alternative Provision
- Suspension / Exclusion figures
- Early Help – Savings / Progress
- Charlton House

Councillor Ruth Malloy proposed a Suicide Prevention update. The Chair replied that she believed that this was possibly due in November.

Councillor Liz Hardman requested a Safety Valve Update.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to note their current workplan alongside these proposals for future work areas.

The meeting ended at 10.28 am

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services