

Lead Member PDS Report 15/07/2024.

1. DFE Safety Valve Update

On Friday, 23rd of May, officers submitted our re-submission to the safety valve team. This met the timescales set by the DFE. I am assured that our draft plans, as outlined in the last paper to the PDS, are robust and will deliver better services for children with SEND, a better early help offer for children and schools and setting in B&NES and, importantly, more SEND schools places through additional resource bases, a new special school, an alternative provision school and a residential school.

As you will know, a general election was called on the 22nd of May and a general election was held on the 4th of July. As a result, the DFE have not been able to provide any feedback or make arrangements for the sign-off of our Safety Valve plans. We also do not yet know what new government plans are for SEND or SEND funding, so we have not progressed in formalising the plans with the DFE.

Our plans were developed with the support of an organisation called ISOS, an independent company that both provide support, research and analysis to local authorities and the department for education, on matters relating to SEND and Education. We have also worked closely with our partners, schools, and parent carer forum to formulate our plans and we believe that our plans are the right actions to be taken for our local area and as such, we continue to work on the delivery of key aspects of the plans. Regardless of the outcome and future of the Safety Valve programme, we will publish our action plans as a SEND Collaboration Strategy for B&NES and share this strategy with this panel.

2. Culverhay & Charlton House

Now that Culverhay has been identified as the site for the Special and AP Free Schools, the 'kick off' meetings between the Department of Education, the Academy Trusts (Midsomer Norton Partnership Three Ways) and the Local Authority have started. The responsibility for building the new schools will lie with the Department for Education, and they will draw up the relevant feasibility studies, with the expectation that the Local Authority will deliver a cleared site.

Charlton House

The required adaptations to the Charlton House to convert the building to a 30-place special school with 12 residential beds have been investigated through a feasibility study. The next steps for the project would be full project delivery to convert the property to a small special school with a residential children's home. This school will be for some of our most complex children with autism and social, emotional and mental health difficulties, allowing them to be educated in their local community.

3. Youth Justice Plan 2024- 2026

I am pleased to be able to present the Youth Justice Plan 2024.

This plan sets out the actions to help make Bath and North East Somerset a safer place and support children to live crime-free lives. It is also being considered by the council's meeting on Thursday this week.

The Youth Justice Plan sets out how services would be organised and funded and what steps will be carried out to prevent youth offending and re-offending across the district from 2024 to 2026.

It builds on the progress made in the previous plan which included a reduction in reoffending of more than 5% from the period July 2021 to June 2022 and delivered interventions on knife crime, including Street Doctors first aid and safety training and 4 knife crime awareness events for parents and carers. A 5th event is planned for July 18th at Broadlands school, and the service are planning for an additional 5.

I will be pleased to take and feedback from this PDS Panel to the council meeting this week.

4. Ofsted Annual Conversation

Colleagues across Council to include the Chief Executive, the Chief Operating Officer and senior leaders across Childrens Services attended the annual Ofsted Conversation on June 7th 2024. The service met with the Regional Director for Ofsted and other Ofsted inspectors. The key areas of focus were children's social care and alternative provision. The LA will receive a letter in due course.

5. Ofsted CQC Thematic Review of Preparing for Adulthood

B&NES Local Authority and ICS were notified of an Ofsted /CQC thematic review of preparing for adulthood on June 10th 2024.

Colleagues across children service, public health, adult social care, the ICS (health colleagues) with support from a whole range of council services completed the significant submission requirements and the room/IT set-up arrangements. Inspectors worked off-site June 10- 21st 2024.

3 Inspections – 1 health, 2 Ofsted, (1 education and 1 social care lead) were on site in the Civic Centre from Monday June 24th – June 27th: there was a full timetable of meetings over the 4 days involving a whole range of staff. All partners to include the third sector, education settings and Parents Carer Forum were actively engaged in the programme.

I attended the feedback session on June 27th 2024 and was impressed at the positive feedback to Children's Services. The work of the SEND team and the improvements underway were noted as was the quality of social work practice. Waiting times for access to some health services were highlighted for improvement

as well as the overall knowledge of the early help offer/early help APP across the wider system.

The Local Authority and the ICS will receive a letter following the thematic visit, not a graded judgement. The Local Area Inclusion Partnership (LAIP), co-chaired by the LA and ICS will progress an action plan in response to the visit/letter.

6. Regional Fostering Southwest Hub.

I previously updated you on the Regional Fostering Southwest Hub. It is a trial for one year so we will need to keep it under review to ensure it works effectively for us. In house foster care remains the most effective and cost-efficient solution for vulnerable young people in care.

The website, **Fostering South West**, the combined voice of local council foster care across the whole region, is now live: please see attached link:

<https://www.fosterwithyourlocalcouncil.org.uk>

To date 5 new B&NES Fostering household have been identified via this project.

7. Health and Wellbeing Board

As agreed at last CAHW, please see link to the Health and Wellbeing Board Meeting 11.07.2024

[Agenda details on public web site](#)

Key papers for discussion:

- Health and Wellbeing Strategy Implementation Plan
- Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Mental Health Strategy
- Experiences of refugees in accessing and using health and social care services in B&NES
- Be Well B&NES: Whole Systems Health Improvement Framework

8. Children with Complex Needs

The 3 Local Authorities across BSW (B&NES, Swindon and Wiltshire) and the ICB are currently undertaking a review of children with most complex packages of support, both in the community and in care. This will support the appropriate level of support from statutory partners.

