

Minutes

of the Meeting of the

Children & Young People Services Policy & Scrutiny Panel

Friday, 6th June 2014

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held at the Town Hall, Weston-super-Mare, Somerset.

Meeting Commenced: 10.00 am Meeting Concluded: 12.05 pm

Councillors:

P Colin Hall (Chairman)

P Sonia Russé (Vice-Chairman)

P Mary Blatchford

A Bob Garner

P Hugh Gregor

A Clare Kingsbury-Bell

P John Norton-Sealey

P Annabel Tall

P Richard Tucker

P Deborah Yamanaka

P Donald Davies

P Catherine Gibbons

P Anne Kemp

A Linda Knott

A Terry Porter

P Arthur Terry

P Liz Wells

P: Present

A: Apologies for absence submitted

Also present: Councillors Jeremy Blatchford (Executive Member for Children and Young People's Services), Dawn Payne and Lisa Pilgrim (Assistant Executive Members)

Added Members: Justin Templer (Diocese of Clifton) and Rachel Ling (Parent Governor Representative)

Officers in attendance: Sheila Smith (Director of People and Communities), Eifion Price, John Wilkinson, Mike Rees, Steve Coggins, Rachel Austin, Lucy Townshend, Lynda Mitchell (People and Communities), David Jellings (Corporate Services)

Apologies: Councillors Bob Garner, Clare Kingsbury-Bell, Linda Knott and Terry Porter; Helen Fenn (Diocese of Bath and Wells), Rachel Ling (Parent Governor, Primary Schools Sector), Fiona Waters (Weston College)

CAY Declarations of Interest by Members (Agenda Item 3)

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None.

CAY 2 Minutes of the Meeting held on 28th March 2014 (Agenda Item 4.1)

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting be approved as a correct record.

CAY 3 The Introduction of Universal Free Infant School Meals (Agenda Item 6)

The Panel considered a report on the required to ensure all eligible infant age children can receive a free, hot, nutritious school lunch from September 2014.

The representative of the Director of People and Communities responded to Members' questions and queries.

It was noted that a series of briefing sessions had been held with schools and a further event for School Governors was planned for 17th June to which Members were invited.

The Vice-Chairman on behalf of the Panel complimented Lynda Mitchell, Commissioning and Contracts Manager for her excellent work.

Concluded: that this Panel supports the introduction of Universal Infant Free School Meals [UIFSM] in North Somerset and supports the delivery of this service by:

- (1) actively promoting take up of the service with eligible residents;
- (2) Members who are also school governors encouraging schools to support the changes necessary for successful implementation;
- (3) supporting the health and well being benefits of school meals for pupils of all ages.

CAY 4 Oral Update by Executive Member (Agenda Item 7)

Councillor Lisa Pilgrim updated the Panel on her work and responded to Members' questions and queries regarding the following areas of activity-

- Foster Placements
- Recruitment Strategy
- Foster Families
- Investing to Save
- Social Impact Bonds (SIB)
- Sharing services with other local authorities
- Training
- NEETS
- 3+ placement moves.

The Director of People and Communities in response to a Member's query, clarified that the SIB proposal around adoption had been developed nationally and related to Children who were hard to place. A 'not for profit' consortium of adoption agencies would specifically find places for these children. There was no change in practice nor a change in policy. The consortium would start from the needs of the child and would then search for an appropriate family.

The representative of the Director of People and Communities advised that the SIB proposal around early intervention was at an early stage.

Councillor Pilgrim would provide a further written update to the next meeting.

CAY 5 Junction 21 Mentoring Scheme (Agenda Item 8)

The Panel considered a report on the work delivered through the Junction 21 Mentoring Scheme.

The Vice-Chairman introduced this item, highlighting her role as a volunteer mentor, her commitment to the scheme and the benefits of the scheme as evidenced by her experiences as a mentor in both Bath and North Somerset.

The representatives of the Director of People and Communities explained that the Mentoring Scheme provided a contribution towards the three national indicators of preventing offending and re-offending; and reducing the use of custody as detailed in the Youth Justice Plan 2013 -2016. They highlighted the key aspects of the scheme particularly regarding the involvement of mentors and their recruitment and training. A case study example was also provided.

The officers responded to Members' queries and questions.

Members were interested also in the further marketing of Junction 21 to attract external organisations to purchase the mentoring service. Organisations suggested included Weston College, local businesses, Sports Centre members and local sports clubs.

Concluded:

(1) that the Panel welcomes the expansion of the Junction 21 provision to work with vulnerable young people across a range of Council service areas;

(2) that the Panel also welcomes the proposed further marketing of Junction 21 to attract external organisations to purchase the mentoring service.

CAY 6 Family Justice Update (Agenda Item 9)

The representative of the Director of People and Communities gave a powerpoint presentation on the changes that had occurred as a result of the Family Justice Review and the Children and Families Act 2014. The presentation also highlighted (i) the work completed in North Somerset to prepare and manage the changes as well as progress made in terms of meeting the requirements, (ii) local collaboration, (iii) achievements and (iv) improved performance.

The rate of turnover of social workers was a national concern. The Executive Member and Assistant Executive Member were actively addressing this issue.

The Chairman on behalf of the Panel thanked Lucy Townsend, Community Family Service Leader for her all excellent work she had done for children and families, her staff and for the Council and to wish her well when she leaves the Council in July to take up a new position with Wiltshire County Council.

Concluded:

(1) that the progress made towards meeting the requirements of the Children and Families Act 2014 (Length of Care proceedings) be welcomed;

(2) that the likely impact this will have on meeting the targets set out in the Medium Financial Term Plan be noted at this stage.

CAY Performance and Finance Monitoring (Agenda Item 10)

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The representative of the Director of People and Communities presented the report covering core information on finance and performance. The following topics were highlighted, details of which were set out in the report.

- Inspection and Improvement

The Panel welcomed the overall good assessment of North Somerset schools by Ofsted which was particularly encouraging given the significantly tougher inspection regime.

- Key Corporate Performance Indicators

The Panel was pleased to note good performance in the following areas-

(i) The percentage of children in care who achieve 5 A*-C GCSEs (or equivalent) at Key Stage 4 (including Maths and English) – up to 23.5%

(ii) Placement stability - The percentage of children looked after with three or more placements during the year – this was steadily reducing.

(iii) Average cost per week of placements for Children Looked After in foster care and residential care – this was well below the national average.

- Number of Children Looked After

The number of children looked after had increased from 204 to 220. This would be closely monitored.

- Financial Monitoring

It was explained that because of the timing of this Panel meeting, the CYPS Financial Monitoring Commentary for the period up 31st March

2014 was not yet available. It would be ready in time for the meeting of the Executive on 17th June 2014, papers for which would be circulated to all Council Members.

- Case Audits
- Programme for Future Thematic Reports

It was agreed to add Care Leavers' Outcomes, to be incorporated within one of the existing themes.

The representatives of the Director of People and Communities responded to Members' questions, queries and comments regarding the number of looked after children, children subject to child protection plans, placement stability, social worker vacancies and children in poverty.

Concluded: that the report be received.

CAY 8 Work Plans (Agenda Item 11)

Issues and topics dealt with at this meeting would be deleted from the Work Plan.

The Chairman suggested Social Impact Bonds as a possible topic for a Members' briefing.

The Panel was reminded that the update session for all Councillors and the added members of the CYPS Policy and Scrutiny Panel on the merger of the former ASSH and CYPS Directorates into the People and Communities Directorate was taking place on Wednesday, 18th June at 5.00 pm in the New Council Chamber.

Councillors and added members were invited to identify key issues for consideration and discussion at the workshop.

Concluded: that the work plan be updated to reflect work in progress.

Chairman
