

## Minutes

of the Meeting of the

# Children & Young People Services Policy & Scrutiny Panel

Friday, 27th February 2015

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

Meeting Commenced: 10.00 am Meeting Concluded: 12.10 pm

### Councillors:

P Colin Hall (Chairman)

P Sonia Russé (Vice-Chairman)

A Mary Blatchford

P Donald Davies

P Catherine Gibbons

P Anne Kemp

A Linda Knott

P Terry Porter

A Arthur Terry

P Liz Wells

P Robert Cleland (substitute for Mary Blatchford)

P Charles Cave

P Bob Garner

P Hugh Gregor

- Clare Kingsbury-Bell

P John Norton-Sealey

P Annabel Tall

- Richard Tucker

P Deborah Yamanaka

P Jill Iles (substitute for Linda Knott)

P: Present

A: Apologies for absence submitted

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

**Added Members:** Caroline Hostein (Diocese of Clifton), Helen Fenn (Diocese of Bath and Wells), Rachel Ling (Parent Governor Representative)

**Right to Speak:** Fiona Walters (Weston College)

**Officers in attendance:** Eifion Price, Jane Routledge, Richard Blows, Christine Jupp, Mike Newman, Mike Reay, Sally Varley (People and Communities Directorate), David Jellings (Corporate Services)

**CAY Declarations of Interest by Members**

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None

**CAY 39 Minutes of the Meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2015 (Agenda Item 4)**

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

**CAY 40 North Somerset Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report (Agenda Item 6)**

It was reported that Mr Tony Oliver, Independent Chairperson of the North Somerset Safeguarding Children Board was unable to attend to present the annual report of the Board due to a family bereavement. Mike Reay, Service Leader, Quality Assurance in Children's Social Care Services presented the report on Mr Oliver's behalf.

The following aspects of the report were identified as highlights by the Board-

- Work on improving multi agency practice in relation to children at risk of, or who are subject to, sexual exploitation. The strategy included the prevention of child sexual exploitation, children who are sexually exploited and the pursuit of adults who sexually exploit. The Board's CSE Sub-Group had identified what to prioritise and the areas for development
- Work to reduce unintentional injuries (highlighted by performance data)
- Work to tackle the increase in deliberate self poisoning (highlighted by performance data).

The Service Leader responded to Members' queries and concerns on the following matters-

- Members were concerned that there was not sufficient robustness in seeking out evidence of CSE – The Panel's concern would be reported back to the Board's CSE Sub-Group
- Reference was made to working with the Border Agency and Bristol International Airport to deal with sex trafficking. The Board's report two years ago had advised of a significant reduction in the number of cases and scrutiny had greatly improved. It was considered that whilst performance remained good, a routine check would be made that adequate systems were in place
- Suitability of accommodation of Care Leavers aged 19 – Work was taking place to focus on meeting care leavers targets. This issue was picked up in the Board's Business Plan and would be followed up accordingly
- Monitoring and Evaluation
  - (i) Case Reviews and Serious Case Reviews were routinely audited
  - (ii) Section 11 Audit – this assessment of each partner agency took place every two years. Issues of concern would be taken up with the respective agency and there would be a report to the Board on the agency response and remedial action.

The Service Leader confirmed that the feedback from the Panel would be reported back to the Chairperson of the Safeguarding Children Board.

The Chairman on behalf of the Panel expressed thanks and appreciation for the work carried out by the Service Leader and the Safeguarding Children Board

**Concluded:** that the annual report of the North Somerset Safeguarding Children Board be received and that the comments and feedback from the Panel be reported back to the Independent Chairperson of the North Somerset Safeguarding Children Board.

**CAY 41      New School in Weston-super-Mare – Expressions of Interest for A School on the St Modwen Site at Locking Parklands (Agenda Item 7)**

The representative of the Director of People and Communities presented the report. The following points were highlighted-

- The Council must take all necessary steps to ensure that the widest possible range of groups or organisations that might be interested in establishing the new school are aware of the opportunity to do so and that they have sufficient time to develop proposals. Local good or outstanding schools that are interested in submitting a proposal to run a new school will need to have or will need to acquire both academy status and sponsor approval
- The Secretary of State for Education was the ultimate decision-maker. All Expressions of Interest will be submitted to the Secretary of State for Education who will decide whether or not to enter into a Funding Agreement with any of the proposers
- The Council's expectations regarding those expressing an interest in promoting the new school
- A Section 106 agreement had been signed with the developer to secure the construction of a 420-place school building. The school will be built with core facilities for 630 pupils and will be designed and constructed in a manner that facilitates efficient future expansion if required.

The representative of the Director of People and Communities further responded to Members' questions and queries on the following-

- A brief explanation was given about the statistical model used for projecting house development, population growth and child birth with regard to the number of future school places. Members complimented the statistician involved for the accuracy of her projections
- Currently there were sufficient places in Weston-super-Mare for secondary school age children.

**Concluded:** that the Panel recommends the Executive Member for Children and Young People's Services to ask for 'Expressions of Interest' to run a new 420-place primary school on the St Modwen's development site in Locking

Parklands, Weston super Mare that is expected to open by 1 September 2017.

**CAY 42 Annual Report of the Adoption Panel 2013-14 and Targets for 2014-15 (Agenda Item 8)**

The Panel received a powerpoint presentation on this subject matter (this would be emailed to Members and a copy placed in the signed minute book).

The representative of the Director of People and Communities highlighted the following areas as detailed in the powerpoint slides and responded to Members' questions and queries-

- Recruitment of adopters
- Key points
- Children – more adopters than children available to adopt – actively pursuing the “It’s All About Me” Project
- Adoption Orders
- Disruptions
- Adoption Support
- Additional Adoption Activity
- Targets for 2014-15
- Future Challenges

The Panel was pleased to learn that 88% of assessments were completed within timescale.

A brief discussion took place regarding inter-country adoption.

A Member enquired about other family members as prospective adopters. It was explained that this occurred either through the adoption process or by Special Guardianship Order.

The Chairman on behalf of the Panel thanked the Jenny Slee, Adoption Team Leader and her team for the beneficial work they carried out.

**Concluded:** that the report be welcomed and endorsed.

**CAY 43 Responses of the Executive Members to the Recommendations of the ‘Life Course’ (Cradle to Grave) Working Group (Agenda Item 8)**

The representatives of the Director of People and Communities presented the report.

The report focused on the key area of transitions and the development of the 14 -25 project for a new transitions service. It also complimented the work and recommendations of the Short Breaks Working Group

The Panel welcomed the positive response of the Executive Member for Children and Young People’s Services and the Executive Member for Adult Care. The Executive Members supported the recommendations and welcomed the initiatives contained therein.

Reference was made to recommendation (v) "That officers explore the possibility of broadening the scope of the post in housing services currently working primarily with people with a learning disability to cover people with a physical or sensory impairment".

Reference was also made to the success of the Older People's Champions Group and the development of proposals for a champions group for parents of disabled children and children with SEN.

A Member whilst welcoming the report expressed disappointment that response to this recommendation was not stronger and more robust.

It was acknowledged that the issues regarding financial support were complex and would require detailed investigation.

**Concluded:** that the report be received.

**CAY 44 Report of the Assistant Executive Member, Councillor Lisa Pilgrim (Agenda Item 9)**

Councillor Lisa Pilgrim updated the Panel on her work and responded to Members' questions and queries regarding adoption, fostering, Invest to Save and care leavers. The report was briefer than usual because of the short time since the last Panel meeting. A fuller update would be submitted to the Children's Champions Group.

It was reported that Adoption West were about to advertise for a Project Manager.

It was requested that the Annual Report of the Adoption Panel 2013-14 be reported also to the Children's Champions Group.

A brief discussion took place on suitable affordable accommodation for care leavers.

It was reported that Councillor Dawn Payne, Assistant Executive Member would circulate a paper to Members on the impact of welfare reform on children.

**Concluded:** that the report be received.

**CAY 45 Performance and Finance Monitoring (Agenda Item 10)**

The representatives 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 and responses made to Members' questions and queries.

**(1) Inspection and Improvement**

**(2) Key Corporate Performance Indicators**

### **(3) Numbers of Children Looked After**

A Member enquired whether the statistician involved with the projection of school places could help with the projection of the numbers of children looked after.

The representative of the Director of People and Communities undertook to investigate whether or not this would be feasible.

### **(4) Financial Monitoring**

The Directorate was projecting to overspend its budget in 2014/15 by £1,871K (7.0%), due to the increase in Children Looked After costs and some Medium Term Financial Plan savings not being delivered at the pace previously anticipated. It was re-emphasised that the Children Looked After 'placements budget' included some costs for supporting children after they have left care, such as adoption allowances, special guardianship allowances and Care Leavers' support.

### **(5) Case Audits**

The Panel was informed that there was a case for audit was chosen monthly at random and that findings were themed according to the subject matter.

### **(6) How well do vulnerable groups such as children looked after, children with special educational needs and pupils eligible for free school meals, achieve at school?**

The gap in attainment was closing.

It was commented that the number of school exclusions had recently increased. The Panel was advised that a report identifying gaps in provision was due to be considered by the Strategic Schools Forum.

84% of North Somerset primary schools were better than the national average.

The use of Pupil Premium whether by LEA schools or Academies was closely monitored by the DfE.

**Concluded:** that the report be received.

### **CAY 46 The Panel's Work Plan (Agenda Item 11)**

The Chairman updated the Panel as follows-

The CSE Working Group's investigation was ongoing and on target to report back to the Panel in June.

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

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Chairman

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