

## Minutes

of the Meeting of the

# Children & Young People Services Policy & Scrutiny Panel

**Monday, 22nd June 2015**

**4**

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

Meeting Commenced: 10.00 am Meeting Concluded: 12.40 pm

### Councillors:

P Ann Harley (Chairman)

P Bob Garner (Vice-Chairman)

A Karen Barclay

P Mary Blatchford

P Judith Hadley

A David Hitchins

P Kate Stowey

A Liz Wells

A Roz Willis

P Chris Blades (substitute for David Hitchins)

P Ericka Blades

P Donald Davies

P David Oyns

P David Shopland

P Richard Tucker

P Martin Williams

P Deborah Yamanaka

P Richard Nightingale (substitute for Roz Willis)

**Also present:** Councillor Colin Hall (Executive Member for Children and Young People's Services)

**Added Members:** (Not present) Caroline Hostein (Diocese of Clifton), Helen Fenn (Diocese of Bath and Wells)

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

P: Present

A: Apologies for absence submitted

**Officers in attendance:** Sheila Smith (Director of People and Communities), Eifion Price, Jane Routledge, Sally Varley (People and Communities Directorate), David Jellings (Corporate Services)

**CAY Declarations of Interest by Members (Appendix 3)**

1

None

**CAY Minutes of the Meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2015 (Agenda Item 4)**

**2**

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

**CAY The Panel's Remit, Role and Work Plan (Agenda Items 6 and 11)**

**3**

The Executive Member for Children and Young People's Services said that he would be setting out his plans for the coming year. He would be consulting on this with Assistant Executive Member, the Chairman of the Panel and the Director of Communities following which it would be circulated to Panel Members for their input. He added that he looked forward to working with the Panel.

The Chairman considered that the main priority and work planning topic was the budget particularly in seeking to reduce the spend on Looked After Children.

The Panel considered this overview of the policy and scrutiny function and the remit of the Panel, and discussed its work plan.

The Scrutiny Officer highlighted the importance of effective work planning based on targeted, incisive and timely work on issues where scrutiny can add value and focusing on 2-3 issues.

The Director of People and Communities provided an overview of the key priority areas of work and challenges within the Directorate to help inform the Panel's work planning identified as follows-

- Development of Safeguarding Plus
- Schools' Performance and Ofsted Inspections
- Children's Centres
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Prevention Agenda
- Placement Stability
- School Place Planning
- Services for disabled children and the Local Offer
- Opportunities to spend on looked after children
- Partnerships with professionals in other agencies.

The Panel discussed the work plan priorities and concluded that the main priority was to scrutinise the People and Communities Directorate budget and in a timely manner, to feed into the 2016/17 budget process and in particular to identify opportunities to reduce the spend on Looked After Children).

The Scrutiny Officer highlighted the importance of concluding the investigation of the Child Sexual Exploitation Working Group. The Panel concurred with the proposal that Councillors Donald Davies and Bob Garner together with the Panel Chairman, Councillor Ann Harley complete the investigation and report to the Panel at its next meeting in September.

**Concluded:**

(1) that a Budget Working Group comprising a maximum of 6 Panel Member be set up to scrutinise the People and Communities Directorate budget and report back to the Panel in September (Membership – Councillors Ann Harley, Bob Garner, Donald Davies, Deborah Yamanaka and Roz Willis);

(2) that the Child Sexual Exploitation Working Group continue and conclude its investigation and report back to the Panel in September (Membership – Councillors Ann Harley, Donald Davies and Bob Garner);

(3) that the Panel's Work Plan be updated to reflect work in progress. that the minutes of the meeting be approved as a correct record.

**CAY  
4 Increase in Charges for Vacant Seat Payment Scheme for Home to School Transport (Agenda Item 7)**

The Panel considered a report which requested support for a recommendation to the Executive Member for Children and Young People's Services to increase charges for the Vacant Seat Payment Scheme for Home to School Transport by 10% in both September 2015 and September 2016.

Councillor Davies expressed his disappointment and concern that the questions he had raised about this subject had not been included in the report nor answered. He and other Members commented that in the circumstances, they were not prepared to support the recommendation and were minded to move deferral to the next meeting of the Panel.

Following discussion, Panel Members concluded that as the questions raised with officers previously had not been yet been answered within the report, they were unable to respond to the recommendation. Therefore, they agreed with a suggestion by the Director of People and Communities to meet with Councillors Yamanaka and Davies (and any others who had concerns), together with the Panel Chair and Vice-Chairman to discuss the questions and where possible provide answers. The Director gave an assurance that the proposed Executive Member decision would include the questions and where appropriate, answers. The responses would also be circulated to the other Panel Members to keep them informed.

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**CAY 5 Draft Education Provision in North Somerset – A Commissioning Strategy (Agenda Item 8)**

The Panel considered a report seeking views on the draft strategy.

The representative of the Director of People and Communities gave a powerpoint presentation (copy placed in the signed minute book) which highlighted the salient points and also responded to Members' questions, queries and comments particularly regarding –

- (1) Supporting schools to be good and outstanding and sustainable ...
- (2) The expectation that provision will be judged by Ofsted as at least good or outstanding
- (3) The role of Local Authorities as the strategic commissioner of services, but with greater autonomy of education provision by the encouragement of the establishment of academies, free schools, studio schools and Enterprise Colleges that are independent of the Local Authority
- (4) The new role for the Local Authority as strengthened champions of choice, securing a wide range of education options for parents and families, ensuring there are sufficient high-quality school places, co-ordinating fair admissions, promoting social justice by supporting vulnerable children, and challenging schools which fail to improve.
- (5) Cluster wide school plans.

It was pointed out that the consultation ended on 3<sup>rd</sup> July so there was further opportunity for Members to submit comments.

**Concluded:** that the views of Panel Members along with all other consultees be considered by the Executive Member for Children and Young People's Services before approving the final strategy for implementation from September 2015.

**CAY 6 Report of Councillor Pilgrim, Assistant Executive Member – Verbal Update (Agenda Item 9)**

The Panel agreed to defer this item to the next meeting.

**CAY 7 Performance and Financial Monitoring (Agenda Item 10)**

The Director of People and Communities presented this report covering core information on performance. It did not include the most recent quarterly financial information as this had not yet been reported to the Executive.

The Director explained that the report helped Members to evaluate the extent to which the Council and its partners were achieving key plans and objectives for children and young people's services and to provide appropriate challenge, praise and suggestions to improve performance.

The Panel's June 2014 meeting had agreed the content of subsequent 2014/15 monitoring reports and this report put forward suggestions for key question information to be included in future reports. The Panel advised the Director that it was happy to continue with the same themed content for the 2015/16 monitoring reports.

The representative of the Director of People and Communities highlighted the outcomes of the Ofsted inspection reports.

**Concluded:** that the Panel agree to continue with the same themed content for the 2015/16 monitoring reports.

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Chairman

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