

## Minutes

of the Meeting of the

# Children & Young People Services Policy & Scrutiny Panel

**Friday, 24th March 2017**

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

Meeting Commenced: 10.00 am

Meeting Concluded: 12.15pm

### Councillors:

P Ann Harley (Chairman)

P Bob Garner (Vice-Chairman)

A Karen Barclay

A Ericka Blades

P Andy Cole

(substitute for Mike Bell)

P Judith Hadley

P Ruth Jacobs

(substitute for Roz Willis)

P Kate Stowey

P Richard Tucker

A Michael Bell

P Mary Blatchford

A Donald Davies

P David Hitchins

P David Oyns

P James Tonkin

(substitute for Donald Davies)

P: Present

A: Apologies for absence submitted

**Other Councillors present:** Jan Barber (Executive Member), Reyna Knight, Tom Leimdorfer, Lisa Pilgrim (Assistant Executive Member)

**Officers in attendance:** Amanda Braund, Louise Malik, Eifion Price (People and Communities Directorate), Shauni Brocklesby, Philippa Penney (Corporate Services)

**Also in attendance:** Claire Hudson (Church of England Representative), Ellie Varley (Observer)

**CAY 17 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest by Members (Agenda Item 3)**

None

**CAY 18 Minutes of the Meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2016 (Agenda Item 4)**

**CAY  
19**

**Resolved:** that the minutes of the meeting be approved as a correct record.  
**Future arrangements for Education Traded Services (Agenda Item 6)**

The Panel received a presentation from the Head of Education Transformation, a copy of which is filed on the minute book. Traded services were those services that schools chose to pay for, either as individual schools or as part of a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT). Members were provided with a background of the traded services in North Somerset, setting out context of proposed changes designed for greater staff resilience and to help mitigate financial pressures.

Since the Executive decision taken in December 2016, North Somerset Council had been working with South Gloucestershire Council and Somerset County Council to identify proposals as to how they would support North Somerset Council Traded Services by becoming a larger organisation.

The next stage will be to present recommendations to the Executive on 25<sup>th</sup> April to agree the preferred options for continued service provision. The opportunity to influence these recommendations was only available for a few days, and Councillors and schools had been asked to assess the responses/proposals from both authorities via the North Somerset Council website, the link for which had been circulated to Councillors yesterday. This will close on Monday 27 March at 5pm, and so Members were encouraged to use this opportunity to complete their submissions. These will be collated and used to inform the report recommendations to the Executive.

**Concluded:** that Members review the proposal responses from South Gloucestershire Council and Somerset County Council and complete their submissions in advance of the closing time.

**CAY  
20**

**Fostering Strategy (Agenda Item 7)**

The Service Leader, Resource Service, presented the report detailing North Somerset Fostering Strategy. Members were updated in the current work, including data statistics and future plans. Local authorities were having to compete against the independent market, and demand for foster carers was high. The strategy focused on developing a service based around the needs of carers in North Somerset, and was working closely with the Foster Carers' Association and improving links with the Children in Care Council. It was also recognised how important foster carers were in the journey towards adoption.

Members discussed the reasons as to why children came into care, and also our local approach to unaccompanied asylum seekers. Members also recognised the importance of recruitment and retention of social workers.

It was emphasised that this report was a live document and therefore subject to updates. Members were welcomed to engage with the document and put forward suggestions accordingly.

Members thanked the Service Leader for the excellent update and gave full agreement to the recommendations.

**Resolved:** that the Panel

- (1) includes monitoring the progress of the fostering strategy implementation within their work plan
- (2) that council officers review the fostering strategy quarterly, with a formal written review to Panel in November 2017, following the first year of implementation.

**CAY  
21**      **Adoption West (Agenda Item 8)**

The Assistant Director, Support and Safeguarding, provided Members with an oral update highlighting a background into the work of Adoption West, which was the central government proposal for local authorities to work together on a regional basis. Locally, this would include North Somerset, Bristol, South Gloucestershire, Bath and North East Somerset, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire.

In June 2016, the Executive endorsed outline proposals for the development of a Regional Adoption Agency and approved public engagement on the outline proposals. The next stage would be to report to the Executive in April with the consultation results and structure proposals based on three hubs across Gloucestershire, Bristol and Wiltshire.

**Concluded:** that the Panel note the progress being made regarding the Adoption West Regional Adoption Agency, and that the Children's Champion Group and the Children and Young People Services Policy and Scrutiny Panel continue to be kept updated.

**CAY  
22**      **Report of the Assistant Executive Member (Agenda Item 10)**

The Chairman agreed to the change in agenda order.

The Assistant Executive Member for Looked After Children gave an oral update.

Members were updated on current work which included the implementation of Social Impact Bonds and the Fostering Strategy. Members were reminded of the impending OFSTED inspection, and also requested greater information regarding accommodation for care leavers.

The Panel Chairman and Assistant Executive Member would continue to work together to ensure that there was no duplication of work.

Members thanked the Assistant Executive Member for the update.

**Conclusion:** that the Panel receive further information on Care Leavers' Accommodation.

**CAY 23 Performance and Financial Monitoring (Agenda Item 9)**

The Assistant Director, Support and Safeguarding presented the report. Members were assured that whilst it was not going to be an easy financial year, it should be an improvement on previous years due to the investment in Social Impact Bonds.

In discussing Mead Vale Primary School's OFSTED result, Members were reminded that "Requires Improvement" had a full title of "Requires Improvement to be Good" and was equivalent to the previous rating of "Satisfactory". Members were invited to review the OFSTED results for each of the schools on line and bring questions forward then.

The Panel thanked the Assistant Director for the report.

**Concluded:** that the Panel noted the financial and performance information presented in the report.

**CAY 24 The Panel's Work Plan (Agenda Item 11)**

The Scrutiny Specialist Practitioner presented the Work Plan. The Home to School Transport Working Group was meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> March to finalise recommendations regarding the revised policy, in advance of the Executive Member decision scheduled to be taken in April.

Members had met on 7<sup>th</sup> March to consider North Somerset Council's response to the schools national Funding Formula, which have now been submitted to the Department for Education.

Members agreed to refresh the Child Sexual Exploitation Working Group, to review the Council's current policies and procedures in line with national guidance and legislation. Councillors David Oyns and Martin Williams agreed to be included within the membership of this group along with the Chairman and Councillors Bob Garner and Donald Davies.

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

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Chairman

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