

DRAFT Minutes

of the Meeting of the

Children & Young People Services Policy & Scrutiny Panel

Thursday, 20th June 2019

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

Meeting Commenced: 10.00 am Meeting Concluded: 12:30 pm

Councillors:

P Wendy Griggs (Chairman)
P Steve Hogg (Vice Chairman)

P Marc Aplin
P Ciarán Cronnelly
P Hugh Gregor
P Nicola Holland
P Huw James
P Lisa Pilgrim
P Tim Snaden

P Caroline Cherry
P Mark Crosby
P Ann Harley
A Ruth Jacobs
P Stuart McQuillan
A Geoff Richardson
P Richard Westwood

P: Present

A: Apologies for absence submitted

Other Councillors in attendance: Catherine Gibbons, David Shopland.

Officers in attendance: Philippa Penney, Katherine Sokol, Nick Brain, Michèle Chesterman (Corporate Services), Eifion Price, Sheila Smith, Mark Hughes, Christian Sweeney (People and Communities).

CAY Election of the Vice-Chairman for the 2019/20 Municipal Year (Agenda Item 1)

Motion: Moved by Councillor Cronnelly, seconded by Councillor Cherry and

Resolved: that Councillor Steve Hogg be elected Vice Chairman of the Children & Young People Services Policy & Scrutiny Panel for the 2019/20 Municipal Year.

CAY Public Discussion (Standing Order SSO 9) (Agenda Item 3)

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Jakobus Vanblerk addressed the Panel on behalf of the residents of Brookfield Walk, Clevedon in relation to the removal of the greenbelt and habitat at Baytree, Cleveon. He had received a letter stating that it was the intention of North Somerset Council to change the function of the field. The green space was an integral part of the community used by dog walkers and the community as a whole. There was anger and anxiety over the digging that had taken place on the land over the course of the last year. The community fully supported the Council with its aims of supporting special needs but did not agree with building a school next to the M5 with issues such as increased traffic and pollution. He concluded by requesting that a copy of the environmental impact study be made public.

The Chairman thanked Mr Vanblerk for his address and noted his comments.

CAY Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (Standing Order 37)
3 (Agenda Item 4)

None.

CAY Minutes of the Meeting held on 24 January 2019 (Agenda Item 5.1)
4

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

****Change to agenda order****

CAY Baytree Special School Expansion (Agenda Item 10)
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The Chairman agreed a change to agenda order, to consider item 10 next.

The Service Leader, Strategic Planning and Governance presented a report on the expansion, including a 2nd site for Baytree Special School. If approved, the school would expand from a 72- place provision to a 120 – place school located across the existing and a new site with effect from 1 September 2021.

Members were informed that there was a projected increase in demand for special school places for pupils with Severe and Profound Learning Difficulties due to demographic growth and an increase in the numbers of pupils with these learning characteristics. The current buildings were too small to accommodate the increase in demand for specialist places. Many of the younger pupils required ceiling hoists and considerable specialist equipment to support their learning. This was not possible at Baytree currently due to the design of the site.

A discussion took place in connection with the selection and suitability of a 2nd site for Baytree School. Members discussed issues including proximity to the motorway, the need for clear consultation with the local community and the importance of involving all those affected by the expansion of Baytree.

However, Members were reminded that the report was concerning a recommendation to be submitted to the Executive Member asking for permission to start statutory consultation with the public in relation to the school expansion and not in relation to the location of any specific site. The Service Leader, Strategic Planning and Governance, explained that the Council had a responsibility to implement plans to address the needs of the rising numbers of children with special needs.

Officers outlined the factors to be considered when choosing a 2nd site for Baytree as the current site was not expandable. These included easy access for families to avoid long journeys for children with complex needs; teaching staff having to manage their time across the two sites and the site needing to be a certain size.

Members agreed that it was the duty of the Council to look after the children of North Somerset to get proper SEN provision. There was a request to review all alternative sites identified as being considered for suitability.

Concluded: that the Panel

- (1) supported a recommendation to be submitted to the Executive Member for Children & Young People's Services to approve the commencement of the statutory process and the publication, if appropriate, of a Statutory Notice by the Council to expand the provision at Baytree Special School.
- (2) requested a review of previously considered alternative sites is undertaken and considered by the Executive Member responsible for securing a site for the new school.

CAY 6 Annual Directorate Statement and Panel Work Plan (Agenda Item 7)

The Assistant Director, Children's Support and Safeguarding, presented the Annual Directorate Statement (ADS) which contained a summary of priorities for the coming year. The ADS had been tabled in conjunction with the Panel Work Plan to highlight any future issues/commitments for members.

Members were requested to consider the content of the report; decide which, if any, of the People and Communities Directorate's commitments for children's services, should be the subject of further detailed reports/presentations at future meetings or task and finish groups and consider and agree the Panel's Work Plan.

Each year the directorates within North Somerset produced an Annual Directorate Statement. This in effect translated the commitments in the North Somerset Corporate Plan into a series of Directorate level commitments. In determining the future workplan of this committee Members may wish to decide which particular commitment/s should form the basis of future performance reporting to the Committee.

Members asked for clarification on the Social Care Transformation Programme. There were a number of projects in this programme including improving retention of key staff, reducing the spend on temporary agency staff, improving the recruitment of foster carers, IT solutions for mobile working staff, reducing numbers of children in residential care provision and a number of work schemes.

The Electoral Services and Scrutiny Manager explained that the work plan was a live document to be amended and updated by members, as necessary including membership of the steering and task and finish groups.

The Council appointed Policy and Scrutiny Panels to discharge the functions conferred by section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 or regulations under section 32 of the Local Government Act 2000 and in relation to CYPs the remit covered schools, central education support, early years, youth service, children's services and finance. There were various mechanisms to allow the Panel to conduct scrutiny activities such as steering groups such as the School Organisation Steering Group, task and finish and formal Panel Meetings.

The Director, People and Communities, informed members that the recruitment of in house foster carers had been historically difficult for councils including North Somerset. She suggested that the figures could be included in the performance monitoring reports and members could decide whether or not to include on the work plan.

A discussion took place on topics to be included in the work plan including child sexual exploitation (steering group); special educational needs (SEN). It was suggested it would be useful for the Panel to have further information on the intersection of looked after children in residential care, child sexual exploitation and high impact families.

Concluded: that the Panel:

- (1) noted the content of the report and decided which of the People and Communities Directorate's commitments for children's services, should be the subject of further detailed reports/presentations at future meetings or task and finish groups and
- (2) discussed and updated the Work Plan accordingly.
- (3) be provided with a report from the Director, People and Communities on looked after children in residential care, child sexual exploitation and high impact families.

CAY 7 New Safeguarding Children Partnership Arrangements (Agenda Item 8)

The Director, People and Communities, presented her report on New Safeguarding Children Partnership Arrangements.

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 abolished Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCB) from September 2019 and replaced them with the requirement for strategic leadership of and accountability for safeguarding children to be provided by the Police, the Clinical Commissioning Group

(CCG) and the local authority as partners. The paper set out the detail of this requirement and the local response.

Members were made aware that:

- The three safeguarding partners (police, clinical commissioning group (CCG) and the local authority) needed to agree arrangements by the end of June 2019;
- The arrangements must be published, and notification sent to the Secretary of State;
- Within three months of publishing arrangements, the three safeguarding partners must implement the arrangements;
- There would be a 12 month period for LSCBs after new arrangements were in place to complete and publish any outstanding Serious Case Reviews (non in North Somerset);
- Once the arrangements had been published and implemented, the LCSB would no longer exist.

All agencies had agreed to set up the Avon and Somerset Strategic Safeguarding Partnership (ASSSP) and this had been in place for some months. The terms of reference of the ASSSP were contained in Appendix 1 of the report.

Members were assured that all partners were committed to ensuring that there was more than adequate scrutiny in place with the new partnership arrangements, establishing a pool across authorities, carrying out their own scrutiny and sharing the auditing of other authorities. CYPs would receive the Annual Report and updates.

Concluded: that the Panel

(1) endorsed the proposed new arrangements and

(2) recommended acceptance of them by the Executive.

CAY 8 Education Commissioning Strategy – Review of Actions from the 2018 - 21 Strategy (Agenda Item 9)

The Service Leader, Strategic Planning and Governance informed Members that The Education Provision in North Somerset – A Commissioning Strategy was the Council's Education Delivery Plan setting out how the Council worked with existing and new partners to commission and deliver the right numbers of school and pre-school places in the right locations to meet Basic Need. The report reviewed and provided a summary update of the school-place with actions recommended in the latest plan 2018-21 (Appendix 1).

The latest Education Provision in North Somerset – A Commissioning Strategy 2018 – 2021 was approved by the Executive on 4 September 2018. The School Organisation Steering Group had met and discussed the document at its meeting on 12 June 2019. It was felt important the document was tabled at the Panel meeting in the public domain.

Concluded: that the Panel:

- (1) noted the report on the progress made to-date in delivering the projects listed in the Education Provision in North Somerset – A Commissioning Strategy 2018-2021.

CAY 9 Month 12 Children’s Services Budget Monitor (Agenda Item 11)

The Finance Business Partner presented her report outlining the spend against budget for children’s services. The report summarised the 2018/19 spend against budget highlighting key variances, movements and contextual information, along with reference to the principles and processes for setting the 2019/20 budget and the associated risks. Panel members noted efforts being undertaken to mitigate against further budgetary overspend and sought re-assurances that there was sufficient flexibility and capacity to deliver given existing service pressures.

Members noted that the financial year end report for the year had just finished with a £1.8m overspend. This was an improvement on last year’s £3m overspend.

Members asked for clarification on staffing changes and savings, what had been lost in terms of resourcing and the impact of pressures from government.

Concluded: that the 2018/19 spend against budget for children’s services be received.

CAY 10 Performance Monitoring (Agenda Item 12)

The Assistant Director, Children’s Support and Safeguarding presented the report. In addition to the standard items, the report included an overview of trends in the numbers of families receiving Early Help, Children in Need, children on a Child Protection Plan and Children Looked After (CLA), including demographic data.

Six inspections related to North Somerset services and/or North Somerset schools were carried out since the last report to the Panel and published on the Ofsted website. It was noted that North Somerset schools’ Ofsted ratings were above the national average. All were rated ‘good’ other than Dundry which was rated ‘requires improvement’.

Members were informed that the audit process within Support and Safeguarding involved grading cases sampled with gradings ranging from ‘Outstanding’ to ‘Inadequate’ similar to Ofsted. For 2018/19, 53% of cases audited were graded as ‘Outstanding’ or ‘Good’, similar to 2017/18 (55%).

Members asked if there was any employment engagement data available to assess the wellbeing of those employed in schools. Officers responded that for Council employees there was valuable employee engagement data contained in the annual staff survey which was broken down by directorate

and reported to Members in the autumn. However, the Council did not have access to such data for the non-Council run Academies comprising the majority of educational establishments in North Somerset.

Concluded: that the Panel received the financial and performance information presented in this report and gave comment on both areas for improvement and areas of good performance.

Chairman
