

Minutes of a meeting of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Wednesday, 17 January 2018 in Committee Room 1 - City Hall, Bradford

Commenced 4.30 pm
Concluded 7.25 pm

Present – Councillors

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT AND INDEPENDENT
M Pollard D Smith	Peart Tait	Ward

VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBERS:

Joyce Simpson

Church Representative (CE)

NON VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBERS

Kerr Kennedy
Tom Bright

Voluntary Sector Representative
Teachers Secondary School Representative

Observers: Councillor V Slater health & Wellbeing Portfolio Holder

Apologies: Councillors Engel, Shaheen and Sajawal, Sidiq Ali and Irene Docherty

Councillor D Smith in the Chair

40. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

No disclosures of interest in matters under consideration were received.

41. MINUTES

Resolved –

**That the minutes of the meetings held on 22 November and
13 December 2017 be signed as a correct record.**

42. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

There were no appeals submitted by the public to review decisions to restrict documents.

43. SCHOOLS FORUM UPDATE

Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee had asked for regular updates on the work of Bradford's Schools Forum.

The last update was presented to the Committee on 22 November 2017. The Schools Forum had met twice since on 6 December 2017 and 10 January 2018. The decision lists from these meetings were attached at Appendices 1 and 2 to the report of the Director of Children's Services (**Document "V"**). Due to the timing for publication of this report Appendix 2 was circulated to Members following its initial publication and further key messages on it were reported verbally directly to the meeting.

The Schools Forum had made its recommendations on the allocation of the 2018/19 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) on 10 January. These recommendations would be presented to the Executive and then to full Council for final decisions on 22 February 2018.

Members were advised that in the next three years schools would still need to take corrective action to balance budgets. Reference was made to the two consultations which were underway on Early Help and the SEND review. A deficit was being forecast in the High Needs Block in 2018-19 and mitigation activities were being undertaken to reduce this however risks would also have to be managed.

In response to a member question it was noted that the membership of the School's Forum was reviewed annually. The next review would be in September 2018.

A member asked about the implications of the cessation of the High Needs Block's direct funding of the Top Up for pupils in the District PRU. In response it was stressed that the double funding of children with no Education, Health and Care (EMC) plan in placements could no longer be afforded by the High Needs Block and further discussion was required with the District PRU.

It was noted that channels of communication with primary and secondary head teachers and business managers were being used to convey information. However caution had to be exercised until any decision was taken at Council on 22 February and it was noted that there was a likelihood that the pay award would be more than 1% and there would be a significant increase in employers contributions to teacher's costs.

Resolved -



That the information provided in Document “V” be received and noted.

ACTION: Strategic Director of Children’s Services

44. CHILDREN’S SERVICES BUDGET PROPOSALS

The report of the Director of Children’s Services (**Document “X”**) provided information on the Children’s Services budget proposals for 2018-19 and 2019-20.

The Strategic Director put the budget proposals into the context of the reduction by 50% of the Council’s budget from 2010 to 2020. He noted that standards and value for money continued to improve with Bradford having the lowest cost base in Yorkshire and Humber on spending per capita and that there were fewer children in care. He referred to the additional investment into Bradford which would be used to mitigate austerity. He noted that despite a significant increase in demand for Children’s and Adult services in the last 12 months Bradford was still in a better position than Leeds, Liverpool and Manchester. He added that despite lobbying that as a Council Bradford needed £5m investment in Social Care nothing had been forthcoming from the Government.

The following questions were asked and answers given:

Q Are the proposals based on the potential 1% Council Tax increase which had recently been announced ?

A The proposals were written before the announcement.

Q What would be the service impact of the proposals ?

A There are impacts on service users, the community and staff

Q How much funding will be coming in ?

A The Council was to allocate £2.8m to manage increased demand. The £3.4m Innovation finance was a major boost for Bradford. Officers would report to a future meeting on the Opportunity Investment Fund. European Structural and Investment fund (ESIF) Local Flexibilities funding was being used to get people into employment. Reductions in Early Help were being faced and if more money became available this would be put into providing front line staff.

Q What action has been undertaken as a result of the review of front door customer contact for Children’s Social Care Services ?

A Some front line activity had been transferred from Children’s to Corporate Services and 93% of calls were answered first time. Better screening of calls had resulted in a saving of 1 social worker. This had been in place since the summer and had been well received.

Q Are any assumptions made in the budget proposals about the number



- of looked after children ?
- A Although predictions were difficult it was known that the numbers had grown which were as a result of children living in poverty, the growing population of Bradford and unaccompanied asylum seeking children.
- Q How do we mitigate against the increase in looked after children ?
- A By meeting their needs in Bradford and keeping them with foster carers in Bradford where possible. The number of foster carers had increased by 53 in a year and the number of looked after children in external placement had reduced which had resulted in a saving of £300,000 in 3 months. The Innovation fund and the B positive pathways concentrated on adolescents on the edge of care to keep them in their own homes and out of care.
- Q What are the implications for schools ?
- A Schools are at the forefront of safeguarding and early intervention. Work was being undertaken with schools on targeting early help. 5 Panels had been set up in which professionals in a locality discuss children and families of concern and offer intervention and early help from Council staff and voluntary agencies. This process will continue under Early Help.

Resolved –

- (1) That the financial constraints faced by the Council be recognised and the additional funding secured for specific initiatives be welcomed.**
- (2) That staff be thanked for their work to improve outcomes for individuals in the last 12 months.**

ACTION: Strategic Director of Children's Services

45. PREVENTION AND EARLY HELP - A PROPOSED NEW MODEL TO SUPPORT FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES FOR THE FUTURE, INCLUDING PROPOSED CHANGES TO HOW WE PROVIDE THE CHILDREN'S CENTRE CORE OFFER ACROSS THE DISTRICT

The report of the Director of Children's Services (**Document "Y"**) highlighted the progress the Council and partners had made in bringing together existing arrangements for early help and early years services.

The Council was facing unprecedented pressure on its budgets whilst the demand and costs for services were rising. Government cuts meant that the resources the Council would have to spend on Prevention and Early Help would reduce by £13.3m or more than one third, from £37.1m in 2016/17 to £23.8m in 2020. These cuts were in addition to the ones the Council had already had to make. It meant that from 2010 to 2020, the overall funding the Council had available would have halved whilst demand and costs were increasing.

The Council would only ensure babies, children and young people had a great



start and better life chances if the Council drew on the energy, experience and effort of the whole system, particularly the strengths and assets within families themselves and local communities.

The report outlined the need for proposed changes to how services were delivered in order to ensure that resources were targeted at a time of increasing demand to avoid a detrimental impact on outcomes to children. Services could not continue to be delivered in the way they were now with this level of government cuts. The focus would be on a proposed partnership approach which was more targeted to improve outcomes and reduce inequalities for children and young people across the District.

On the 7 November 2017, Executive approved a period of consultation on a proposed new Prevention and Early Help delivery model. The Committee was asked to consider and comment on the report as part of formal consultation.

Committee members made the following comments and posed questions:

- Parents were attending the wrong consultation events. Officers endeavoured to look again at the communications to make the difficult events clearer however they acknowledged that there may be an overlap.
- A member had experience a number of “invest to save” schemes in which there was an injection of funding and resultant savings. He questioned whether a disinvestment scheme would work.
- The report says that none of the Children’s Centres will close yet, what does this mean?
- Implementation is already 18 months behind the date in the KPMG report.
- Do not understand how Children’s Centres will be “aligned” with the hubs.
- Work should be done to increase engagement in Children’s Centres not reduce them.
- The same level of activity that was presently provided across the district would not continue to be delivered. Who will be affected and when?
- In which buildings would the hubs be?
- There has been a lot of investment in Margaret McMillan Tower but it had been said that there were not many people working in it.
- Is the model based on North Yorkshire because Bradford is very different.
- How can people comment on the proposals when they don’t know where the jobs will be?
- How will transient families be affected by the hubs?
- Provision is already decentralised, so what is new?
- We already have “Families First”
- There are a lot of unanswered questions for the people affected.

The Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder commented that at present the Council worked in silos which did not reflect the needs of families. She noted that families worked with other agencies such as police and health authorities. It had become clear during the consultation that families were working with a number of different professionals and attending appointments on different days at different locations. There was a desire to bring services together and work with families rather than



individuals. She had visited Barnsley and North East Lincs. that received Innovation finance to move towards this model. They were now in the third year and had been able to attract additional finance and although there had been an initial reduction the level of funding it had now returned to the same level as before.

She referred to the proposed services commencement date of October 2018 and noted that the commissioned contract for School Nurses and Health Visitors, which was delivered by the Health Service, had been rolled forward but could not be rolled forward indefinitely. The specification would be sent out in February - March 2018 and tenders would be received for the new service to commence in October 2018. There was a desire to build into the tender, a concentration on front line services and reduced central costing.

The Strategic Director of Children's Services reported that the Council had drawn from the experience of other authorities and noted the challenge that locality working and joining up services from 0 to 25 posed. He added that partner organisations such as the police had asked how their knowledge of families could be used to support the proposals and he referred to the broader research from Born in Bradford study.

It was noted that structures and draft job profiles were being consulted on. It was confirmed that there were no proposals to close individual buildings but the Council would be providing a reduced offer. Consideration would have to be given to how to make the best use of buildings.

The Strategic Director referred to the summary of the KPMG report, Transforming Early Years and Early Help Opportunities 2020. KPMG had looked at how the Council compared with the cost of placements and could this be improved. Comparative data from similar authorities was used. It showed that the Council was doing things well but there were some things that needed to be done differently. Members requested that the summary of the KPMG report be circulated to members of the Committee. The Strategic Director advised that he would seek permission from KPMG to do this.

The Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder referred to the Bradford District Partnership Peopletoo report in which a number of recommendations were made such as the need to stop working in silos and for public authorities to work together.

The following comments and questions were asked and answers given:

- Q How do you build a job specification to cover working with a wide age range.
A Work was being undertaken to produce a 0 – 19 passport. Staff would have specialisms. Individual plans would include training and mentoring.
- Q Services would commence in October 2018, is there enough time for training?
A A team would be formed with people with different skill sets which would



be developed over time with training and mentoring. The Under 5's and the Adolescent Support Team had already been brought together and it worked well.

- Q How were the cost savings arrived at ? A the potential staff reductions applied to all teams not just Children's Centres
- Q why are we cutting staff not Children's Centres?
All Children's Centre buildings would continue to be looked at. When challenged about why people were being released rather than buildings it was noted that there was no quick release of revenue from closing buildings. Buildings would be kept until there was a positive community use for them.
- The services provided for young people had not been looked at holistically and there was no impact assessment on the effect on young people.

The Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder confirmed that there were no proposals to reduce the number of youth workers. She added that there would be four locality teams and one central team and that gypsies and travellers would remain with the central team.

The Chair of Governors of Midland Road Nursery School attended the meeting to represent Lister Park, Bradford West and Strong Close Nursery Schools that all ran Children's Centre clusters and made the following comments:

- KPMG made recommendations regarding health outcomes and a targeted health offer and referred to concern regarding the engagement of children and families in the areas of highest need.
- Peopletoo referred to the need for community based hubs and acknowledged the role of Children's Centres.
- Children's Centres and Nursery Schools could not understand why they had not been more involved in the engagement that took place the previous year given their wealth of experience. They were concerned that they had not been invited to contribute.
- An integrated service should provide high quality early education, paid for child care, family support, play opportunities, and home and family learning.
- In the clusters workers identified which families were in the most need and where help could be offered. Issues such as domestic violence and mental health problems were identified.
- Are children going to be kept safe?
- Children's Centres are located in communities and are accessible. The workers who were left should be linked to Children's Centres to build trusting relationships with families.
- In the Bradford West locality there are 40 Front line staff in 2 children's Centres that operate 200 family support plans. There is a proposed reduction of 15 front line staff and working with 0-19 age range will not be feasible.
- She was concerned about the responsibility that front line staff were expected to take on.
- There would be a 54% cut in staffing. She thought that it would be



highest in Children's Centres.

- Family support workers already work with the 0-19 age range so Children's Centre staff would be more effected by the proposals.
- Schools do not seem to feature strongly in the model. How are they going to be supported and involved in the model?
- Evidence based work is undertaken in Children's Centres so this was not new.

A representative of UNITE attended the meeting and raised the following:

- He referred to the Trade Union consultation and noted that he had not been included in meetings or forwarded information. UNITE had not been consulted.
- The staffing implications were that there would be a 65% cut in full time staff. 2,735 families were involved with the service.
- Frequently asked questions from staff show that staff are worried and the answers from management are woeful.
- During the consultation on Children's Centres protests were held.
- Morale of staff is at an all time low
- How can staff fully contribute without full information?
- The flow chart for the consultation process is difficult to understand.
- As an employee in Children's Services I have not been part of this process.
- Is there any long term accountability and who will take responsibility for the model when it goes wrong?
- There are huge concerns about the generic job descriptions and how staff will work effectively with families.

The Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder confirmed that the Executive members would be accountable for the proposals. They would be considered at full Council and officers would provide advice. She added that none of the members wanted to cut this number of staff. A plea had been made to Government regarding funding for Children's Services and Adult Social Care. Due to these cuts it would not be possible to continue to provide universal services as at present. There would be some universal services but families in need would have to be targeted. In designing new ways of working you start with what outcomes you want to achieve.

The Deputy Director Social Care thanked the Chair of Governors of Midland Road Nursery School for her helpful and considered comments and stressed that they wanted everyone to have their say. He added that there would be £13.3m less in the budget than the current year. He believed that appropriate risk mitigation had been put in place however accepted that with the level or reduction in the funding the service would not have the same reach and there would be less people to work with families. Meetings were taking place with Unions every two weeks and every Union was asked to send a representative. The service was currently working with 2,300 families and there would be less people to work with them. The generic job description was the right approach which would identify people who could develop relationships with children and families. Consultation



submissions received would be brought together by Peopletoo on behalf of the Council to demonstrate the independence of the process.

Members of the Committee made comments and asked questions as follows:

- What will be the outcome of the proposals?
- He would like more information.
- There would be less provision in certain areas. Officers should be open about the significant reduction in service.
- The proposals were being put forward as being better
- Initiatives had already been introduced that reduced working in silos
- There should be openness about the fact that targeting would be required and that there would be consequences.
- Would IT systems be in place to facilitate information gathering and dissemination to key workers?
- What plans are there to review and monitor whether high quality and sufficient support to children under five and their families was being delivered over time.
- If the service continued as at present then less would be done for children in Bradford. By being innovative this was mitigating the reduction in services. Maximising the impact with a reduced budget was the right thing to do.
- The Committee and the Unions needed more information.

The Health and Wellbeing Portfolio holder confirmed that as the consultation developed a report could be presented to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee before it went back to the Executive.

- (1) That it be noted formal consultation is underway from 15 November 2017 until 12 February 2018 with all interested parties as outlined in Appendix 12. This has included reports to Area Committees**
- (2) That the concerns raised at the meeting and the portfolio holder and officer responses be noted.**
- (3) That it be noted that Executive will receive a further report in April 2018 following formal consultation.**
- (4) That it be requested that the summary of the KPMG report (Transforming Early Years and Early Help Opportunities 2020) be circulated to members of the Committee.**

ACTION: Strategic Director Children's Services



46. **RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF TEACHERS IN THE BRADFORD DISTRICT**

The shortage of teachers was a continuing challenge for the education sector in England, particularly in certain subjects and regions. Bradford had no more nor less an issue than the national picture. However, Bradford had been the first local authority to commission a designated post to address these concerns at a district level. This model was now being replicated in other authorities due the publicly acknowledged success of the Bradford campaign to date.

The report of the Director of Children's Services (**Document "W"**) advised members how the Recruitment & Retention Strategy Manager was addressing the key issues, progress to date and next steps as the project came to an end in August 18.

The following were raised:

- It is not just workload but teacher's control of the workload that was important.
- Q How committed were head teachers of schools that were within academy chains that were not Bradford based.
A They worked with all head teachers.
- The work being undertaken was innovative and valuable to the authority, it should continue and resources should be found to allow it to.
- Reference was made to the need to provide support to long serving teachers to allow them a period to refresh and go on performing at their peak. It was noted that this was part of the programme.

Resolved –

- (1) **That the Council be congratulated on the vision and implementation of the recruitment and retention of teachers programme.**
- (2) **That the continuation of the project be recommended to the Executive and the opportunity for it to become a traded service be investigated.**

ACTION: Strategic Director of Children's Services



47. CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2017-18

Resolved –

That the Work Programme continues to be regularly reviewed during the year.

ACTION: Overview & Scrutiny Lead

Chair

Note: These minutes are subject to approval as a correct record at the next meeting of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

THESE MINUTES HAVE BEEN PRODUCED, WHEREVER POSSIBLE, ON RECYCLED PAPER

