

Minutes of a meeting of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday, 27 February 2018 in Committee Room 1 - City Hall, Bradford

Commenced 4.35 pm
Concluded 6.50 pm

Present – Councillors

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

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 Val Slater

Apologies: Councillor Beverley Mullaney, Councillor Angela Tait, Sidiq Ali, Irene Docherty
and Claire Parr

Councillor D Smith in the Chair

55. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

No disclosures of interest in matters under consideration were received.

56. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

57. REFERRALS TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

No Referrals had been received.

58. YOUTH VOICE

Representatives of young people who attend programmes run by the Youth Service gave Members a verbal presentation on how they felt “Youth Voice” and their engagement with the democratic process could be increased.

A number of young people attended the meeting and spoke about how the Committee at a previous meeting proposed that work should be undertaken to look at how the views and concerns of young people in Bradford around agenda items could be considered.

It was reported that since then, a consultation meeting was held with young people on how the voice of young people of Bradford could be represented at the Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings.

It was decided that social media would be an effective tool for young people to voice their concerns/comments; young people felt that Instagram would work well as it was the most current social media site which most young people had accounts on; a public account could be set up on Instagram which would include inspirational quotes and official statistics that encouraged debate, synopsis of agenda items, success stories etc.

Members were informed that the Committee would be able to receive the comments about agenda items on the youth voice Instagram account; officers who wrote reports to be discussed at Committee could provide a short synopsis of their report which highlighted the main points raised in the report; as well as this framework young people would continue to attend Committee and partake in discussions.

The Health and Wellbeing Portfolio suggested that report authors could provide a synopsis of their reports at the Chair’s Agenda briefing

The Chair stressed that due to safeguarding concerns the Instagram account needed to be set up as a private account with strict monitoring so that only young people use the account rather than anyone.

A Member suggested receiving comments from young people through secondary schools.

Resolved-

- (1) That the Committee support that a pilot of the Youth Voice Instagram framework be run, on the proviso that the account is set up as “Private” with strict monitoring.**



- (2) That the Committee requests that as part of the pilot scheme, report authors provide a synopsis of their report for use on the Youth Voice Instagram account.
- (3) That representatives of “Youth Voice” attend the relevant meeting to present the comments from the Instagram account.

Action: Commissioner (Youth Provision)/Overview and Scrutiny Lead

59. B POSITIVE PATHWAYS

In January 2017 Bradford was awarded £3.2 million over 2 years from the Department for Education Innovation Fund. There were 3 elements to the award:

- 1) Reducing the number of children in care through stronger edge of care work.
- 2) Improving the ability to provide high levels of care within residential homes through embedding a therapeutic “PACE” approach.
- 3) Setting up two “mockingbird” hubs to improve support to foster carers working with children with more complex needs.

After consultation with the Children in Care Council, the programme was named B Positive Pathways. The Strategic Director Children’s Services submit **Document “AE”** which provided a progress report on the programme.

It was reported that B Positive Pathways Programme (BPP) was an innovation funded project that scaled the successful North Yorkshire ‘No Wrong Door’ innovation project to Bradford; No Wrong Door was a different approach to working with adolescents to prevent them entering the care system and to improve their long term outcomes; the model centred on a hub home with wrap around multi agency professionals working together; No Wrong Door had won several awards and had made a significant saving to the public purse in the approach that had been taken; a number of Local Authorities were looking to replicate this approach.

Members were informed that the B Positive Pathway Hub Home and Specialist Children’s Home Service was based out of one of the Local Authority Children’s home, The Willows. In addition to the Willows, the Service had identified three specialist homes in Bradford which were Newholme, Meadowlea and Hollybank Road. These homes would have a greater level of staffing, had a reduced number of residents and would call on the specialist roles within the BPP hub. These homes had already contributed to the authority’s aim to return children from external homes to live in this provision and create resilient long term placements. It was predominately adolescents that were placed in external residential accommodation. Despite Bradford mirroring the national picture of a rising overall care population, external residential placements had fallen by 8% which was a cash saving to the local authority of £378,000.



Members were informed about the Mockingbird Fostering Model which used the concept of a hub carer being at the centre of a constellation of foster families. The hub carer became the 'grandparent' figure and provided regular sleep overs to the young people in the constellation and arranged a regular get together of the whole constellation. The hub carer was supported by a liaison worker. A constellation was made up of between 6 – 8 foster families.

Members commented on the following issues:

- The programme was a good example of invest to save.
- What happened to the programme after two years? was the programme sustainable?
- In relation to paragraph 3.3 of the report what were the weaknesses that triggered a situation escalating to full time care?
- What if children preferred to remain with their grandparents?
- Could the capacity be increased so that external placements could be brought back locally?
- The programme needed to be monitored to ensure its effectiveness.

In response to the comments raised by Members it was reported that:

- BPP was fully funded in the first two years and by year three the Service would be aiming to show the significant savings that had been made to ensure that the programme was supported financially for years three and four; there would be a full academic review of the programme (including a cost benefit analysis) to show impact with research partners led by the University of Oxford Rees Centre.
- Previously it took time to see a family (waiting for a referral and putting a package of support in place) which had escalated the child going into full time care; outreach workers would now support young people and families in their own homes responding at the time of crisis and to call on the wrap around support to enable families to work through the issues without statutory intervention; rapid response was key.
- Children would not remain with the grandparent figure (hub carer) in the mockingbird model, it was a brief intervention tool only and the child would return to foster carers after the intended sleepover.
- The overarching aim was to get as many children as possible back to Bradford but in some cases it was in the interest of the child to remain outside of the local area.

In response to a Member's question it was reported that as a result of an external review of the residential provision in 2015, the authority developed a model for Looked After Children in Bradford. The aim for the basis of this model PACE was to work with children who had suffered early trauma and attachment in all placements.



Resolved-

That the Committee welcomes the report and looks forward to receiving an update on the B Positive Pathways programme with details of the cost savings realised.

Action: Strategic Director, Children's Services

60. BRADFORD OPPORTUNITY AREA

Bradford was one of the Education Secretary's 12 Opportunity Areas (OAs) - these were social mobility 'coldspots' each receiving a share of £72 million to improve opportunities for young people in this community.

Bradford's share of the investment was £6m and would total £11.5m. This would include £5.5m for the Essential Life Skills funding over two years to enable children and young people aged 5 -18 years old to participate in regular extra-curricular activities. Children and young people would be able to participate in extra-curricular activities such as sports, volunteering and social action projects.

The Strategic Director Children's Services submitted **Document "AF"** which provided information on the Bradford Opportunity Area Delivery Plan which had been developed in partnership with the Local Authority, local schools, employers, and the voluntary and health sector. Young people had been consulted and would be engaged in the delivery of this programme.

Members commented on the following issues:

- The deadline for applications for schools and colleges to apply for Essential Life Skills funding of 9 March was not long enough; a number of schools were not aware of the deadline or that the funding was available.
- How many applications had been received for the Essential Life Skills programme and was there a problem in communication with schools? needed to ensure communication with schools was appropriate; needed to do a press release informing schools on what was available and what they needed to do to apply for funding; had officers looked at informing the Governors service to communicate with school governors on the scheme?
- How would the programme help with the impact on funding cuts relating to Early Help and Prevention?
- What was the alternative provision for children who had been excluded?
- Where the Opportunity Area Partnership Board meetings held in public?
- Would like to see information on which schools had applied for the funding and what schemes they were running.



In response to the comments raised by Members it was reported that:

- The information about the grant allocation and what was expected from the application was posted on schools online.
- The Director of Children's Services was on the Bradford Opportunity Area Partnership Board which looked at the investments that would need to be made based upon priorities and activities outlined in the Opportunity Area Plan; improving education was a priority.
- An online activity guide was available to organisations which listed the activities that could be supported; the deadline for applications was extended twice; 84 providers had come forward in providing various activities; needed to obtain feedback from schools on whether the activity guide was useful.

The Chair requested that an email be sent to the Committee on the number of schools that had applied for Essential Life Skills funding.

Resolved-

That the Committee welcomes this exciting initiative and requests an update report in 6 months and members of the Opportunity Area Partnership Board be invited to that meeting along with Damon Boxer, the Delivery Lead for the Bradford Opportunity Area.

Action: Strategic Director, Children's Services

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

The report of the Chair of the Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee (**Document "AG"**) presented the Committee's Work Programme 2017-18

A Member suggested that the Committee looks into illegal independent schools.

Resolved-

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

Action: Overview and 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.



