

BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL
CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting held on 24 February 2021 at 6.00 pm

Present:-

Cllr R Burton – Chairman
Cllr L Lewis – Vice-Chairman

Present: Cllr E Coope, Cllr B Dunlop, Cllr N C Geary, Cllr J Kelly, Cllr S Moore,
Cllr L Northover, Cllr S Phillips, Cllr Dr F Rice, Cllr R Rocca

Co-Opted Members: Mr P Martin, Parent Governor Representative
Mr S Welch, Academy Parent Governor Representative
Mr M Saxby, Diocesan Representative
N Collins and G Grogan, Members of the Youth Parliament

132. Apologies

There were no apologies for absence.

133. Substitute Members

There were no substitutes.

134. Declarations of Interests

Councillor Moore declared an interest in Agenda Item 6 Children and Young People's Partnership Plan 2021-24 as a Trustee of Canford Heath Infant and Middle School Teacher Trust, due to the input pupils of the Trust had had.

135. Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 26 January 2021, having been previously circulated, be signed by the Chair and confirmed as a correct record.

136. Action Sheet

There were no comments on the Action Sheet.

137. Public Issues

There were no public issues received.

138. Children and Young People's Partnership Plan 2021 - 2024

The Independent Chair of the Children and Young People's Partnership Board (C&YPPB) presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'A' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The draft BCP Children and Young People's Plan had been developed by the BCP C&YPPB, the successor body to the previous Learning Partnership Board. The difference was to focus on all issues for children, not just education and to a lesser extent, children's social care.

Having a plan in place was a requirement placed on BCP by the Local Government Reorganisation process so in that sense it is a plan required by Government of us.

The draft Plan sets out the proposed strategic priorities for partnership action to improve outcomes for BCP's children and young people and to help them achieve their potential. It was consistent with existing BCP policy about improving child outcomes

Central to this was that the Council played its part in the Partnership to help BCP's children and young people to be "fulfilled, happy, included, and resilient".

A copy of the draft plan could be found at Appendix 1 to the report.

The draft Plan had been subject to public consultation during the month of January 2021.

This Plan, when finalised, would be championed by the multi-agency BCP C&YPPB. An action plan would be an integral part of the final document. This would be monitored through the Board.

The Committee discussed the Report and comments were made, including:

- The Committee was generally very positive about the Plan, the content, format, its accessibility, and ambition were all really welcomed
- A Member of the Youth Parliament (MYP) advised that they had considered the Plan and felt it was very accessible to young people however, felt that some of the actions highlighted under the four priorities could be better positioned under other priorities. The Chair of the C&YPPB requested a meeting with the MYPs to go through the Plan in more detail to gain their insight further. **Action.**
- In response to a query about whether consideration had been given to a longer term plan, say ten year, the Chair of the C&YPPB highlighted that it was felt a three year plan was appropriate at this time and especially in relation to Children and Young People where the context for their lives can change so fast.
- In response to a query about where the four priorities had come from and in particular whether they were relevant from a child or young

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person's perspective, the Chair of the C&YPPB advised that they had consulted with as many children as they could given the current pandemic and capacity issues and those were the four words that had been decided to be most appropriate based on the feedback.

- A Committee Member referred to the different summaries and in particular the reference that 'it would be targeted at the disadvantaged', it was highlighted that that was not considered a protected characteristic and so should read instead that 'it was addressing inequalities'
- A Committee Member welcomed the links demonstrated between the high number of exclusions to the 16/17-year olds young people currently in care and felt that some input from the Police and youth work could be linked in at that point.
- A Member welcomed the longer-term priorities and enquired how it was proposed that these would be achieved? In response the Chair of the C&YPPB advised that the Children's Services Improvement Plan highlighted apprentices for Care Leavers as a priority with the Chief Executive taking the lead. The Committee was also advised that the Council would be taking a leading role and offering in house apprenticeships where appropriate. Exclusions were also being targeted by seeking to secure an agreement with all local schools to reduce them across BCP, with a multi-agency conference being planned to get all of the agencies on board to provide as much support as they could to schools to achieve this ambition.
- In response to a concern that the levels of bullying highlighted seemed high, the Committee was reassured that there were already a number of anti-bullying policies in place, but the plan aimed to use multi-agency provision to help target interventions by considering what had been successful and what hadn't
- A Member queried the figures relating to a child who would be living with a family with abuse detailed in the Plan and that there were two different figures which needed checking. **Action.**
- There was a large amount of discussion surrounding the references to the Economy within the Plan with a Member advising that new research had suggested that there was not a strong correlation between high levels of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and child happiness. Following the discussions, the Chair of the C&YPPB advised that the reference within the Plan was focusing on preparing children and young people for work, helping them to become productive and creative adults by working closely with the colleges, schools and businesses
- The Chair of the Committee referred to the mental ill health reference within the Plan and requested it be amended/softened so it did not look like mental health was being blamed
- The Committee appreciated the opportunity to contribute towards the Plan and acknowledged that it detailed some large pieces of work which needed to be undertaken. The Committee stressed the importance of ensuring that the work was carried out by building links with other agencies and strategies to ensure all the aspirations within the Plan were achieved and delivered.

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- The Chair of the Committee referred to the dashboard being created to monitor progress and advised that the Committee would welcome the opportunity to consider it at an appropriate time. **Action.**
- The Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Covid Resilience, Schools and Skills as well as her role as Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board concluded that all the strategies were linked and the Board would be responsible for delivering some of the aspirations once adopted.

The Chairman summed up as follows:

- The Committee thoroughly enjoyed considering and providing input into the draft Plan
- The Chair of the C&YPP was going to meet with the MYPs to consider the actions detailed under the four priorities
- A request to ensure protected characteristics were given consideration/highlighted
- The aspirations surrounding Apprenticeships
- Discussions surrounding the local economy and links with children and young people
- The Importance of ensuring close links to other BCP strategies.

RECOMMENDED that the views and considerations of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee be taken into account when the plan is considered by Cabinet and supported by Full Council.

139. Covid - Children's Services

The Interim Corporate Director, Children Services advised that this was a verbal update and informed the Committee of information, including:

- Schools would be returning on 8 March and Children's Services was working with the Headteachers to manage the return of all schools across the BCP.
- The challenges were highlighted including the logistics of testing the secondary school pupils.
- The Interim Corporate Director advised that she would circulate some information received from the DfE to the Committee for its information. **Action.**
- It was highlighted that the clinically extremely vulnerable groups were still be requested to shield and the impact of this on teachers and staff was still being considered.
- The Committee was advised that the Governments position on exams was yet to be announced.

The Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Covid Resilience, Schools and Skills addressed the Committee and provided a verbal update which included the following information:

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- The Committee was advised of findings released by Ofsted in November 2020 on the Impact of Covid on Children and Young People when considering social care settings, early years, and schools
- It was noted that with the planned return to school, children would again become more visible to BCP and Children's Services, ensuring evaluations of the impacts locally could be undertaken however, there was no reason to suggest that it would not echo the national findings of Ofsted
- The Portfolio Holder referred to some research which had been undertaken regarding maternal mental health during the pandemic and the need to ensure mothers of young children were sighted and supported, if required.
- The mental health of children and young people was highlighted and it was advised that those who already experienced emotional health wellbeing may have suffered more, an acknowledgment of reduced physical activity, and the possible impact of long Covid on parents and carers.
- One positive was the outcome of an Office for National Statistics Survey which showed that the Covid impact on mental health of 16 to 19 year olds was less than other adult age groups
- The Committee was also advised of need to ensure support for children and young people was included within the economic recovery local plan
- The Portfolio Holder summed up the impact Covid had had on SEND children whose routine and wider support structure from families, services and practitioners had been impacted and it was advised that if those relationships had been strong prior to lockdown, then the support had continued where possible but if not, then the opposite could have occurred.

The Committee discussed the verbal update and in response to a query about the proposed catch up opportunities over the summer holidays, the Committee was advised that this was only one of many discussions being undertaken in Government. The Committee was reassured that any measures taken within BCP would be led by what the children needed and that a plan and clear vision to support the children and parents moving forward was being formed.

The Chair thanked the Interim Directors, Children's Services and the Portfolio Holder for their verbal update.

141. Forward Plan

The Chair explained to the Committee the reasons why the item on the Bournemouth Learning Centre – Capital Investment to expand SEND provision for Longspee Special School had been removed from the agenda for this meeting and that it would come back once it was ready to be considered by the Committee and Cabinet.

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The Committee was advised that an Information only report would be circulated via email on the BCP Children's Services Complaints and Representations Annual Report 2019-2020.

142. Dates of Future Meetings

The dates of future meetings were noted.

The meeting ended at 7.30 pm

CHAIRMAN