

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

Minutes of the Meeting held on 10 September 2019 at 6.00 pm

Present:-

Cllr R Burton – Chairman

Present: Cllr J Bagwell, Cllr M F Brooke, Cllr E Coope, Cllr P R A Hall,  
Cllr J Kelly, Cllr M White, Cllr R Lawton and Cllr P Hilliard (Substitute)

Also in  
attendance: Cllr S Moore

21. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Geary, Lewis and Phillips and Parent Governor Representative, Peter Martin. Councillor Northover was absent.

22. Substitute Members

Councillor Hilliard substituted from Councillor Geary and Councillor Lawton substituted for Councillor Phillips.

23. Declarations of Interests

None.

24. Confirmation of Minutes

**RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 31 July 2019, having been previously circulated, be signed by the Chairman and confirmed as a correct record.**

25. Action Sheet

The Committee was advised that the email regarding the Barrack Road Pupil Referral Unit would be circulated shortly.

A Councillor thanked Officers for the acronym sheet circulated at the Committee.

26. Public Issues

No public items had been received.

27. Children and Young People's Participation

The Interim Service Director, Inclusion and Family Services, advised that the purpose of the report was to enable the Committee to consider proposals relating to how the voice of children and young people can be represented on the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This would only be for an interim period pending the establishment of a long term BCP Council model for the participation of children and young people.

In response to a query, the Committee was advised that it was hoped that children and young people's representatives would be joining the meetings from the November Committee and that they would be representative from across the whole conurbation.

It was noted that young people and the Youth Participation Worker were present to observe and they were welcomed.

**RESOLVED THAT the Committee supported the proposals outlined in Paragraph 2.1 of the Report for interim arrangements for young people's attendance and engagement at Committee meetings.**

28. BCP Council Corporate Safeguarding Strategy

The Corporate Director for Children's Social Care introduced the Report and advised that the BCP Council Corporate Safeguarding Strategy set out how the Council would deliver its safeguarding duties; the accountabilities of individual officers and Councillors; the training and development standards across the Council and how the delivery of the framework would be monitored.

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

- A Councillor expressed concern that the Strategy would only be available on the Council's website and that a proportion of the Council's residents may not use or have access to the internet. It was requested that consideration be given on how to share the Strategy with a wider audience
- There were discussions regarding the DBS checks and the Committee generally supported the requirement for anyone from the Council who had contact with children or vulnerable adults to be checked
- In response to a query about BCP Council's procurement of businesses and services, the Committee was advised that

safeguarding measures requirements would form part of any relevant contract, which would then be monitored

- In response to a query regarding secondary school children attending businesses for work experience, the Corporate Director advised that it was the responsibility of the Headteacher and School to ensure they were placing students in a safe environment
- A Councillor felt that all Councillors should be enhanced DBS checked as they had access to and dealt with the most vulnerable members of the community
- In response to a query, the Corporate Director advised that she would investigate the cost of a DBS check and the renewal frequency and circulate the information to the Committee
- The Chairman requested consideration be given as to how best to engage all Councillors in awareness of the Safeguarding Strategy and their responsibilities
- In response to a query, the Corporate Director advised that female genital mutilation would be classed as extreme physical abuse. A Councillor felt that, due to its severity, a separate category may be more appropriate.
- With reference to Appendix 1, a Councillor thought the definition of children and young people's age should be extended to include, if considered vulnerable, up to 25 years old.
- The following errors were highlighted at Paragraph 3.2 – it should read “has a responsibility...” instead of “have a....” and in Appendix 1 it should read “sexual abuse by family / people in authority / other young people” instead of “sexual abuse by family people in authority / other young people”

The Corporate Director thanked the Committee for its comments and observations and advised that these would be provided to Cabinet when the Safeguarding Strategy was before it for consideration.

**RECOMMENDED that Cabinet consider and note the Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee's comments when considering the BCP Council Corporate Safeguarding Strategy.**

29. Peer Review of BCP Front Door

The Interim Service Director, Children and Young People's Social Care (CYPSC) started by introducing Jane White, the new Service Director for CYPSC and advised the Committee that she would be taking over the role in a couple of weeks.

The Interim Service Director presented the Report and it was noted that BCP Council were invited to join the Partners in Practice program funded by the Department of Education to support a review and offer development support to BCP regarding the front door services – Multi Agency Assessment Hub (MASH) and Assessment teams within Children's Social Care. The review identified strengths and areas for improvement. An

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action plan had been developed and approved by the Department for Education (DfE). This review had been of great assistance in the development of the new BCP Council Services.

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

- A Councillor agreed that this was a very useful and helpful project and was pleased to see the strengths identified and how the Service was aware of the areas that required improvement prior to this exercise
- In response to a query regarding how the improvements/systems implementations were being addressed, the Committee was advised that an update would be brought to the next meeting
- In response to a query whether a visit to North Tyneside Council would be beneficial, the Committee was advised that some of the team visited there two weeks ago and that a further visit was being planned which would also include other agencies such as the Police, Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) together with Senior Officers
- In response to a query regarding timescales, the Committee was advised that work began as soon as North Tyneside had left and some actions were completed immediately, others within a two week timescale and some were still being worked on. The update to Committee would show the timescales which would enable the Committee to measure the implementation
- The Corporate Director advised that the intention to bring a new data set of key indicators to the Committee for consideration would include areas such as the timeliness of front door decision making and staff moral
- In response to a query about the two case management systems, the Committee was advised that the two being used were 'Mosaic' and 'Care Director'. It was advised that both were legacy systems and that Dorset Council currently used Mosaic. Both systems were relatively new but staff in both MASH and the assessment teams were trained and able to use both until a decision was made on which system to use moving forward
- The Committee was advised of the Signs of Safety methodology which was being used by staff. It was a technique developed in Australia and was being adopted by many Councils across the United Kingdom and the world. The Committee was advised that a briefing would be arranged for it to understand how the principles and applications.

**RESOLVED that the Report be noted, and an update provided to the next Committee meeting.**

30. Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership

The Service Director for Quality and Commissioning advised that the Children and Social Work Act 2017 replaced the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) with new local safeguarding arrangements, led by

three safeguarding partners: local authorities, police and clinical commissioning groups. A Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children's Partnership had been created to meet this requirement locally.

In finalising its work, the outgoing Bournemouth and Poole LSCB produced its final annual report which would inform the work of the new partnership.

The new body had worked with all partners to develop a plan for delivery of this work including emerging priority areas. The new Partnership was formally established in August 2019 with BCP Council being one of the statutory safeguarding partners.

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

- A Councillor requested that the Dorset LSCB Annual Report 2018/19 be circulated to the Committee because that would include the data relating to Christchurch
- A Councillor stated that at pages 16-17 of the report, the trend given was inaccurate as a trend should be over a 3-year period, not on a yearly basis. The Committee was advised that this was not a Council report but that the report authors would be made aware
- A Councillor expressed concern about the reduction on 'return home interviews' being completed within a prescribed timescale, the Corporate Director advised that she was also concerned and would ensure close monitoring took place
- The Committee was advised that the 2 Safeguarding headlines diagrams on page 12 of the appendix provided a good baseline and highlighted the differences across Bournemouth and Poole
- In response to a query regarding the Portfolio Holder's duties within the new partnership, the Corporate Director for Children's Services clarified that the legal duty of the new partnership was shared across the Local Authority, local Police and the Clinical Commissioning Group with no specific role defined for the statutory lead Councillor
- It was noted that consideration would need to be given on how the partnership would feedback to the lead Councillor and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee as well as how it would engage with local agencies such as schools

The Corporate Director concluded by advising that the partnership aimed to bring the safeguarding community together by keeping a high profile, being held to account and improving system outcomes for children and young people in the area.

**RESOLVED that the Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee:**

**(a) Noted the Annual Report of the LSCB 2018/19; and**

**Noted the new Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership arrangements**

31. The Workforce Strategy for Children's Services

The Interim Service Director, Inclusion and Family Services presented the Report.

It was highlighted that the impact of leaders, both political and Officers was key in supporting a stable and confident workforce, in an environment where effective social work could occur.

Effective social work and early help systems and services improved the life chances of the most vulnerable children within the BCP locality. Critical to this was that the local authority workforce was sufficient, suitably qualified and supported to deliver high quality services to children and their families.

It was advised that the market was challenging, which was linked to the national shortage of qualified social workers, the difficulty of the role, the volume of need in a community and how effectively this was owned across the whole system, together with how competitive the regional market was.

The Committee considered the report and comments were made, including:

- The term 'Real vacancy personnel' was clarified as vacant posts which were currently not covered and was acute in some teams. Reasons for these vacant posts included maternity leaves and staff off on long term sickness
- In response to a query regarding the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE), the Committee was advised a new approach was being used to help retain social workers which meant continuing this support from 1 Year post graduate
- It was highlighted that the service was bringing the previous local authority teams together and that the plan was to strengthen, develop and invest in the staff to ensure good retention.

**RESOLVED that the report be noted.**

32. Forward Plan

The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services advised the Committee the Family Support Strategy (Early Help, Youth) which was currently scheduled for the November Committee needed to be considered sooner. It was therefore proposed that a task and finish group of Committee Members be arranged to consider it in October. The Committee agreed to this proposal and the Interim Service Director, Inclusion and Family Services advised that an email with further information would be sent out soon.

The Chairman advised the Committee that there had been some additions to the Forward Plan for the November meeting and that it would be circulated to them by email for further consideration. He requested Committee Members considered the updates and advised of any concerns

or topics which they felt should be added to the Forward Plan for consideration by the Committee.

In response to a request that County Lines and Knife Crime within schools be added to the Forward Plan, the Corporate Director advised that these would be added to the November agenda.

**RESOLVED that a Task and Finish Group be established to consider Family Support Strategy (Early Help, Youth).**

33. Dates of Future Meetings

The dates and venues of future meeting dates were noted.

The meeting ended at 7.10 pm

CHAIRMAN