

Bristol City Council

Minutes of the People Scrutiny Commission

23 January 2017 at 10.00 am



Members Present:-

Councillors: Lesley Alexander, Mark Brain, Eleanor Combley, Anna Keen, Gill Kirk, Celia Phipps, Ruth Pickersgill and Liz Radford

Officers in Attendance:-

Michele Farmer (Service Director Early Help and Targeted Support), Mike Hennessey (Service Director, Care and Support (Adults), Statutory Director of Adult Social Services), Paul Jacobs (Service Director Education & Skills), Netta Meadows (Service Director, Strategic Commissioning & Commercial Relations), Karen Blong (Policy Advisor), Joshua Van Haaren (Democratic Services Officer), Ros Cox (Contracts and Quality Manager) and Tim Wye (Principal Commissioning Manager)

1. Welcome, Introduction and Safety Information

2. Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

Apologies received from Councillor Cleo Lake and John Readman (Strategic Director for People)

3. Declarations of Interest

None received.

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The following minutes were accepted as a correct record:

- People Scrutiny Commission – 21st November 2016
- Meeting in Common between South Gloucestershire Council's Health Scrutiny Committee and Bristol City Council's People Scrutiny Committee - 23rd November, 2016 – Independent Reports related to the Bristol Royal Hospital for Children 2016 – Three month review.



5. Action Sheet

An update on the actions was provided.

6. Chair's Business

a) School admissions inquiry day

The Chair highlighted the forthcoming school admissions inquiry day which would take place on the 27th February 2017. The information workshop held in December had been well received and Councillors were encouraged to attend the Inquiry Day.

b) Reference to a letter sent to Commission Members

The letter referred to social care commissioning. The Chair had taken advise from Officers and it would not be appropriate to discuss the information in a public forum.

c) Tony Jones – Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)

Tony Jones from the CCG would soon retire. The Chair and committee extended their thanks for his insight and input as well as their best wishes for his retirement.

7. Public Forum

Following items were received:

PS01 – Julie Boston – Citizens Service Points

Julie Boston spoke to statement and it will be passed on to the Neighbourhoods Scrutiny whose remit this is.

PP01 – Tom Renhard – Crisis Line Petition

CCG, AWP and BCC had received a petition with 4523 signatures. This highlighted widespread concern amongst the carer community over the potential cutting of the Crisis Line service. There had been constructive work since about how to solve the issue. There was collaborative work in train to encourage a more joined up approach to utilise the service effectively and sustainably going forward.

8. An update on the Crisis Line

Representatives from the Clinical Commissioning Group and Avon & Wiltshire Mental Health Trust presented an update on the work to improve the Crisis Line.

Welcomed the Public Forum item as it summarised the key points of the big piece of co-production work, of which Tom Renhard had been part of.



The committee received an overview of key facts of what the service is used for, the work undertaken so far and the preferred options for the future model.

- An important but expensive resource in the form of a 24 hour telephone line to the crisis service had also been used primarily for admin calls which were not an effective use of the resource of a mental health professional.
- This also blocked the line and can deter genuine crisis calls.
- A presentation was given (appended) which looked at the nature of callers and the work done to identify needs of the service users via the Frequent Callers Plan and an options Appraisal of the new system was presented.

The following remarks were received:

Q1. Cllr Brenda Massey felt it was essential to keep the auto cues and messages as brief as possible.

A1. It was confirmed that the language of the system was being developed with service users and that there was a keen awareness of the feelings of frustration generated by getting stuck in an automated system.

Q2. Cllr Jos Clark – Queried if people with dementia use the line and if so how they are worked with by practitioners?

A2. The original data had not shown a lot of people phoning for dementia welfare.

Q3. Cllr Gill Kirk – Felt the Co-production was very positive and welcomed the evidence based approach; a model that could be learned from. More detail was requested on the criteria for a “crisis” as opposed to an emergency/999 call. The capacity of the Professional’s Line was also queried.

A3. The Project Board had mapped exactly the number of calls going to different places based on the proposed options change. Capacity on the PL had been factored in as well as work with all the teams to see how this might affect their work flow.

A3. A Mental Health Emergency was clarified as someone at imminent risk who needs to speak to a professional before they need a 999.

Q4. Cllr Anna Keen- Echoed thanks for a great piece of work and was encouraged by the effort put into collaborative working. Flagged issues with boundaries and how organisations divide up the city and asked if there could be clarity in the AWP Messaging on this.

Q5. It was queried if there were a list of numbers somewhere for people to use who don’t know the system?

A.5 AWP was redeveloping their website and useful numbers were to be published there. CL had been highly publicised and really well known and new leaflets were also planned.



Q6. Cllr Mark Brain - Concerns were over the automated systems and messages, and it was felt that monitoring was crucial to assure it didn't deter people.

A6. Service Users had been consulted and welcomed the call management system especially that you could get through without talking which was good for someone user in an emergency, too anxious to speak.

Q7. Cllr Eleanor Combley – highlighted the need for routes out of the wrong branches just in case people pick the wrong options on the system and the need for help to steer the users to appropriate services.

9. Annual Education Performance reports

The report was presented by Paul Jacobs, Service Director for Education and Skills. An overview was provided on the headlines in the performance report in the circulated pack.

National Education Policy Update

- Education and Adoption Act

Action (PJ): coasting schools update to be delivered to local Cllrs on request.

- Education Excellence Everywhere
- Less emphasis on the academics from the new government / education secretary
- Schools that work for everyone
- National Funding Formula reform: Jan 30th. Member Briefing from 4pm with Cllr Hiscott.

The huge journey of improvement for Bristol with OFSTED headlines was noted. Bristol was top 20 of all local authority areas nationally. It was also acknowledged that there were challenges ahead with changing nature of assessment and curriculum and that all concerned will need to work hard to continue this attainment.

The following remarks were received:

Q8. Cllr Jos Clark – Felt it was hard to understand data from a parental viewpoint. It was flagged that there will be issues going forward with changing grades.

Q9. Cllr Anna Keen – Wanted to ensure children in care were kept in mind in the data, although a relatively small group performance figures needed to keep them in mind.

9.2 It was also felt that sharing good practice was not happening enough across Bristol and that the committee had a role to facilitate inter-academy networks.



Action: Councillors requested further information on how BCC are encouraging good practice across academies and the Local Authority.

A9.2 PJ confirmed that the learning and education group was seeing more data sharing and challenges from education leadership. Through Learning City there was encouragement to share resource and get good schools to lead on projects.

Q10. Cllr Ruth Pickersgill –Bristol Met were congratulated for now being in line with other good schools. The Progress 8 criticism from UOB research was raised for the committee’s awareness. It was also requested if future performance reports could include retention data and data on post 16 and PJ confirmed there will be another version of the report at a later date with this data.

Q11. Cllr Mark Brain – Appreciated that officers were trying to bring together a fragmented academy system to ensure co-operation. The overarching impression of the figures was that every inequality was alive in the report and therefore will be in the future when the kids develop into adults and take disadvantages move with them.

Paul Jacobs welcomed individual questions or a separate session if there were lots as he appreciated there was a large amount of data in the report.

Q12. Cllr Gill Kirk –Welcomed the attainment and improvement in early years it was requested if on this set of data could be monitored to ensure it is maintained, especially in light of the imminent cuts to funding.

Q13. Keeping resource available for HOPE virtual school was considered vital enable them to continue their good work. With the loss of SEN funding mitigation for a section of children a high level of need was discussed.

Action - An update on Children’s Centre’s would be added to the Scrutiny work programme.

Q14. Cllr Brenda Massey confirmed a letter had been written to the Mayor to request protection of HOPE funding.

Q15. It was confirmed that fewer pupils were leaving Bristol for their education, 10% down from 20/30%, but it was acknowledged whilst this was a good problem to have it brought other problems.

10. Performance Monitoring

The Councillors agreed to defer the item to the next Commission meeting.

11. Commissioning Approach



Tim White, Principal Commissioning Manager gave the Commission an overview of the Adult Social Care commissioning context.

Ros Cox, Contracts and Quality Manager, was introduced as the officer responsible for monitoring the quality of BCC's care providers.

The following remarks were received:

Q16. How far would the Voluntary Sector be involved in the commissioning group on an ongoing basis?

A16. It was confirmed that no external bodies were involved as this was a governance and process meeting for officers (CPG).

Q17. How does BCC lever value for money? Procurement law was strict but there was account made for social value and added value as part of the process.

Action (NM): Quality training and visits for Cllrs to care homes in their wards to be investigated. NM would also consider how to provide Councillors with monitoring information.

Q18. It was clarified that there was no blanket drop from half hour service to fifteen minutes and that homecare providers needed to meet the outline of the support plan. If individual needs were not being met it was essential this was looked into. Fifteen minutes was right for some people but if this was not the case service failures needed to be investigated.

Q19. Cllr Mark Brain –Asked if robust processes put off smaller organisations that have no time to fill out extensive questions?

A19. There was work underway to address this including the development of an intelligence hub to stop duplication – providers and suppliers only needing to send in information once for example. We are also supporting providers by giving extensive Feedback for open frameworks where providers can re-apply.

Q20. There is inconsistency in commissioning across the council with pockets of excellence and other areas with more work to do. Many officers were involved in commissioning across the council and it was made up of many components.

A20. One of the reasons CPG was set up was to deliver consistency and share best practice across the Council.

Q21. The off contract spend review was discussed. Whilst some was not logged for legitimate reasons, e.g. court mandates in children services, other areas that lacked robustness were being tackled.

12. Scrutiny Work Programme



The work programme was provided for information.

Next event: 3rd Feb School Inquiry Day.

Meeting ended at 1.00 pm

CHAIR _____

