

Bristol City Council Minutes of the People Scrutiny Commission

21st November 2016.



Members in Attendance:

Councillors: Brenda Massey (Chair), Jos Clark (Vice-Chair), Lesley Alexander, Mark Brain, Eleanor Combley, Gill Kirk, Anna Keen, Cleo Lake, Celia Phipps, Ruth Pickersgill, Liz Radford, Clare Champion-Smith.

Officers in Attendance:

John Readman (Strategic Director - People), Michele Farmer (Service Director Early Help and Targeted Support), Hilary Brooks (Service Director, Care and Support - Children & Families), Mike Hennessey (Service Director, Care and Support - Adults), Paul Jacobs (Service Director Education & Skills), Netta Meadows (Service Director, Strategic Commissioning & Commercial Relations), Michael Pilcher (Finance Business Partner –People), Anne James (Equalities & Community Cohesion Team Leader), Karen Blong (Policy Advisor), Joshua Van Haaren (Democratic Services Officer)

Others:

Sally Lewis (Independent Chair Bristol Safeguarding Children's Board) and Louise Lawton (Independent Chair Bristol Safeguarding Adults Board)

Expert Witness: Judith Brown (Bristol Older People Forum)

1. Welcome, Introduction and Safety Information

There were welcome and introductions.

2. Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

There were no apologies for absence and substitutions.

3. Declarations of Interest



None received.

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Agreed as correct record.

5. Chair's Business

Some Councillors had indicated that they have to leave at points during meeting and the chair requested they use the back door.

6. Action Sheet

The action sheet had not been included with the agenda papers but the Scrutiny Policy Advisor confirmed that all actions were complete or in progress.

To note – at a previous meeting Members had asked for information to be provided about the Bristol standard of care quality framework and the standard required for commissioned care homes and homecare services. The Commission are due to receive an item on Commissioning in Jan 2017 – information will be provided as part of this session.

7. Public Forum

None received.

8. The draft Corporate Strategy 2017-2022, Business Plan 2017/18 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2017/18-2021/22

As requested by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) each Scrutiny Commission had been provided with an overview of the business efficiency savings – the ongoing proposed savings to be made within each directorate that do not form part of the consultation process.

One hour of the meeting had been allocated to the budget item but it was acknowledged that Members could still have further questions. Members would be canvassed about a requirement for an informal briefing in January 2017. **(Action – JVH / KB)**



John Readman, Strategic Director and Service Directors for the People Directorate delivered a presentation (appendix x to the minutes), with the second part focused on early help and children's centres, community meals, and community links.

The Chair requested that future presentation include figures, rather than percentages (**Action – all Officers**).

During the discussion the following points were highlighted:

- Projection of figures, i.e. projected growth of children's figures are based on figures from Office for national statistics and local data such as school places – live birth data is adjusted to local situations.

Members requested the National living wage report (previously presented the Human Resources Scrutiny Commission). (**Action – Karen Blong**).

- The Educational Services Grant has been significantly reduced but the national funding formula to replace this has not yet been put in place. This will result in a significant funding challenge for school. The Learning City Partnership, the Bristol local framework, is committed to joint working and avoiding fragmentation, regardless of the direction of national legislation. The Commission Members welcomed this.
- The Commission were updated on work looking into third party spend and how the Council is trying to get better value for money from contract spend. (Going to business change scrutiny and is a cross Council initiative)

a. Early Help Presentation – Michelle Farmer/ Paul Jacobs

- Options for Children's Centres would be explored; this could include retaining the same number of centres providing children care but a smaller number of these being Children's Centres.
- The use of Council buildings could be considered - Schools, libraries etc. It was hoped to retain local deliver using a more efficient approach.
- Health visitors could be included in multi-agency assessments to increase health deliver in Children's centres. The service would be better for children and families if seamless multi agency assessments were available – work continued towards joint assessments or accepting each other's.
- Cllr Keen referenced a 'family centre' in Hillfields Ward that covers a wide area. The centre could be used as a case study as an alternative approach. Little Hayes was also example of an alternative model that worked well.



- Members were asked to feed in concerns about Special Educational Needs (SEN) and behaviour support via the consultation.
- The Commission discussed the definition of “Family Support” and opportunities to connect the existing work force across the city (e.g. family support workers in special schools). Officers were already actively looking for opportunities to combine into Children’s Centres. Members agreed it would be more effective to move away from the preconception of a “building”, focussing more on access to professionals and expertise, sharing information and professional meeting places.
- BCC hoped to continue to provide universal and targeted offers.

b. Community meals service – Michele Farmer

Proposals were presented to the committee (presentation available from Democratic Services – democratic.services@bristol.gov.uk).

As part of the discussion the following was noted:

- Members noted that drivers received welfare training and monitored vulnerable people. The Commission requested information on how many drivers currently pick up on issues. (Action – Michele Farmer).
- Officers highlighted that vulnerable clients were provided with other types of support and would be monitored via other channels.
- Members re-iterated their strong commitment to this underrepresented group and the potential threat of any loss of service. A detailed financial analysis, plus a full and proper consultation would be required with all the current service users ahead of any changes.
- MF referenced the commissioning model which should mitigate against the issues and concerns raised.

c. Community Links & Drop in –Mike Hennessey

Appended proposals were presented to committee. Legal advice was pending on when consultation can begin as well as equalities impact assessment but officers confirmed it would be going to consultation.

- Members were concerned that people with learning difficulties and carers had already been through so much in last few years. It was feared that suggestions around moving people with learning difficulties away from centres could leave people isolated.
- The Commission felt that it was wrong to move away from dedicated care for people with learning difficulties as they get older.
- Ideas around outside organisations that could run these centres instead were discussed. Officer confirmed there was a lot of interest in the market last time this was floated, including charities and other providers – but it has not been tested recently.



- It was noted that great care should be taken over the equalities aspect and the different cultural needs for people in the central area of Bristol. Members highlighted the specialist staff in these areas.
- Further questions would be collated and written answers provided as part of the frequently asked question. **(Action – KB).**

d. Savings Tracker Summary – Michael Pilcher

Business Efficiency Saving for Scrutiny Commissions People as referred from OSM – appended.

Members agreed to receive the Business Efficiency Savings for the People Commission via email (copies available from Democratic Services –democratic.services@bristol.gov.uk), due to time constraints.

9. Bristol Safeguarding Adults Board - annual report 2015-16

Louise Lawton, Chair of the Bristol Safeguarding Adult’s Board was in attendance to present the report.

The Committee received the first Bristol Safeguarding Adults report since implementation of the care act 2015 – which put the board on a statutory footing for the first time – moved from “should do” to “must do” and the annual report. Presentation appended.

The BSAB chair viewed the report as a vehicle to reach out to partners and people across Bristol and increase the profile and engagement of stakeholders – welcomed the commission’s questions.

Following the presentation Councillors asked questions and the following points were noted:

- Following a query related to Serious Case Reviews, the BSAB chair confirmed that more resource were now available from all core partners following the introduction of the statutory requirements coming.
- The cross over with mental health strategy was discussed. Members were informed that the issue of setting up a specialism to deal with these complex issues had been raised with partners. The clear themes and trends around mental health had been raised and the partnership asked what it can do – meeting next month with mental health governance board to discuss this further. The Board has a clear role to ask these questions

Councillors Keen and Phipps departed 11:55.

- Current reporting could be improved: strands need to be pulled together and the Board would be looking at how we delve into the stats/data more effectively to understand.
- The BSAB Chair noted that poor school reporting was a national issue. The Boards could work together to address this. The data analyst at the business unit would be able to consider data in a



new way. Although the Bristol data was normal compared to nationally the Board would need to understand the quality of the Health and Social Care provision.

The Commission Chair thanked the BSAB for attending the meeting.

10 Bristol Safeguarding Children Board - annual report 2015-16

Sally Lewis, Chair of the Bristol Safeguarding Children's Board (BSCB) was in attendance to present the report.

Following the presentation the commission asked questions and the following was noted:

- No major shortcomings were reported. The board is a scrutiny function in itself but if issues are unresolved with partners the Commission would be appraised.
- The Committee were made aware of the Public relations award shortlist for BCC PR team noted as an accolade for Bristol's management of the Operation Brooke Serious Case Review.
- The BSCB Chair felt the Board set a strong bench mark.
- The Commission queried why there was only one person in prevent channel process with more referrals coming in. The nature of the referrals was discussed and the issues to be addressed around prevent systems and how to improve them
- Members were pleased to see a response to children and social care bill gaining a higher priority. Members requested a briefing, at the appropriate time. (Action – KB).
- It was felt the Safeguarding boards were very valuable and there was a desire to keep them to ensure best practice going forward.
- Following a query on Female Genital Mutilation the BSCB Chair suggested that the focus should be on prevention first, prosecution after. Bristol is a good preventative city and will prosecute where necessary.

Mark Brain left 12:21

11 Corporate Parenting report 2016

Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report

Ann James, Service Manager, Specialist Commissioning and Services, Looked after Children and Aftercare presented the report which is due to be presented at Full Council on the 17th January 2017.



The following was noted as part of the discussion:

- The Commission welcomed comments from the children who felt heard and listened to which all agreed was of the utmost importance.
- The Chair raised concerns over youth offending going up despite national trend going down. Officers agreed this was not good enough – analysis revealed relatively low level offences and a plus side that these are easy to tackle but restorative practices are needed to tackle in first place.
- All Councillors were encouraged to attend the Corporate Parenting Panel
- The Commission highlighted two groups lost in outcomes: for UASC in terms of their destination and their asylum status. It was also felt there was also a need also a separate look at disabled children more info on their educational outcomes and destinations.

The Chair thanked Officers for attending the present the report.

The Commission agreed to note the report.

12 Bristol as City of Sanctuary and Supporting refugees and asylum seekers, including unaccompanied minors/care leavers

An overview of the disparate and varied work in this area was given by Mike Hennessey, Service Director (Care, Support and Provision - Adults), the lead officer. Corporate strategy support is provided by Anne James from Equalities Unit and Hilary Brooks provides operational support for UASC (Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children).

The following was noted as part of the discussion:

- The Commission noted that Bristol has 53 UASC to date.
- 30 organisations presented in a recent meeting: the onus is on the city and partners.
- The BCC financial limitations were noted.
- It was clarified that the Syrian Model is only Syrians – MENA Scheme is for vulnerable children who have experienced violence or unrest and are particularly vulnerable in camps- cases so far tend to be Somali and Eritrean.
- The Chair requested that officers circulate a list of items needed ahead of Christmas **(action - Mike Hennessey to look into this with Citizens UK).**

The Commission welcomed the update and commended the positive advances made that has seen the Council taking a lead and being more strategic from view of refugee organisations. Officers were urged to keep strategic lead in mind and not to slip back.



Action: Any additional questions on refugee strategy to be submitted to Karen Blong.

13 Home Care Update

Home care update

An update was provided by Leon Goddard (Strategic Commissioning Manager).

The Committee received a short presentation to compliment detailed report and further conversation.

The following was noted as part of the discussion;

- 30-40% of the markets are using this contract rate of pay. As a result of the outlined changes care home workers are receiving more money city wide. However, other employers offer £8 per hour for an 18 year old.
- There is a choice between zero hours or guaranteed which gives flexibility to workers– it was acknowledged some want zero hours.
- Market forces and affordability were discussed. Across the south same Local Authorities are reporting similar problems to BCC. The rates make it difficult for us to engage the market of providers.
- Members requested information about the costing model (**ACTION: Leon Goddard**).
- The Commission discussed increasing collaboration with other Local Authorities in order to standardise or increase the hourly rate in Bristol. Officers referenced £3.5 million savings required in the MTFP. Members requested a breakdown of figures (**Action: Netta Meadows**)
- Contracts were written to ensure preferred providers were given priority: the business model only works with large numbers.
- Officers would work closely with providers and risks would be monitored carefully over the coming months: rates are very new and impact on providers would be regularly checked. Other providers would be available if needed.
- Members requested regular updates. Officers would advise the Scrutiny Policy Advisor of appropriate timescales for updates outside the meeting. (**Action – Mike Hennessey, Leon Goddard and Karen Blong**).

The Chair thanked Officers for attending to present the report.

The Commission agreed to note the report.



CHAIR _____

