

Bristol City Council

Minutes of the People Scrutiny Commission

17 July 2017 at 2.00 pm



Members Present:-

Councillors: Brenda Massey (Chair), Clare Champion-Smith (Vice-Chair), Tony Carey, Eleanor Combley, Anna Keen, Gill Kirk, Cleo Lake, Celia Phipps, Ruth Pickersgill and Liz Radford

Officers in Attendance:-

John Readman (Strategic Director - People), Terry Dafter (Service Director - Care and Support - Adults), Anne Farmer (Service Manager (Central / East Bristol), Care and Support - Children and Families), Michele Farmer (Service Director Early Help and Targeted Support), Paul Jacobs (Service Director Education & Skills), Jacqui Jenson (Service Director - Care & Support, Children & Families), Lindsay Winterton (Principal Commissioning Manager - Strategic Commissioning & Commercial Relations), Lucy Fleming (Democratic and Scrutiny Manager) and Louise deCordova (Scrutiny Advisor)

1. Welcome, Introduction and Safety Information

Councillor Massey, Chair of the People Scrutiny Commission, welcomed attendees to the meeting, and led introductions.

2. Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

There were no apologies for absence or substitutions.

3. People Scrutiny Commission AGM Report

The Commission received the Annual General Report from the Scrutiny Policy Advisor.

The Commission RESOLVED:

- a. To elect Councillor Claire Champion-Smith as Vice Chair for the 2017-18 year.
- b. To note the Commission's Terms of Reference.
- c. To note the topics selected as priorities for scrutiny by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.



4. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Action Sheet

The Commission RESOLVED that the minutes dated 27 March 2017 were agreed as a correct record.

All actions were complete or in progress. The following points were noted:

Education Performance Report

- a. Officers to provide a briefing note for Councillors on Bristol City Council's work to encourage good practice across academies and the Local Authority. **(Action: Paul Jacobs)**

Risk Register

- b. Officers to confirm the revised format for presenting risk. **(Action: John Readman)**

6. Chair's Business

There was no Chair's Business.

7. Public Forum

There was no public forum received.

8. Targeted Youth Services

Michelle Farmer, Service Director for Early Intervention and Targeted Support, introduced the funding context and background to the proposed New Contract for Targeted Youth Services, presented by Bridget Atkins, Principal Commissioning Manager.

In response to Councillor's questions the following points were noted:

- a. Councillors agreed and were encouraged that there had been a thorough process of consultation with good councillor engagement. Councillors recognised that meaningful adjustments, had addressed the points councillors had raised.

For example, adjustments to deprivation criteria, had been made in response to feedback and this was evidenced in the current iteration of the proposed commissioning model.

- b. Councillors were pleased to see NEET data management being brought in-house



- c. Councillors welcomed the proposed tapering of online resources in order to obtain best value for money
- d. Noted that providers would need to tailor their bids to demonstrate their capability to respond to the profile of specialised need and specific outcomes required in the three geographical areas.

The Commission RESOLVED:

- a. **To note the *New Contract for Targeted Youth Services* presentation**
- b. **To refer the Commission's comments to Cabinet for consideration.**

9. Unaccompanied asylum seeking children

The Commission received a position statement and report, presented by Anne Farmer, Area Manager East Central, Care and Support Children and Families, detailing current services provision, and plans for developing services to meet anticipated demand.

In response to Councillor's questions, the following points were noted:

- a. The majority of unaccompanied children had come from Afghanistan and other countries whereas Syrian children were more likely to arrive as part of a Syrian family scheme.
- b. There had been positive strides forward in coordinating the City's support to unaccompanied children, although it was recognised that the landscape and challenges were changing constantly
- c. There was more work to do to create a strategic and city response to provide accredited legal support which could be accessed by carers or social workers through an organised legal pathway.
- d. In placing 'Dubs III' children, there were ongoing challenges, where children were being reunited with families in already vulnerable or crowded situations. 3 out of 7 placements had broken down, with the children being supported in independent accommodation and some families being offered additional help including financial support.
- e. Officers to explore options for Reconstruct Advocacy Services to be provided as an automatic right for unaccompanied children, acknowledging the priority to provide both housing and education services.
- f. Some schools had developed best practice, in the provision of school places for children without a definitive date of birth that was safe but efficient. It was recognised that some Local Authorities may be less confident in recognising and delivering on the obligations to unaccompanied children. Officers to explore options to share best practice guidance to support schools and other local Authorities. **(Action: Paul Jacobs/ Anne Farmer)**



- g. The recent campaign to recruit foster carers had also signposted people to other schemes such as 'Branch Out' for older children (16+) and mentoring schemes. It was noted that councillors could support ongoing recruitment by sharing event and open day information via social media and in their networks. James Beardall and Ann James to be contacted for further information regarding recruitment to be shared with councillors. **(Action: Ann Farmer)**
- h. Bristol experienced very few instances of missing children. The Cabinet Office had recently visited Bristol to discuss best practice in relation to missing children to inform a future offer of national guidance. Children may go missing for a range of reasons. In all circumstances the Council works very closely with the police, other agencies and other local authorities to locate a missing child. Consideration is being given to photographing children on arrival and building a comprehensive database which may offer mitigation in some circumstances.

The Commission RESOLVED to note the report

The Commission held a ten minutes comfort break.

10. An overview of the School Admission Arrangements in Bristol - Conclusions of the People Scrutiny Commission

Paul Jacobs, Service Director, Education and Skills and Councillor Clare Hiscott, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, introduced the report and asked the Commission to formally agree the recommendations and refer the report to the Mayor and Cabinet for consideration.

In response to Councillor's questions, the following points were noted:

- a. Councillors commented that the Council had a role to encourage and influence a change in school admissions criteria to increase the numbers of pupil premium students admitted to their first preference of schools across the City, at least 10%.
- b. It was acknowledged that whilst the Council could not oblige schools to change their criteria, the Council could include Pupil Premium within its own admissions criteria and use this as an example to support the narrative and aim for a more balanced City. Officers to include a recommendation in the report to Cabinet. **(Action: Paul Jacobs/Councillor Claire Hiscott)**
- c. It was recognised that any change in policy could displace some students. Officers to do further modelling to identify the likely impact of this action. **(Action: Paul Jacobs)**
- d. The new Bristol Cathedral Choir School was aiming for a minimum intake of 30% pupil premium students, which was a good start.



- e. Following the Inquiry Day and in response to feedback, Colston School had employed a Somali champion to support applications from Somali families to the school.
- f. In respect of Recommendation 1, '*...oversight of Admissions through an Annual Update...*' The annual reporting process should have a discussion and relationship building format and invite stakeholders including head teachers and councillors. **(Action: Cllr Hiscott/Paul Jacobs)**
- g. In respect of Recommendation 3, '*...support available for parents on admissions processes...*' Officers to prepare new guidance for parents in the autumn, to reinforce the importance of including a local choice in their selected preferences. A crib sheet to be shared with councillors. **(Action: Paul Jacobs)**
- h. In respect of Recommendation 5, '*...to promote Bristol schools...*' councillors suggested more could be done to celebrate and communicate to parents and carers when a local school's performance had improved. This could be shared with councillors and circulated to primary schools for information sharing.

The Commission RESOLVED:

- **To agree the report and recommendations subject to the comments and amendments noted above**
- **To refer the report to the Mayor and Cabinet for consideration.**

11. Reductions to the Supporting People budget consultation update - Lindsay Winterton

Lindsay Winterton, Interim Principal Commissioning Manager and Councillor Helen Holland, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, presented the report and asked the Commission to note the update on the live consultation options for £1.8m budget reduction for Supporting People services.

In response to Councillor's questions, the following points were noted:

- a. It was recognised that significant work was taking place to speak to a wide range of providers, to ask them to describe the impact of the budget reductions on their service provision, identify opportunities for collaboration and to engage service users in a city wide conversation, in local neighbourhood settings. Cllr Holland invited councillors to raise any particular points with her, Lindsay Winterton, or the Supporting People team directly via email.
- b. People who accessed Supporting People services were not necessarily known to the Council and therefore providers were setting up focus groups with their service users to enable conversations to take place. Councillors to encourage local providers, within their wards and networks, to make contact and respond to the consultation.
- c. The Commission noted comments from Judith Brown, expert witness on behalf of Bristol Aging Better; who raised concern that the reduction in budget impacted the services designed to



promote the wellbeing of the most vulnerable; questioned whether there was an opportunity for the Council to use Reserves in order to minimise risk; and perceived that the cuts represented a short term measure which could shift problems to statutory and more expensive services in the long term.

- d. It was acknowledged that in order to mitigate the impact of the budget reduction, there was a need to nail the approach to the 3 tier model in partnerships across Social Care, Public Health, Housing and other services and connect people to appropriate services or likeminded people in their own communities, minimising the risk of individuals presenting with a formal need, particularly within housing services where it was believed the largest impact would be felt. This concern was amplified for service users with mental health or learning disabilities.
- e. Officers were working in partnership with health colleagues to put forward a scheme of proposals to the Health and Wellbeing Board on 18th August, recommending targeted use of the 'Improve Better Care Fund' monies, within the guidance set.
- f. Over £5m would continue to be invested in the provision of tailored Supporting People Services. There was unanimous agreement that decisions must be supported by a needs and user led approach. It was important to quantify early intervention models across adult and children social services in order to continue to make the case for this work, alongside the development of financial modelling to understand the likely long term financial impact of budget reductions.

The Commission RESOLVED to note the report.

Meeting ended at 4.40 pm

CHAIR _____

