

**CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & LEARNING
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL
3 JULY 2013
7.30 - 9.45 PM**



Present:

Councillors Mrs Birch (Chairman), Mrs Hamilton (Vice-Chairman), Brossard, Ms Brown, Gbadebo, Ms Hayes, Heydon, Kensall, Mrs McCracken and Dr Barnard

Reverend Canon Parish, Church of England Representative
Mr R Briscoe, Parent Governor Representative
Miss V Richardson, Teachers' Representative

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillor Mrs Temperton

Executive Members:

Councillor Dr Barnard

Also Present:

Katharine Simpson, Democratic Services Officer
Andrea Carr, Policy Officer (Overview and Scrutiny)
Lorna Hunt, Chief Officer: Children's Social Care
Dr Janette Karklins, Director of Children, Young People & Learning
Bob Welch, Chief Adviser: Learning & Achievement
Lesley Adams, Senior Admissions Officer
Sandra Davies, Head of Performance Management and Governance
Debbie Greatrex, CAF Co-ordinator, CYPL
Gregory Makarachuk, Youth Parliament
Max Ranger, Youth Parliament
Johane Pitney, Bracknell Forest Youth Council Co-ordinator

1. **Election of Chairman**

RESOLVED that Councillor Mrs Birch be elected Chairman of the Children, Young People and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Panel for the 2013/14 Municipal Year.

COUNCILLOR MRS BIRCH IN THE CHAIR

2. **Appointment of Vice-Chairman**

RESOLVED that Councillor Mrs Hamilton be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Children, Young People and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Panel for the 2013/14 Municipal Year.

3. **Apologies for Absence/Substitute Members**

The Panel noted the presence of the following substitute member:

Councillor Ms Brown for Councillor Mrs Temperton.

4. **Minutes and Matters Arising**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 17 April 2013 be approved as a correct record, and signed by the Chairman.

The Panel received and noted the previously circulated information pertaining to the Family Focus initiative.

Matters Arising

- It was clarified that under the Council's Education Transport Policy a child would receive assistance with transport to school if they were under eight years old and lived in excess of two miles from their allocated school or if they were over eight years old and lived in excess of three miles from their allocated school
- The Working Group to review the provision of school places would consist of Councillors Mrs Birch, Gbadebo, Kensall, Mrs McCracken and Mrs Temperton and Mr R Briscoe. Work on this review would commence shortly.

5. **Declarations of Interest and Party Whip**

There were no declarations of interest nor any indications that Members would be participating whilst under the party whip.

6. **Urgent Items of Business**

There were no urgent items of business.

7. **Public Participation**

No submissions had been made by members of the public under the Council's Public Participation Scheme for Overview and Scrutiny.

8. **Bracknell Forest Youth Council**

Max Ranger and Gregory Makarchuk, Youth Parliament members for Bracknell Forest, gave a presentation in respect of the work that the Youth Council were doing in the Borough.

The Youth Council had 23 elected members ranging from 11 to 19 years with representatives from Ranelagh, Garth Hill, Easthampstead Park and The Brakenhale Schools and Bracknell and Wokingham College and Farnborough Sixth Form College. Young people were able to stand for election to the Youth Council from Year 7 and once elected they could remain a member until they reached 18. The Council met on a weekly basis to share ideas and carry out project work with their current focus being: the Youth Elections, Young Persons' Social Media and Youth Review.

To ensure the Youth Council was representative all young people in Bracknell Forest, work was taking place to develop and build relationships with Sandhurst, Kennel Lane and College Hall Schools and it was hoped that representatives from these schools would stand for election in the autumn term. It was hoped that this work would help develop the Youth Council's succession planning process so that young members had the confidence to take over as older members left.

The Youth Council wanted the Xpressionz website to be a place that young people could use to obtain advice and following a consultation exercise with young people from across the Borough work was taking place to update the site's content. It was

also hoped that the Youth Council's Facebook and Twitter web pages would be incorporated into the website so that the Youth Council could promote its work and events more widely.

Youth Review was the Youth Council's name for scrutiny with review subjects identified through consultation sessions with young people. The Youth Council's current focus was the Youth Provision in the Borough with an emphasis on the provision at the Wayz. As a result of this work it had been found that whilst the range of indoor and outdoor provision at the Wayz was particularly good many young people had expressed dissatisfaction with the approach that was taken towards team bonding sessions and work would take place with young people to look at how this might be developed and improved.

The Panel thanked Max Ranger and Gregory Makarchuk for their informative presentation and invited them to come back to a future meeting of the Panel.

9. Youth Provision

The Director of Children, Young People and Learning gave a presentation providing an update on the modernisation of the Council's Youth Services provision.

Work to modernise the youth service provision was currently in the third year of a three year programme. Since the update given to the Panel in April 2013, work had continued on the modernisation of the Youth Service and the development of a Youth Hub in Bracknell Town Centre in addition other key areas of work included:

- The development of a draft strategy for the engagement of young people which would be approved by the appropriate Executive Portfolio Holder shortly
- Targeted youth work had taken place focusing on: sexual health and relationships, promotion of good health, NEET Support and engagement, promotion of the arts, promotion and engagement with vulnerable groups for example Looked after Children and those with special educational needs and promotion and development of adventure education and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme
- The development of a Youth Service Management Board, including representation from young people, to steer the development of the service in the future

It was reported that there had been an increase in the number of young people accessing youth service events and activities with month on month attendance figures increasing. The number of young carers accessing the service had remained stable but work would take place to link the specialised provision for this group to the mainstream youth provision.

The provision of a Town Centre Youth Hub was a particularly ambitious project which would provide a large multi-use space suitable for a wide range of activities including sports and performances at Coopers Hill. Visits had been made to a number of youth hubs around the country and it was hoped that young people would get involved in the development of the facility. It was agreed that the Youth Council would be provided with regular updates as the project developed.

It was noted that a full programme of events had been planned at Coopers Hill during the summer holidays including an activity day on 21 August and an art exhibition was running at South Hill Park until 21 July.

It was agreed that the presentation would be circulated to the Panel.

10. **Quarterly Service Report**

Lesley Adams, Senior Admissions Officer, gave a presentation in respect of school places provision for the 2013/14 academic year. The Panel was informed that at the current time there were 227 places available in the Borough's Secondary Schools with places at The Brakenhale, Easthampstead Park and Sandhurst Schools. Following the allocation process for Reception year places at the Borough's primary schools there were 72 spare places. Of those asking for a primary school place 96% of children were allocated a place at one of their three preference schools and 87% of children were offered a place at their first preference school.

The School Admissions Team had carried out a significant amount of work to raise awareness of the allocation process amongst parents and the need for parents to have realistic expectations when naming their preferences with regard to school options at both primary entry and secondary transfer stages and this allied to the work that had taken place to increase capacity at primary schools across the Borough had contributed to this positive performance.

Whilst it was acknowledged that the Jennets Park development was nearing completion there were no plans to increase the number of classrooms at Jennets Park Primary School for September 2013 and only 6 designated area children were currently on the waiting list for a Reception place at the School.

It was agreed that the presentation would be circulated to the Panel.

The Chief Advisor: Learning and Achievement gave an update in respect of Ofsted inspections that had taken place in the Borough since January 2013. It was reported that the new more rigorous inspection regime and the school's inability to evidence 'significant progress over a period of many years' had been a significant factor in the outcomes of Crown Wood Primary School's recent inspection. Both The Pines and St Michael's Primary Schools had been under going inspections during the week commencing 1 July and updates would be given at future meetings.

Arising from Members' questions and comments the following points were noted:

- L140 it was clarified that this indicator related to those children placed in foster care or who had been placed for adoption but were not yet adopted
- N1062 related to children in care who made three or more moves in one year
- N1063 this indicator related to those children who had been in care for longer than two and a half years but who had remained in a single placement for at least two years. Bracknell Forest's performance in this area compared well to national data
- L141 included repeat visits to youth centres. The recently introduced new recording systems for youth service data would give more detailed information in the future
- L141 It was agreed that the number of young people visiting youth centres would be included in future reports
- Efforts were made to resolve complaints at an early stage whenever possible
- It was clarified that complaints were often deferred when a child was subject to legal proceedings
- The Annual Complaints Report would be brought to the Panel's next meeting
- Under Medium Term Objective 10 it was confirmed that the reference made to the European Social Fund Project was the project taking place with the Nepali community to improve their English skills and general health

Officers noted the Panel's concerns that a number of the trend arrows did not match the performance data. The Panel were informed that this was an anomaly of the performance management system used by the Council and was subject to debate at officer level in an effort to identify an appropriate way forward, particularly for a number of Children's Social care indicators which were needs based and could not be performance measured.

The Panel noted the report.

11. Service Plan 2013/14 - Revised Key Actions and Indicators

The Panel received a report containing the Children, Young People and Learning Service Plan for 2013/14 and its associated key actions. The Service Plan formed a key part of the Council's overall planning framework and provided an aide to monitoring the Department's performance.

The Family Focus project was operating on a payment by results basis with targets being set on a case by case basis and monitored through individual action plans. As progress was demonstrated then more families could be brought into the project with the original cohort being expanded from 35 to 100 families as the project progressed.

The Panel noted the report.

12. Adoption Service Annual Report

The Panel received the Adoption Service Annual Report for the period 2012-2013.

The Panel was informed that at 31 March 2013 there were 17 children with plans for adoption in Bracknell Forest, a significant increase in the number since 2010 when there had been three. The number of adoption orders granted in 2012-13 stood at eight, this compared favourably to the previous year when no orders had been made. Two children had been adopted before their first birthdays, a figure that was considered exceptional in view of the fact that nationally only 77 children had been adopted before their first birthdays.

The Panel noted that the majority of children subject to adoption plans were those that it had been necessary to remove from their families.

The Panel commended the work of the adoption service.

13. Foster Care Service Annual Report 2013

The Panel received the Annual Report of the Fostering Service for 2012-2013. The total number of Looked After Children as at March 2013 showed a sustained increase over previous years. A Bracknell Forest Fostering Panel had been established in 2012.

It was noted that approximately 50% of Looked After Children were in long term foster care with the remaining 50% moving back to their families as necessary.

The Panel commended the work of the Fostering Team and the Borough's Foster Carers.

14. Common Assessment Framework

The Panel received a briefing on the work of the Early Intervention Hub and the implementation of the Common Assessment Framework over the past twelve months.

It was reported that work to increase the capacity of the service had been undertaken and an early intervention social worker had been appointed to support families that had been identified as needing additional support and to develop links with the Family Focus project. The processes surrounding the Early Intervention Hub had been streamlined with a single referral process replacing the three integrated pathways previously in place and the redesigning of referral forms to make them more user friendly. A Family Common Assessment Framework had also been rolled out and was being used successfully. Over the past year the Adult Social Care, and Housing Sections and Health Visitors had been active participants in the Early Intervention Hub's work and it was hoped that more sectors would engage with the service in the future.

Work was also taking place to improve engagement with young people and a leaflet that had been developed to use in schools to explain the assessment process would be circulated to the Panel.

During the past twelve months 84 assessments had been carried out on primary school pupils, 51 assessments had been carried out on children in the Early Years settings and 41 assessments had been carried out on secondary school students and agencies were working to develop focused tailored support packages for families. Of those children assessed there was an element of domestic abuse identified in 23% of cases and work was taking place to look at this aspect in more detail.

It was reported that the introduction of the Early Intervention Hub and the Common Assessment Framework was making the transition process between adults and children's social services an easier one.

It was agreed that the Service's Annual Report would be brought to a future meeting of the Panel.

15. Children and Young People's Plan

The Panel received a report containing a review of the progress made against the Joint Strategic Plan for Children and Young People in Bracknell Forest 2011-2014. The Panel was informed that following the progress review a number of the secondary priorities underpinning the four overarching Outcome priorities would be revised to ensure they remained current and relevant.

The Panel commended the layout of the report.

16. School Governance Overview and Scrutiny Report

The Panel considered the draft report resulting from the review of school governance undertaken by a working group of the Panel.

The Panel noted the comprehensive nature of the review and the high levels of engagement with governors that had taken place. School governors were commended for the hard work that they undertook in this voluntary role. Officers in the Overview and Scrutiny and Governor Services Teams were thanked for

supporting the review which would assist with developing the service. It was agreed that the names of those who had been part of the working group would be added to the front of the report. Copies of the report would be sent to all governing bodies and head teachers.

The Panel agreed and adopted the report of its Working Group for sending formally to the relative Executive Member for a response.

17. Overview and Scrutiny Progress Report

The Panel received and noted a report providing an update on activity in overview and scrutiny during the period September 2012 to April 2013.

18. Executive Key and Non-Key Decisions

The Panel noted the scheduled Executive Key and Non-key Decisions relating to Children, Young People and Learning.

CHAIRMAN