

## **Minutes of the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee Meeting held on 5 March 2018**

Present: John Francis (Chairman)

Syed Hussain  
Trevor Johnson  
Jason Jones  
Kyle Robinson

Paul Snape  
Conor Wileman (Vice-Chairman)  
Victoria Wilson  
Mike Worthington

**Apologies:** Natasha Pullen

### **PART ONE**

#### **1. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **2. Minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2018**

**RESOLVED** - That the minutes of the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee meeting held on 15 January 2018 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

#### **3. Children and Families System Transformation**

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People introduced this report. This had been the seventh update to the Committee. The Children and Families System Transformation Programme continues to address the challenges identified within the children's social care system and the broader children's system. The Children and Families Transformation System Programme represents a new way of working that has been developed with partners, which recognises the importance of system leadership, commissioning in partnership and empowering communities and families to help each other and themselves.

The report detailed the progress that had been made since the last update to the Committee in July 2017.

The Cabinet Member stated that further progress had been made in regard to the Pilot Projects and invited Members' questions.

In regard to the aspiration to bring specialist drug and alcohol into the Integrated Child and Family Hubs, Member asked if the hubs would be supported by specialist or generalist staff, and questioned if they would have the capacity to deal with the identified needs.

The County Commissioner for Community Safety and Children stated that they would be looking for specialist staff. Finance and housing expertise had been identified as significant issues for families and families. The teams of different disciplines would be integrated within Children and Families and then expanded to vulnerable adults in due

course. This had been shown as good practice elsewhere e.g. Hertfordshire. It was hoped that this system would help those on the cusp of care.

Members asked if the Council was working closely with Borough and District Councils. The Cabinet Member responded that there was close working with Borough and District Councils as there were issues of revenue and benefits and housing that were affecting the same families in all systems. We were looking to share information and intelligence.

The BRFC Co-ordinator added that she was leading on the Finance and Housing work stream. An application for £3m funding had been made to central government and the outcome would be known next week. Part of this funding stream will resource the secondment of a Department of Work and Pensions worker who can work across families who are in temporary accommodation or who have a private landlord in Cannock and Newcastle. The reason for working with these families is that it is in this area that private landlords do not sit within a structure where they have social responsibility and have access to wider support. The BRFC Co-ordinator is working closely with the Jobs Centre to ensure employment needs are met efficiently. It can take 6-8 weeks for benefit processes to be completed. The Project Worker will be able to redirect benefits or get benefits into those families quickly. The DWP budget has a budget that is deployed to each district and borough councils to support budgeting and money matters for our most vulnerable families. In Staffordshire this DWP budget is underspent so it is important to ensure that this money is spent and directed to support families in crisis.

There is close working with Trent and Dove Housing and Your Housing and other housing organisations, but there is a need for consistent partnership working countywide.

Members asked about the relationship with housing associations that had a significant housing stock which they are selling off family houses and building properties outside the county, for example a large number of people in Kidsgrove are not able to get access to the housing they need.

The report also referred to the fact that the County Council would act as a broker for the Direct Schools Grant, acting on behalf of the schools to offer earliest and early help provision through commissioning arrangements based on the needs in each of the eight districts and asked if a progress report on this could be brought to the Committee. The Cabinet Member agreed to bring this as part of a fuller report to the Committee in September/October 2018.

The County Commissioner suggested that the issue of housing should be addressed at a more strategic level within the County Council. The Cabinet Member agreed to take this point away and make further enquiries.

Members asked how the PBA new Family Service Contract was being monitored. The BRFC Co-ordinator responded that the Council was working with the school, but that the challenge was in changing the culture of parents.

a) Children and Families Transformation Programme

In regard to the aspiration to bring specialist drug and alcohol into the Integrated Child and Family Hubs, Member asked if the hubs would be supported by specialist or generalist staff, and questioned if they would have the capacity to deal with the identified needs.

The County Commissioner for Community Safety and Children stated that they would be looking for specialist staff. Finance and housing expertise had been identified as significant issues for families and families. The teams would be integrated within Children and Families and then expanded to vulnerable adults.

Members asked if the Council was working closely with Borough and District Councils. The Cabinet Member responded that there was close working with Borough and District Councils as there were issues of revenue and benefits and housing that were affecting the same families in all systems.

The BRFC Co-ordinator added that she was leading on the Finance and Housing work stream. An application for funding had been made to central government and the outcome would be known next week. The funding will resource a Department of Work and Pensions worker who can work across families who are in temporary accommodation or who have a private landlord in Cannock and Newcastle. The reason for working with these families is that it is in this area that private landlords do not sit within a structure where there is access to support. The BRFC Co-ordinator is working closely with the Jobs Centre to ensure employment needs are met efficiently. It can take 4-8 weeks for benefit processes to be completed. The Project Worker will be able to direct or redirect families to other sources of finance. The DWP budget is underspent in Staffordshire so it is important to ensure that money is directed to support families in crisis.

There is close working with Trent and Dove Housing and Your Housing and other housing organisations, but there is a need for consistency countywide.

Members asked about the relationship with housing associations that had a significant housing stock outside the county for example a large number of people in Kidsgrove have private landlords in Cheshire and they are not getting the benefit of the sales of properties. Families are not therefore getting access to the type of family housing that they need. The Cabinet Member agreed to take this point back and investigate this matter further.

The report also referred to the fact that the County Council would act as a broker for the Direct Schools Grant, acting on behalf of the schools to offer earliest and early help provision through commissioning arrangements based on the needs in each of the eight districts and asked if a progress report on this could be brought to the Committee. The Cabinet Member agreed to bring this as part of a fuller report to the Committee in September/October 2018.

Members suggested that the issue of housing should be addressed at a more strategic level within the County Council. The Cabinet Member agreed to take this point back to Cabinet.

Members asked how the PBA new Family Service Contract was being monitored. The BRFC Co-ordinator responded that the Council was working with the school, but that the challenge was in changing the culture of parents.

**RESOLVED:** a) The Cabinet Member bring back a progress report on the use of the Direct Schools Grant in September/October 2018.

b) the Cabinet Member agreed to take back the issues raised regarding housing for further consideration and report back to the Committee.

b) Children's & Families System Transformation & Update on Pilot Projects

Turning to the Update on Pilot Projects, the Chairman congratulated the Cabinet Member for the outreach work done in the Stafford area.

Members asked how the projects would be rolled out to other areas.

The Commissioner for Culture and Communities referred Members to the Conclusions in the report. The practice in the pilots was been used to consider how one key voluntary provider could be used as a lynchpin to direct families with low level need to other services and prevent escalation to high levels of need. The way in which the Families Support Contract had been tendered facilitated this development.

Members asked for further information on how the Girl Power project in Newcastle is monitored. A detailed analysis of the Newcastle pilot had been given in the previous paper to the Committee. The learning from the pilot had been considered as part of the One Front Door discussions and the work on setting up the daily vulnerability hubs in each district. The Girl Power has been continued and is picked up as part of the local monitoring.

The Newcastle Partnership budget is held by the Borough Council. The BRFC payment by results goes into this pot with other funding streams. The District Commissioning Officer monitors the budget with the Borough Council.

Members referred to the impact of school exclusion and asked how this was being managed.

The BRFC Co-ordinator explained that we work closely with schools in Staffordshire but we need to work more closely with them and children before they are excluded. The Commissioner stated that we will work closely with the eight District Inclusion Panels, as there are different policies in each of the districts. If a child is excluded from school more than three times they are 22 times more likely to be in the Children's Social Care System. School exclusion is a high risk vulnerability factor. The DSG provides an opportunity for joining up work in this area. Elected Members raised the issue of children who were home educated and stated that the Working Group on Elective Home Education were trying to identify how many of them were excluded from school in Staffordshire.

The Cabinet Member stated that South Staffordshire was a SEND pilot area and the aim was for schools to work together with one or two secondary schools to take earlier

ownership of issues. In areas where schools were working together the pilots had been more successful.

Members acknowledged the positive family support work that was going on with Malachi in Tamworth and asked how this pilot would be rolled out.

The BRFC Co-ordinator stated that a formal tender process had been completed and six contracts had been awarded to work with those on the threshold or cusp of care. All providers had the opportunity to tender and unsuccessful providers would still currently delivering services in some areas. There are still some voluntary providers working in communities without contracts.

In Tamworth there was agreement in five districts to put their DSG grant into Malachi. The list of Family Support Services on page 33 of the papers would be updated now that the new contracts had been awarded.

Members asked how referrals would be made to voluntary providers. The BRFC Co-ordinator responded that some referrals that come through the One Front Door do not meet the threshold for intervention. Voluntary organisations and other networks of support will be able to help in these cases. The voluntary sector (SCYVS) is leading on this.

The County Commissioner stated that the Family Support Contract focusses on those on the cusp of need for support at Tier 3. The intention is to give partners the confidence to refer as appropriate when families have lower level needs. Work is going on to ensure that there are consistent pathways across the county.

The Tier 2 Family Support Contract is jointly funded by Early Years and BRFC. If the application for funding from central government (mentioned earlier) was successful funding will go directly to the Districts rather than on the basis of payment by results. Districts will be responsible for identifying need and allocating resources on the basis of assessment of need. The appendices to the paper showed local needs plotted on an outcome star diagram.

Members asked how many families were being supported in Staffordshire. The County Commissioner agreed to let the Committee have a breakdown of the figures.

Members asked for details of the numbers associated with the percentages in paragraph 20 of the report. The County Commissioner agreed to let the Member have these figures.

With reference to the Ready Steady Library in Burton on Trent the local Member asked for further detail regarding the participant locations. It was agreed to send further detail through to the local Member.

The local Member stated that he had been in touch with Members of the local community that was multi-cultural in its make-up, and some members of his community had no knowledge of this project. He cited two cases of local families in extreme poverty without access to basic food and provisions. One mother in the area had tried to take

her own life. He stated that it was these examples of poverty that the Council should be concerned with. He reiterated a concern that he had expressed at an earlier meeting that local Members should be fully engaged in work going on in their areas.

Members acknowledged the work going on to support those in super output areas, but stated that there were some small rural areas that suffered from deprivation.

The County Commissioner acknowledged that the pilot in the Shobnall area had been challenging.

The BRFC Co-ordinator agreed to ensure that the local Members were involved in the projects that were taking place in their areas. Every effort had been made to involve local Members in the pilots.

The Cabinet Member stressed the importance of school readiness and improvements that the Council had made over recent years in this regard. The focus had been on those living in super output areas. He acknowledged that although 80 per cent of children were school ready, 20 per cent were not and he urged local Members to engage with their District Advisory Boards to understand the issues and the impact that school readiness could have in the medium to long term.

Members asked for an update on the Children and Families Transformation and the Cabinet Member informed them that he was hopeful that consultation would begin soon.

**RESOLVED:** a) The list of Family Support Services on page 33 of the papers would be updated now that the new contracts had been awarded.

b) The County Commissioner agreed to let the Committee have a breakdown of the figures.

c) It was agreed to send further detail on the Ready Steady Library project through to the local Member.

d) Local Members were urged to engage with their District Advisory Boards to understand the issues and the impact that school readiness could have in the medium to long term.

e) It was agreed to bring a further update on the Children and Families Transformation Programme to a future meeting.

#### **4. Work Programme**

The Scrutiny and Support Manager updated Members on the Work Programme.

**Children's Centres 3 years' on** - Members had requested that they revisit the work that they did in regard to Children's Centres 3/4 years ago. It was agreed that the Children's Commissioning Officer attend the June meeting to update Members on progress and that they visit the Children's Centres in their districts during June/July, before the summer holidays. A copy of the relevant papers including the Cabinet report will be shared with Members in due course.

**Safeguarding Concerns over Rise in Crime** - The date for the special meeting with the Chief Constable and Police and Crime Commissioner had been rearranged to 23 April at 11.00 a.m. in the Oak Room. Members were asked to send in their questions to Tina Gould or Helen Phillips. Councillor Snape stated that he had been in touch with the Chair and Secretary of the Staffordshire Police Federation to get their view on local policing. He would be forwarding questions in due course.

Members who had not already received **Child Protection Level 1 training** should put their names forward and attend this training.

In regard to **CSE** the Cabinet Member stated that he had been approached by both middle schools that take children in his division requesting that Chelsea's Choice (a play on child sexual exploitation) be shown to Year 8 pupils. The Cabinet Member suggested that a joint letter go out to all Members encouraging them to fund Chelsea's Choice through their Local Community Fund if available.

The County Commissioner stressed the importance of embedding teaching about sex and relationships in the Personal, Health, Social and Economic (PHSE) curriculum in schools. A proposal was being considered by the Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board to develop the offer across Staffordshire for schools and other partners.

**How to engage Hard to Reach Communities** - The Local Member for Burton updated Members on progress. A visit by the Chair and Vice Chairman to the Central Mosque had resulted in further visits by senior managers and they were close to achieving a women only gym. There was commitment from the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner had offered some equipment to refurbish the gym.

**RESOLVED:** That the Work Programme be amended to reflect the above changes.

## **5. Exclusion of the Public**

**RESOLVED** - That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business which involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 indicated below.

## **6. Exempt minutes of the Safe & Strong Communities Select Committee held on 15 January 2018**

**RESOLVED** - That the Exempt Minutes of the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee held on 15 January be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

**Chairman**

Documents referred to in these minutes as Schedules are not appended, but will be attached to the signed copy of the Minutes of the meeting. Copies, or specific information contained in them, may be available on request.