

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET COMMITTEE CORPORATE PARENTING HELD HYBRID - COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND /REMOTELY ON WEDNESDAY, 19 APRIL 2023 AT 09:30

Present

Councillor J Gebbie – Chairperson

JPD Blundell
T Thomas

HJ David
A Wathan

N Farr
AJ Williams

J E Pratt
HM Williams

Officers:

Steve Berry	Corporate Parenting and Participation Officer
Rachel Keepins	Democratic Services Manager
Claire Marchant	Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing

20. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

W R Goode and JC Spanswick

21. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

22. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting dated 12 January 2023 be approved as a true and accurate record.

23. **UPDATE ON CORPORATE PARENTING DEVELOPMENT**

The report was presented by the Corporate Parenting and Participation Officer for BCBC. The purpose of which was to provide the Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting with an update on the development of Corporate Parenting in Bridgend.

He stated that as the report mentioned, the service were in a position where they had sub group meetings recurring on a quarterly basis, their board meeting had been fully integrated, partnering multi agencies, they were in a position where they had their strategy ready to be launched on Thursday the 27th of April 2023.

The new strategy was designed with a translation into Welsh and explained the purpose of the service, their plans, priorities, how they planned to evaluate progress and understand requirements of the future.

The CPP Officer also stated that they had secured 45 promises within the strategy and those were their commitments as multi agency professionals, leaders and senior managers, stating their intentions in their individual roles to support the Care Experienced children, young people and care leavers. The service was to be held to account by the Youth forum and there were measures put in place by the forum to be able to be supported to question any of these promises and evaluate progress with the support of Tros Gynnal Plant (TGP Cymru) who are advocacy providers and they facilitate the forum along with the CPP Officer. He concluded by inviting all members to attend the Launch planned later on in the month.

The Chairperson commented she was pleased about the process followed and the progress made. She was pleased to know of a robust mechanism in place now for children and young people to be heard and listened to.

She stated that they found it interesting that when they started this journey, other organisations who had responsibility for corporate parenting did not really understand what their responsibilities and duties were. These Organisations have since been more engaged and BCBC have a better focus on what is required by the Care Experienced young people.

RESOLVED: The Committee considered the contents of the report and supported the progress of the Corporate Parenting development.

24. **MY SUPPORT TEAM AND RESIDENTIAL & THERAPEUTIC REVIEW**

The Report was introduced by The Head of Children's Social Care, the purpose of which was to provide the Corporate Parenting Committee with an update on:

- Grant funding secured from Welsh Government, under the National Improving Outcomes for Children, Eliminating Private Profit Programme to develop and implement a My Support Team (MyST) service
- The root and branch review of residential and therapeutic services
- The new children's residential service that is being developed

She stated that it provided the committee with an update on further developments in the placement service, particularly within the residential provision in Bridgend and the therapeutic support that was offered to the Care Experienced Children as outlined in the report.

The Head of Children's Social Care stated that in the Autumn of 2022, the service submitted a bid to Welsh Government under the eliminating profit agenda to further enhance their existing provision and development being the models that they were hoping to expand on, described in detail within the report.

She stated they had secured funding to expand the staff and establishment across the residential provision in Bridgend so that they could have a greater skill set and more experience in the staff cohort for the homes that currently provide for care experienced children.

The Head of Children's Social Care elaborated on the role of the "My Support Team (MyST)" service stating that it was about creating a team around the child that will assess their needs, identify the best option for permanence and wrap around support to achieve it. Prior to finalising the role, The Institute of Public Care was commissioned to review the existing approaches delivered to date and sought recommendations how best to maximise funding to build on current processes to provide more support for children and young people with complex needs, who need intensive interventions to overcome trauma. She stated that the aim was to register the new provision "Meadows View" by June 2023 hopefully ready to open with the new team in place. She concluded her presentation and invited questions for herself and/or the officer whose role was Responsible Individual - Children's Social Care.

The Chairperson stated that she felt that the trauma informed model was an excellent model of good practice. She said she felt it to be very flexible to work with the increasing demands and the complexity of cases received. Meadows View was named by Bridgend children and it was her opinion that it was important they have ownership over their own home because essentially that was what it was going to be for them.

The Chairperson expressed concerns that the service were offering employment contracts for the new staff for two years whereas she felt it needed to be sustainable as she could not imagine that the staff would not be needed after that two year period.

The Corporate Director for Social Services and Wellbeing responded to say that as part of the registration process, in terms of the way staff is employed, budget pressures were put forward, which the Council approved in terms of the budget setting for the year 2023, this enabled to put in place the best permanent workforce attainable. However, flexibility was also utilised eliminating profit money from Welsh Government, which at the moment was 2 year grant funding. Challenges were presented, not just to this service but within many services in the county borough reliant on grant funding, which does not have a life span beyond the initial allocation. It was vital to the service that they had a financial sustainability plan. As a service, it was envisaged that there would be a reduction in the number of children who had to move out of county into expensive independent sector residential care homes as a consequence of this provision.

She stated that they would envisage that sustainably they would be reducing the number of children who required long term residential care support, because through that intensive assessment approach and therapeutic approach, it was hoped for them to be able to live within foster families in the county borough. The Corporate Director for Social Services and Wellbeing stated it was imperative to utilise that budget most effectively over the next two of years to get to a position where sustainable long term contracts for the workforce are achieved while reducing costs in other parts of the system.

The Leader queried the relationship and partnership with Cwm Taf University Health Board in relation to the support expected to be provided as it needed to be seamless. He stated that meeting the health needs of these children and young people was vital and a collaboration with the Health board would be required to ensure that the support was seamless.

The Head of Children's Social Care responded that while the Health Board had not made an actual commitment in terms of services they would provide, they will participate in the review with recommendations for the service to reach.

The Leader suggested that representatives from the Health Board are invited to meet and discuss how best to discharge responsibilities.

The Corporate Director for Social Services responded to the Leader stating that in terms of the previous report, they had commitments from all partners with clarity and the board chaired by the Deputy Leader has had good representation on a senior level from all those partners. She stated that she would envisage that, going forward, all of those partners would come in turn into the formal Cabinet Committee to set out how they're delivering against their commitments in terms of the specifics around the report.

The Corporate Director for Social Services stated that it was important that the engagement of IPC results in an outcome where they were clear that their contribution was in terms of professional leadership and clinical oversight of services delivered. She went on to say that a lot of time was spent with Welsh Government in terms of this agenda and they highlighted examples of good practice from elsewhere in in Wales, where the input of Health Boards was very strong in very practical terms in terms of similar residential provisions that were being developed.

She stated that there are a number of mechanisms in addition to the review of IPC, there's the Regional Partnership Board with which the Deputy Leader Chairs which had received a children's partnership as part of that and developing Residential provision was one of the key priorities through that residential partnerships. There were upcoming

meetings at very senior level with the Health Board in which discussions about BCBC priorities and priorities for children and young people are anticipated.

The Chairperson invited the Responsible Individual - Children's Social Care to share further information and he stated that the next part of the APC review was going to be a workshop or a feedback session with CAMS and Education were being invited as well.

The Leader queried if the new model was being implemented in the new provision in Brynmenyn to which the Chairperson responded that it was important one model of practice was utilised so that staff and children, whoever they are being managed by, supported by, living with, they would all be managed and supported in the same way.

This was reiterated by the Head of Children's Social Care.

The Leader also queried plans in place to work with specialist educational provision with Ysgol Bryn Castell, Heronsbridge and the Bridge to ensure that that the model adopted is consistent across that young person's life, as it is recognised that a big part of a child's life is in school and education and therefore require it to be complementary and consistent in its approach.

The Deputy Leader responded that as part of the Corporate Parenting strategy, one of the things done was delivering signs of safety. The practise model would go to all organisations to impart a basic level of understanding about the way the service works.

The Head of Children's Social Care stated that when the grant application was compiled in Autumn 2022, colleagues from the education and Family Support Directorate worked on it with the service and there was exploration in terms of whether it was needed to develop an education provision up in Meadows View.

It was suggested as an option but had insufficient funding.

The Service preferred that the Care Experienced children attend an existing settings as well spend time with the children outside of the home they living in as well. She confirmed the involvement of the Education and Family Support directorate and stated that whilst an education provision was not being developed, there were conversations about the development of the MyST service.

She informed the committee that she was invited to the stakeholder event referred to earlier and was confident that other colleagues from schools referenced would be as well because the schools named were primarily the ones they were in contact with.

RESOLVED: It was recommended that Cabinet Committee – Corporate Parenting noted the contents of the report.

25. **IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BRIDGEND EXPLOITATION PREVENTION PANEL**

The Report was presented by the Peripatetic Group Manager, the purpose of which was to inform the Committee of the progress to date in developing and implementing a multi-agency operational Exploitation Prevention Panel in Bridgend.

She shared a presentation with the committee and invited questions.

The Chairperson stated she was pleased to see progress take form and sought some clarity. She queried if the tools mentioned in the presentation were being used in Early Help and A&E because it was a regional strategy. She stated that the inspection picked up that it was something for all partners and she was looking for reassurance.

The Peripatetic Group Manager responded to confirm that Early Help was on board with utilising the tools mentioned but she assured the committee that she would reach out to Hospitals as well.

A member queried how they intended to gain parental engagement to ensure children are not exploited.

The Peripatetic Group Manager responded, relating to work undertaken in her role in a previous Local Authority, and stated she would be happy to share the resources utilised and thereby share with a wider audience, she however also stated that it was work in progress within the current setting.

A member queried if there has been consideration to extending community engagement towards the night-time economy, namely pubs, night clubs and door supervisors.

The Peripatetic Group Manager responded stating that developing their relationships with the wider community was essential to the strategy and though a slow process, it was work in progress.

The Leader added that such exploitation was masked and hidden where the young people themselves were seen as offenders because they had been exploited to commit offences, he queried the role of South Wales Police, as whilst there was a crucial role for the authority in terms of safeguarding and social services, there was an equally important role for South Wales Police to make it clear to people / to the perpetrators, as it was children and young people of the borough that are being exploited. As such, it should be regarded as a crime and therefore requires work with South Wales Police to ensure those crimes are detected and criminals brought to justice.

He stated that he would welcome an update in the future from South Wales Police.

The Corporate Director for Social Services and Wellbeing stated that South Wales Police had their structure and support the work done to prevent and to address exploitation. They had created a central resource in the BCU linked to South Wales Police. There is also a Violent Prevention Unit (VPU) that the safeguarding board had made a bid into, that they had pencilled in the resources for BCBC. She said that BCBC was expected to have more strategic resources at a regional level progressing and developing the strategy across CTM. In addition to that the Peripatetic Group Manager had been expertly leading partnerships to make sure that, operationally, BCBC are where they need to be. She suggested that possibly, six months to a year from now, the Social Services directorate re-visited the committee with its partners to update on progress that has been made.

The Leader welcomed this with an additional action point that the committee received a report from partners. Given the seriousness and the scale of the challenge, he believed that six months would be a timely opportunity to measure progress made.

RESOLVED:

- It is recommended that the Committee considers the report on the current progress of the work around exploitation and supports the proposal to establish a multi-agency Exploitation Prevention Panel in Bridgend.
- The Committee is to receive a report from partners in 6 months.

26. URGENT ITEMS

None

The meeting closed at 10:19