

**Better Start Bradford Partnership Board Minutes  
Thursday 18 January 2018  
Mayfield Centre**

**Meeting Started:** 17.30

**Meeting Ended:** 19.10

**Present:**

Vipin Joshi	Community Board member (Chair)
Talat Sajawal	Ward Councillor, CBMDC
Michaela Howell	Programme Director, Better Start Bradford
Julia Elliot	Interim Head of Children's Services, BDCFT
Peter Horner	Voluntary Sector Representative, Bradford District Assembly
Sarah Hinton	Board Member, Bradford Trident (items 1 to 7 only)
Ruth Hayward	Head of Commissioning (Women and Children), Bradford & Airedale CCGs
Christy Bischoff	Community Board member
Nasim Qureshi	Community Board member
Rashida Latif	Community Board member (items 1 to 6 only)
Shaheen Khan	Community Board member

**In Attendance**

Mark Anslow	Programme Director, Early Help, CBMDC (in place of Michael Jameson) (items 1 to 6 only)
Gill Thornton	Head of Programme, Better Start Bradford
Guy Dove	Programme Administrator, Better Start Bradford

**Apologies for Absence:**

Kev Taylor	Mumtaz Elahi	Michael Jameson	Jenny Cryer
Sara Keogh	Gill Hart	Shaza Omer	Nahed Akhtar
Rosie McEachan	Gwen Balson	Nasreen Khan	Shirley Brierley

**1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies**

Vipin welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted the apologies.

**2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting – 14 December 2017**

The minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record.

**3. Matters Arising actions table**

Michaela confirmed the data administrator post has just been advertised.

Pre-Schoolers in the Playground will be covered under item 8.

Michaela said the perinatal coordinator position will be advertised tomorrow with interviews at the end of February.

Parents in the Lead will be discussed at the February Partnership Board, after the consultation exercise.

#### **4. Declarations of Interest**

Peter mentioned that there is a suggested action point for CABAD in item 7 (Lessons Learned in Commissioning).

#### **5. 'Getting to know you' session – Nasim Qureshi**

Nasim agreed to be recorded for this session.

Nasim said he was born in Karachi, Pakistan then at the age of three months his family moved to Lebanon where he lived for the next ten years. His father worked in foreign affairs and so Nasim moved to a different country every five years, including Kuwait, Iran and Iraq where he lived opposite Saddam Hussein's palace in Baghdad. Nasim moved to the UK in the late 1980s, unable to speak English, and decided he wanted to put down some roots and get an education which he had missed by moving around so much. He spent the first year learning English, then did O-Levels at Shipley College, A-Levels and then a degree in Finance and Business. He initially wanted to be an accountant but left his job after a year and did a degree in Housing.

Nasim then worked in the regeneration of Holme Wood for four years which he enjoyed and then became a neighbourhood officer in Laisterdyke. He joined a housing association and did two national roles with an area manager's job in between them, but then became tired of all the travelling and became a senior regeneration manager at Bradford Council for nine years. He has always lived in Bradford since moving to the UK and was originally based in BD3 and knows Bradford East very well.

He is now CEO at Inspired Neighbourhoods which was founded six years ago with 2 employees and now has 21. The organisation has moved into asset management and built their own premises and cover many other things including physical and mental health, employment advice, they run a library and are a commercial landlord. They have a branch in Little Horton and are building 50 homes and a health centre at Wood Lane.

Nasim has seen enormous changes in Bradford and although he now lives in Shipley he lived in the inner city and saw changes in South Asian and Eastern European demographics. He is very aware of inequalities in the district such as ten year differences in life expectancy and fears that over the next five years technology will cause many jobs to be lost. Another concern is older people's communities breaking down and there not being enough culturally appropriate accommodation for them. Nasim mentioned aspiration and Inspired Neighbourhoods delivering meaningful change in partnership with other organisations like the council.

Nasim has been married for 30 years and has three children. The eldest has a first class degree in Finance, the next one works for Anchor Housing and the youngest is ten years old and football-mad.

The Partnership Board thanked Nasim for his presentation.

## **6. Prevention and Early Help proposal**

Mark passed around some information including the proposed draft structure for the Prevention and Early Help service. There was also an outline of the key functions and a diagram showing the goals of the proposal.

There are three consultations that are live; Prevention and Early Help, special educational needs and disability and the council's draft budget. Prevention and Early Help has a multi-agency partnership board chaired by Michael Jameson and including Michaela and Peter. Mark said they would need to draw on the efforts of the whole system.

Mark went through a presentation showing the aims of the proposal and its three principles. His team are currently mapping all the local programmes which run to at least four sides of A4.

Mark presented a map of Bradford district which shows deprivation indicators by ward. Ten wards have consistently done less well and although needs will be picked up in other wards the proposal will concentrate on these areas. He outlined the cuts in funding from national government which means there will be much less available to spend on Prevention and Early Help against a background of high demand and increasing numbers of children with complex needs. Some outcomes are improving but others look worse, and there is a need to narrow the gap with the national average and within the district. By 2020/21 savings must be found of £13.3m compared to 2016/17.

The proposal is to move from separate services, including the seven children's centre clusters, to a new Prevention and Early Help service which will reduce duplication so families will not have a series of interventions from different services. Some services will be delivered centrally such as safeguarding.

Four area-based teams are proposed - (Keighley/Shipley, East, West and South). Mark read out the Area Team's roles which are based on collective work for the family by a single team.

The proposal is for the local authority to provide core teams alongside a number of commissioned services and Mark said this would involve a 54 per cent reduction in the number of full time equivalent staff. The council are engaging in the three month consultation. Mark says there is a need to maintain a community focus and none of the 41 children's centre sites are proposed to close at this stage, but some are outreach sites delivering a minimum of eight hours a week. The buildings will be developed into community/family hubs in time.

Mark said his team are working closely with Public Health and other current providers and the intention is for Public Health services for 0-19s to be recommissioned. The service specification for this is being developed and will be fully integrated with the proposed Prevention and Early Help model.

The consultation ends on 12 February and there are negotiations with the trade unions and discussions can continue beyond this date. Mark is expecting about 600 responses to the consultation then the proposal will go the council's Executive in April with implementation due from 1 October 2018.

Michaela then gave the Better Start Bradford perspective on the proposal. We are involved in the discussions and it is a partnership though it is a very difficult discussion at times for partners as only council services are being remodelled. BSB's focus is to preserve prevention which in time will reduce the call on social care. Mark is due to meet the BSB team on Monday.

The proposed model will have direct implications on BSB's programme and this happened before when the 41 children's centres were put into 7 clusters, with impacts on budgets and relationships. We had to increase budgets for our projects for venues and staffing. Michaela noted that some of our projects are targeted and that the demand for them may rise. She is working on an official BSB response to the consultation.

Nasim said the proposed restructure would have a massive impact in terms of staffing numbers and he noted that 2020/21 is quite soon and wondered if the new service would be sustainable beyond then. He felt that partnerships with other organisations delivering services had not been outlined fully in the presentation and documents and that demand for BSB's services was likely to rise. Shaheen described an Ofsted study which tracked three families which showed it can take three or four years for interventions to have a positive effect and we have only just started delivering some BSB projects. Mark said the proposal is based on aspiration and although collectively there are less resources, the aim is to make it work by cutting out duplication, using co-location, working together and best use of collective resources.

Michaela said the council understands that BSB provision is on top of and not instead of existing or withdrawn services and Vipin said differences may widen with places like Keighley Central where there is no BSB. Nasim noted BSB does not cover all of Bradford East and we do not want to be seen to widen inequalities though Rashida observed three of the six children's centres in East are not in BSB and our programme has caused no changes between them and the BSB ones yet.

Ruth said the council cannot allow BSB to replace core services and if we needed to fund a building to stay open for our purposes we would need to ask the BLF. Rashida remarked she has said to her families that BSB's projects will remain and Action for Children have other corporate partners.

Talat said we should focus on what we have to deliver. We have relied on staff from other organisations and increased ours and should not duplicate anything and remember that some projects are part of children's centres core offer and we will be looked at to fund more staff. Peter said children's centres should also look to other community organisations for support. Michaela agreed with this and said we would look at strengthening resources and it might be better if this is done across all the organisations we rely on.

Julia said this was the first time she had seen the proposed workforce structure and she felt there was still some duplication in leadership roles between the local authority and Public Health. Mark confirmed his team would explore ideas like that. Talat said that focussing on children aged from 0 to 3, there should be more space available at the outreach sites and

Parents in the Lead projects could have a role and this was an opportunity for BSB to say what we are delivering.

Gill asked if the proposal states that some people will need Early Years skills and Mark said school readiness and Early Years remain a priority although the system is for 0 to 19s and Michaela said it recognises some staff will need to have specialisms.

Mark observed, in response to a query from Guy, that some other northern metropolitan councils are also cutting children's services. He also mentioned North Yorkshire as an example of a council which is a couple of years ahead of Bradford in this process and said there has been some useful learning from them.

Michaela confirmed she has talked to the BLF who have seen the proposals and said we need to discuss workforce development in Bradford East and she will talk to Mark and Judith about staffing and what we might add to ensure the successful delivery of our programme. Any actions from this will be referred to the Partnership Board.

## **7. Lessons Learned in Commissioning**

Gill said that following concerns over our commissioning of projects over 2016/17 we had agreed to an independent review of our commissioning. A solutions-based consultant had therefore interviewed a wide range of people.

The consultant's report is brief and Gill asked for views from the Partnership Board. The report included calls for a simpler commissioning process with more flexibility. The Innovation Fund will help to address this and we will discuss this next month.

There is also a need to further value and recognise local groups and their expertise. Gill said we recognise the challenges and that our projects constrain how likely it is that local, small organisations can submit bids but this will also be addressed by the Innovation Fund.

In addition, it said that smaller organisations often have less resources and experience in commissioning and Gill noted that we need to consider our demands in the service design process, for example she would not expect a BSB parent to go through all the service design process unless they were particularly interested.

The low number of expressions of interests for tenders is another concern and Gill said that some of our projects are highly specialised but we would still like EOIs from a wider range of organisations. The review also found a wish for us to offer support to small local organisations who are thinking of submitting tenders, perhaps via CABAD, and for BSB to have a more face-to-face approach. This would allow bidders to become more familiar with BSB and be more likely to ask questions.

Peter said BSB had used a competitive commissioning process and perhaps if this had been done differently then small local groups could have formed a partnership to bid. Michaela said some of our projects had to be delivered by statutory partners and other projects were open to the VCS but competitively. Peter also said there are projects like Home-Start which uses Home-Start's model so nobody else could deliver it and our arrangement is directly with them. Bradford Douglas is another licenced project.

Shaheen mentioned another project that she felt could have been delivered by a smaller organisation. Talat said it had been awarded to a national organisation which he felt had no experience of delivery or evidence whereas smaller local organisations had been delivering it for years. Michaela said she felt this was unfair on the successful bidder but acknowledged there is a need to improve the process and Talat and Shaheen said examples like this would put off smaller local organisations from bidding.

Sarah said the lessons learned in commissioning should be considered along with Mark Anslow's presentation and it is clear small local organisations will be under huge pressure and they will not have the time to put in complicated tenders. Families are under lots of pressure and projects will end up working with the same families instead of the harder to reach ones who are in greatest need.

Vipin said a problem is that small local organisations will not have enough staff and time to bid for BSB contracts. Talat said the community Board members should play a bigger role rather than BSB looking for parents who would not have the time. Ruth said that statutory organisations are just as guilty when it comes to small organisations having to deal with a complicated commissioning process and maybe there should be two different processes, with support for smaller organisations. Vipin observed that Parents in the Lead has a one-page application form and Michaela said the Innovation Fund will be discussed at the February Partnership Board and this may have a less complicated application process than BSB's projects.

Gill said there is a need for due diligence and to check the financial strength of bidders with our larger contracts and Michaela explained Parents in the Lead is the bottom tier of the Innovation Fund. There is a middle tier and a top tier (the top tier has full scale evaluation) and the commissioning process for the middle tier may be simpler. The Innovation Fund is experimental ('Test and Learn') and will be discussed at next month's meeting.

**Action: Gill to take the Lessons Learned in Commissioning report and this meeting's comments to the Commissioning Advisory Group.**

Michaela encouraged more community Board members to join the Commissioning Advisory Group and Gill mentioned them joining the consensus panels as well.

## **8. Programme Monthly Report**

Michaela explained we have merged the programme status report and the strategic update.

Gill said we are scoring the tenders received for ICAN and Incredible Years closes next week. These two projects are difficult to commission because they are very specialist and technical and we extended the Incredible Years deadline by one week.

Gill confirmed we will discuss Parents in the Lead at the February Partnership Board and its consultation is ongoing. For Pre-Schoolers in the Playground, we have reissued the request to local primary schools to see if they are interested in delivery because the original request was made in the run-up to Christmas. The deadline for responses is the end of this week and it would have joint delivery if another school besides St. Stephen's is interested. Pre-Schoolers in the Playground will be discussed at our February meeting.

Michaela recalled that at the September Partnership Board the culture of the programme team had been called into question and as a result an Investors in People consultant has interviewed the entire BSB team. Michaela said she was greatly reassured by the findings although there are some areas of work. A consistent approach to staff development shall be put in place and she will be looking at staff roles and there is a job evaluation exercise currently underway.

Finally Michaela noted that Nasim's term of office has expired and two more community Board members' terms expire in March and another two in June. The intention is that we keep the current members and have a recruitment exercise in April with a particular focus on recruiting parents of young children.

#### Opportunity Areas

Michaela said that unfortunately nobody from Children's Services was available to present to us but they had provided a briefing paper which was handed out. Michaela said that Bradford being an Opportunity Area does not affect BSB yet but it may do. If we need to discuss it in detail, we will invite Children's Services to come back.

Peter said Opportunity Areas was of interest to BSB but not of particular impact as it concentrates on older children and Michaela noted we are lobbying for Early Years to be included.

### **9. Any other business**

Michaela mentioned the ESIF bid and that the Partnership Board agreed to match Better Place funding and be part of the decision-making structure. The Partnership Board also delegated sign off for the ESIF bid to Vipin and Michaela.

Carlton's proposal integrates the ESIF proposal with Better Place for reasons of geography and collaboration. The only differences to the two programmes are the ESIF bid's de-culverting and cycle pathways and it is arguable that these could benefit our age range as well. The Stage 2 bid deadline is tomorrow and the BLF are happy with our intentions provided we include resource in the bid for the extra work needed by us.

Christy asked for a timescale for the ESIF bid and Gill said we should find out in June or July if it has been successful with delivery due to commence in October. Michaela said there are risks involved such as clear decision-making structures and the Better Place Steering Group may need reforming.

Michaela said the ESIF bid should not be a drain on us and Johanna has a lot of experience in European grants of this kind. Peter said if the project has challenges, lots of 'fire-fighting' would be needed and Michaela said she felt that on balance the big picture outweighs the concerns. Vipin observed that discussions will continue after the bid has gone in and it was confirmed we could withdraw the bid if it becomes untenable.

Michaela said the ESIF bid is in its final stage and despite the risks, supporting it is the right thing to do. Vipin said we have agreements from the Big Lottery Fund and Bradford Trident and Michaela said any changes will be referred to the Partnership Board.

Christy asked for an update on Better Place and it was confirmed that delivery starts on 1 February and there are some 'quick wins' planned.

Michaela confirmed that we have recruited to the community engagement specialist post and are awaiting references.

Finally Vipin asked if everyone at the meeting had felt they had an opportunity to contribute and all agreed that they had.

**10. Date of next meeting**

The next meeting is on Thursday 22 February 2018 at St. Stephen's Primary School, Gaythorne Road, BD5 7HU, starting at 9.30 am.

The meeting closed at 7.10 pm.