

Blog Post

## WSOA Partnership Board meeting 25<sup>th</sup> November 2019

The West Somerset Opportunity Area Partnership Board met on the 25<sup>th</sup> November 2019. The purpose of this blog is to provide an update on the activity of the Partnership Board and its oversight of the Opportunity Area programme

Participation:

Members: Fiona McMillan (chair), David Ralph (CEO Heart of the South West LEP), Natalie Wainwright (SCC), Tom Thayer (HPC), Cllr Frances Nicholson (SCC), Andrew Hanson (Somerset Education Business Partnership), Paul Rushforth (West Somerset Academy Trust), Naomi Griffiths (Onion Collective), Alison Bell (Consultant in public health, SCC)

In attendance: Jan Downie (Head of Delivery, DfE), Julia Ridge (Programme Manager, SCC), Sandra Newing-Griffiths (note taker, SCC),

At this meeting, a conflict of interest was declared by Naomi Griffiths.

### 1. Special items

- Julia Ridge updated members on a revised plan to take forward the transition project. There are two main parts of the plan: to focus on effective transition for vulnerable children and to develop continuity in the English and maths curriculum across educational phases in different schools
- Jan Downie provided a brief update on the work currently undertaken by Jim Whittaker to develop a sustainable plan to re-open the West Somerset College 'farm' learning centre. Jim is consulting a wide number of organisations, including those, which provide funding for community enterprises

### 2. Performance Reports

Partnership board members reviewed the performance and finance reports for the programme.

### 3. Legacy planning

Jan Downie presented information about work conducted since the last partnership board meeting to collect information to inform a legacy plan. All working groups had been consulted and asked to respond to none questions about how successful interventions within each priority will be sustained in the longer term.

The Partnership Board considered a funding proposal from *Contains Art* for an Art Educational project allied to development at Watchet Marina. It was agreed that the proposed activity would be advantageous. The programme management group will work through final details with *Contains Art*.

### 4. Priority 1: Every child has a great start in like update: achievements and progress.

Alison Bell (Chair, priority one working group) provided a presentation about the achievement and progress of the priority one, which is focused on children's development in the Early Years Foundation stage (birth to five years old).

Alison started by emphasising the importance of brain development in the first 2 years of life and why cognitive development is so important, helping to reduce inequality of attainment on later phases of education.

The **scope** of interventions on this priority area include:

- Supporting development of the early years' workforce (speech and language, maths, physical literacy, SEND and other training)
- Developing the home learning environment (Home Start West Somerset and contributions from other interventions)
- Improving assessment of children's development in the early years phase, led by Somerset County Council and Somerset Public Health
- Co-ordinating development, led by Somerset Council Early Years team

Alison described **successes** across the programme as:

- Improvement in the levels of attainment as measured by Good Level of Development (GLD) – **72%** of children achieved the GLD standard in 2019
- Wide range of professional development opportunities for early years staff
- Effective programmes for engaging families and providing parental support
- The early year's community in West Somerset has been established

More work needs to be done to develop:

- tracking children who have not achieved age expected development at ages 2 and 3 (as recorded in the ages and stages questionnaire)
- embedding professional development in to day to day activity at settings
- ensuring that training is accessible
- Recruitment to the childcare workforce

Members of the priority one working group are informing next steps for the early years programme including sustainability of the benefits secured in the programme so far.

### **Date of the next meeting**

The next meeting of the Partnership Board is on the 23rd January 2020. It was agreed that this meeting would have a specific planning and forward-looking focus.