

**Better Start Bradford Partnership Board Minutes
Thursday 18 July 2024
Via Zoom**

Meeting Started: 17:30

Meeting Ended: 19:25

Present:

Vipin Joshi	Community Board member (Chair)
Sarah Hinton	Board Member, Bradford Trident (items 1 to 9 only)
Gill Thornton	Director, Better Start Bradford
Josie Dickerson	Programme Director, Born in Bradford Innovation Hub
Lisa Brett	Head of Service for Early Help and Prevention, Bradford Children's and Families Trust (items 1 to 10 only)
Rizwana Jamil	Ward Councillor, Bradford Council
Gwen Balson	Community Board member (Vice Chair)
Humera Mahmood	Community Board member (Vice Chair)
Samina Begum	Community Board member (Vice Chair) (item 6 onwards)
Aroosa Meherban	Community Board member
Gazala Taj	Community Board member
Karen Tetley	Community Board member

In Attendance

Gill Hart	Funding Manager, National Lottery Community Fund
Kerry Bennett	Assistant Director, Better Start Bradford
Justine Bowman	Finance Manager, Better Start Bradford
Vikrant Bhatia	Programme Manager, Better Start Bradford
Sola Onifade	Contract & Implementation Manager, Better Start Bradford
Becky McIlvenny	Observer
Guy Dove	Senior Programme Administrator, Better Start Bradford

Apologies for Absence:

Ishaq Shafiq	Marium Haque	Richard Padwell	Zakra Yasin
Carlton Smith			

1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

Vipin welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted the apologies.

A round of introductions took place. Becky will become a Community Board member on 1 August and is attending this meeting as an observer. Vikrant is Better Start Bradford's new Programme Manager and started in post two weeks ago.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting – 20 June 2024

The minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record.

3. Matters Arising actions table

Guy confirmed that there is one outstanding register of interest form, from someone who is attending this meeting. That person filled their form in during the meeting.

Gill Thornton said that we are continuing to promote Baby Steps as one of the larger Start for Life projects and there is lots of activity. The perinatal project administrators can now get referrals direct from midwives and some new PPAs are about to be appointed.

There will be a showcasing event for projects in the autumn which will include Baby Steps and the Neighbourhood project. There is an action for BSB to put on a Learning Together session about the Neighbourhood project, including co-production. Gill Thornton noted that our Workforce and Learning Manager has left, but the Learning Together session is being planned.

Another action is for Gill Thornton to chase up our statutory partners about Partnership Board representation. She noted that Lisa is present at this meeting and we have had apologies from others. BSB are still connected to statutory partners and we do meet outside of Partnership Board meetings, we update them and encourage representatives to attend. We have recently met Richard Padwell of West Yorkshire Police and Gill Thornton is soon to meet a colleague of his to discuss potentially attending Partnership Board.

No recommendations have been received about a private sector representative joining the Partnership Board. Vipin proposed that this be left as an action for our next meeting in September, and then taken off the action table.

4. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5. 'Getting to know you' session – Humera Mahmood

Humera said she joined the Partnership Board a couple of years ago and it was the best decision ever. She wished to tell Becky that it is not as daunting as it looks and is interesting and Humera felt she can make a difference and a contribution.

Humera has two boys and she said that her joining the Partnership Board has made a difference for them and she can be a voice for mums and dads and is now a Vice Chair. She shared that she has lots of experience of groups and they are important for people who are struggling.

Humera mentioned the vital role of the Partnership Board in Bradford and the success of BSB and hopefully there will be another year. It is good to meet everybody and join and listen to meetings.

Vipin thanked Humera for her presentation and noted how passionate she is about BSB and it was good to hear her story at the recent Strategy Day.

6. Talking Together end of contract review

Sola gave a Powerpoint presentation and explained that usually an end of contract report is done for a project six months before it ends.

Talking Together is delivered by BHT Early Education and Training, who were commissioned from 1 June 2015 and the project will be delivered until 30 November 2024. The original end date was 31 May 2024 but the Partnership Board agreed a 6-month extension to allow the project to apply for a new funding opportunity, but unfortunately, they were not eligible for it.

Sola read out the three contract dates, all of which were for three years plus the current extension. The overall contract value is £3.9 million over a 9.5 year period.

Talking Together is a locally developed language intervention delivered to parents of children aged two years who have been identified as being at risk of language development delay following a language assessment. Talking Together provides language assessments for all two-year-olds in the BSB area. Families who would benefit from extra support are offered hourly one-to-one sessions at home over a six-week period.

Sola mentioned that 5,690 children were assessed, which is 72 per cent of those eligible and 40 per cent of those screened were at risk of language delay and so were referred into the project.

The sessions at home help parents and carers engage their children in activities, play and conversation to help their communication and language development as well as their ability to interact positively with people around them.

Sola read out the short-term outcomes (within 3 to 6 months of the programme) for children, which are improved scores on the WellComm assessment and increased vocabulary. The longer-term outcomes (after 2 years) are that children have sustained improved language and communication development and improved pro-social development.

In the longer term it is anticipated that other impacts may be shown, such as improved Early Learning Goals (ELG) scores at age 3 and 4. There is also improved overall Good Level of Development (GLD), including personal, social and emotional development (PSED) in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at age 5.

Sola proceeded to Key Successes. The project has become widely recognised and respected by families and professionals across the district. All are concerned with early years speech development and success stories have emerged, which have been shared at various forums.

Many children have received onward referrals to other services such as speech and language therapy, audiology and statutory services. Families have been supported to access nursery

places where appropriate. Speech and language was the theme of Baby Week Bradford 2022, at which key messages were shared.

Another success is the development of the Talking Together files as a resource pack that is also accessible to all users. As previously mentioned, there is the project extension for six months to enable sustainability plans. Sola mentioned excellent relationships with health visitors as a main referrer into the project.

There is a new referrals system that has reduced the number of children that reach the age limit before they can be supported. BHT have a flexible working arrangement for their staff which seems to have raised job satisfaction. Talking Together still offer an online option, but face-to-face support in the home is recognised to be more effective overall.

Sola displayed three testimonials from parents, which showed how helpful Talking Together has been.

Sola proceeded to a slide about Impediments to delivering the projects. Covid left some families highly concerned about the risks of in-home delivery even after restrictions had been lifted. There were difficulties with securing interpreters and last-minute cancellations by booked interpreters, leading to some families having to be discharged from the service.

Highly skilled staff have left due to the project coming to end, before the six-month extension was agreed, and have been hard to replace due to the short time period. Referrals from external professionals did not always meet the threshold which impacted on staff time taken to assess and discharge from further support.

Due to the high level of referrals (around 50 per cent of those children assessed) waiting lists have remained high, with some families waiting for 6 months before being seen. There was a gap in referrals from health visitors as the project end date approached and the referrals had to be restarted when the contract extension was agreed. Future funding remains a challenge.

Sola said the way forward is to continue with the delivery of the Talking Together service (the enhanced version, Talking Together Plus, ceased on 30 June 2024) and future funding opportunities will continue to be explored.

Josie commented that Sola had already covered a lot of what she wanted to say from an evaluation viewpoint. She said that Talking Together is one of BSB's biggest achievements; locally developed, and a huge need for the service has been demonstrated, which will also apply to other parts of Bradford.

The BiBBS cohort work has found that 1 in 4 children are late talkers, particularly boys and those from a Pakistani background. Those from larger households are less likely to be affected.

Josie noted that Talking Together has not been taken up by any partners, so BHT are looking for funding elsewhere to statutory services. She felt this is a real shame, due to the success of the project and the need for it, with 1 in 4 children being late talkers. Josie felt we should 'push' the project with partners and if there is no early language support after 30 November the situation will get worse.

Josie mentioned that Talking Together is delivered in the family's home language. The completion rates (78 per cent) and participation rates are phenomenal. Her team have done a feasibility randomised control trial, but Josie explained that there were not enough people for a full RCT.

There is however 'evidence of promise,' with the project moving from nothing to EIF (Early Intervention Foundation) Level 3. The project may have other benefits like improving vocabulary, parent / child relations and the home learning environment. The project is a great success but Josie said it is a sad moment now it is ending. Aroosa wrote in the Chat that Talking Together is a superb project and it is a shame that it is ending.

Kerry pointed out that BSB are championing Talking Together where we can. She mentioned the Talking Bradford pathway and that she had a positive conversation with the Integrated Care Board, who feed into the Healthy Children and Families Board. We have also discussed the project with Public Health who are reviewing their speech and language offer, pathways and gaps in provision.

Rizwana said thank you for the presentation and commented that it is good to see the success and statistics. She shares the concerns about Talking Together ending and is keen to see it carry on and thought we can be hopeful about this.

Rizwana mentioned the November 2024 end date and asked if there are no more referrals and if families already on the project will get to the end of their support. Gill Thornton replied that the referrals will possibly have stopped by now and there is a lag, which may be why BHT are losing staff. They will provide the in-home support and this is guaranteed – no families will be left halfway through a programme.

The project tried to get further funding, but Covid Recovery funding was diverted at the last minute. There was hard work to get Talking Together into Start for Life, but it did not fit their criteria, though BHT have some Start for Life funding for a different service. A bid was made to the Education Endowment Foundation, but it also did not 'fit.' Becky wrote in the Chat that she enjoyed working for Talking Together at BHT a few years ago and there is a need for the project.

Work is still going on and maybe Talking Together will be supported due to the new government. BSB can say we believe it works and there is good evidence.

Gwen shared that at the community prep meeting two nights ago, it was agreed that it is a shame that Talking Together is ending when it is recognised there is a need for the project. She suggested a possible solution using underspend, to train parents in communication skills as a short-term measure, and this could be community delivered. Gill Thornton said that suggestions are welcome, but Josie has mentioned that the in-house delivery is a parenting intervention and it is hard to train parents in interactions and this would be a new thing, which could maybe be tagged on to something else.

Gwen said it would be useful to explore and queried what was mentioned earlier about more success in larger households. Josie explained that her team look at factors independently such as boys, Pakistani background, family size. Larger families reduce the risk of language delay. Josie put a link to a briefing paper in the Chat and added that the factors she has mentioned are found in other things too such as perinatal mental health.

Lisa observed that there is a good case to speak to potential permanent funders about. She mentioned the Youth Justice Service and how many young offenders have speech and language challenges, which may strengthen the argument.

Aroosa suggested that parts of the project go into Incredible Years and Gill Thornton said this is a great idea, but Incredible Years is much more expensive than Talking Together. Any funder would need to support this, though it would address language problems to some extent.

Josie said that she is impressed with the ideas, but from an evaluator's viewpoint if the project changes, the evidence would have to start back at 'square one.' She thought that having conversations about delivering Talking Together in community settings would be feasible. Lisa felt however that delivering in families' homes is better for less motivated parents who might not be confident about going to settings.

Decision: The Partnership Board approved that the Better Start Bradford funding period for Talking Together ends as scheduled on 30 November 2024.

Vipin said that Talking Together is a great project and BSB will look at other ways of it continuing and should put pressure on partners about funding it.

7. Year 9 final accounts

Justine said she would go through the key highlights as BSB's Finance Team see it. The Finance & Audit Sub-Committee have already reviewed the accounts to 31 March 2024.

The management accounts to 31 March 2024 show an underspend of £1.01m against the budget of £8.1m for the same period. This equates to 12.5% of the budget. Justine remarked that this is in line with happened during the year, but there were low year end accruals at 31 March 2024, which increases the accuracy of the accounts and is to be expected near to the end of the programme.

Management Revenue had an underspend of £228k which is 17 per cent of budget. 41 per cent of this (£94k) is unused Contingency fund. Justine explained that this does not relate to project redundancy costs which have been split out.

Salaries, NI and Pensions were underspent by £38.2k, due mostly to unfilled posts. Other underspends included Marketing and Comms (£16.1k), due to there being less website development work than in previous years and Learning Together (£11.6k), with there being less activity in the final quarter.

Justine reiterated that the Contingency fund was never used and has been carried forward to Years 10 and 11. This is also the case for Consultation and Research and Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning. The Area Wellbeing Survey shows zero expenditure, and it has been decided not to continue with this. Other Project Costs also ended the year with no expenditure as this was reserved for leasing the Better Place van. This did not occur so there was an underspend of £10k.

Justine said five items showed very small overspends which are not material here. Staff training was £2.1k overspent due to higher than budgeting staff training sessions.

Justine then turned to Projects which had an underspend of £786k at 31 March 2024, which represents 11.9 per cent of the relevant budget. Justine said the reasons for this are repetitive themes, such as recruitment difficulties, staff leaving before the end of projects and there was also slow Start for Life mobilisation.

Almost half the underspend on Projects was due to the Personalised Midwifery Project, which had a large final underspend of £371.9k, due mostly to continued recruitment difficulties, with only one of the two teams of midwives ever established. There was one other large underspend on Projects which was Bradford Doulas which also experienced recruitment difficulties. BSB funding of Bradford Doulas ended in April 2024, but the project has secured further funding from the Integrated Care Board.

Justine said the Innovation Hub have a small overspend due to accounting adjustments and an overspend correction has been agreed for 2024/25. This is also the case for Better Start Imagine books.

HENRY has no variance as the project was refinanced in December 2023, and we have not received the financial returns about this. Justine said all the Start for Life projects show underspends – Little Minds Matter is £47k due to recruitment difficulties, which is frustrating as demand for the service is very high. This was also the case for Incredible Years (£46.2k) but the underspend for Baby Steps is more of an accounting adjustment.

Justine explained that Round 4 of the Happy Early Years fund was held in March 2024 and most of the spend from it would be in the following financial year. £84k has been spent to date on the HEY! Fund. The final panel meeting took place last week, and 14 out of 16 funding applications were successful. The costs of these are not shown in these numbers.

Justine said that £35k for project redundancy costs were set aside, but only £13-14k of this has been used because some projects were extended. £163k has been set aside for this during 2024/25.

Vipin thanked Justine for the report. Gwen attended the recent Finance & Audit Sub-Committee meeting and confirmed that the accounts were scrutinised at that. Vipin apologised for missing that meeting and asked for his apologies to be noted.

Vipin asked about use of underspend and Gill Thornton confirmed that this is being worked on. There are several unknowns such as if Start for Life will be extended beyond 31 March 2025 and we would not want there to be any gaps or cliff edges between Start for Life and any new plans.

Gill Thornton said there is a good argument to extend Start for Life and noted that many districts that have Start for Life are behind us in development terms. If Start for Life was extended, it is likely that BSB would be the commissioned body which would affect capacity in the staff team and we are trying to factor that in. We will bring the use of underspend subject back to the Partnership Board in the autumn and Gill Thornton confirmed BSB are looking at our budget every month.

Lisa asked about Start for Life funding and Justine explained that we do not have Start for Life underspend due to how it was structured.

Josie enquired about using BSB underspend to extend Talking Together. Gill Thornton said this was not considered, due to being 'late in the day' and when the evaluations finished. BSB would need to talk to the Innovation Hub about an extended evaluation and there could be a conversation with Josie very soon. The Partnership Board and National Lottery Community Fund would need to approve using underspend in this way.

Gill Hart advised that this is not ruled out and would depend on the length of any extension and what has already been agreed for the extension. If any extension would be post-December 2025, an internal discussion would be needed at the NLCF as it would impact on their resources. The detail of the proposal would be needed – amount, timings and rationale. There would be factors like the impact on local children and if there is a 'bridge' to other funding.

Lisa agreed that more children would benefit from an extension and it would also give more time to build a case to another funder. Gill Thornton said we need to initiate a discussion between BHT, the Innovation Hub and BSB, we need to cost any extension, including evaluation and know what destination is better. Josie wrote in the Chat that she would want projects to be able to do their own implementation evaluation.

Action: Gill Thornton to set up a discussion about a possible extension to Talking Together with relevant parties.

Decision: The Partnership Board notes and accepts the accounts for the year ending 31 March 2024.

8. Cooking for A Better Start contract completion

Sola noted that we presented the end of contract report some months ago, and the project has now concluded. Cooking for A Better Start was commissioned in January 2018 until March 2024 across two contracts, with a total value of £382k.

The project offered practical cooking sessions to increase confidence in preparing healthy meals and improve the family's knowledge of healthy meals. The project was delivered in community venues with cooking and creche facilities.

Becky wrote in the Chat that she loved doing the Cooking for A Better Start project and as a new mum, it was the first time she had left her child in a creche. Gill Thornton said it was good to get this feedback from a service user.

Sola said that after the first contract, it was recommended that the project work on their data quality and look at introducing a way to measure mothers' confidence in preparing healthy meals. In contract 2, it was recommended introducing validated measures for future evaluation and understanding if and how community facilitators could go on to deliver the programme.

Sola noted that there were significant staffing changes in HENRY as the deliverer, involving several management changes and a new co-ordinator and facilitator starting at the beginning of contract 2. This caused a delay in delivery as staff training had to be completed in the first quarter.

Sola went on to Key Successes and Learning Points. 10 community facilitators were trained to deliver the project, 5 of which have shadowed the core trainers.

The delivery model in schools is successful with positive parent feedback. The two-facilitator model creates a strong team to deliver the project. The parent-only programme allowed mums to attend the course without distractions, and there were also a parent and child programme which gave them a choice and try new ways of interacting as a family.

The project also signposted parents to food providers and other linked services. A WhatsApp group for parents to share information and build relationships was set up. Sola also mentioned a parents' forum to give feedback and look at individual progress after the programme, much of which was very positive.

HENRY did fundraising to provide additional ingredients for home cooking after the sessions, which helped families at financially difficult times.

A learning point was to overbook each course to ensure a full cohort could complete, and to hold a short waiting list to slot people in when there were drop-offs before the start of the course. Having creche support or children in nursery where the project was running was helpful in facilitating delivery. Sola noted however that due to costs, creche support is not a sustainable option going forward.

Sola said that the Innovation Hub reported that the project has been successfully implemented according to the logic model. They confirmed that there is an appetite for the project within the community, which can also include children in the practical aspect of the sessions.

The evaluation said that the project successfully implemented its face-to-face element, delivering 87 per cent of planned programmes. High completion rates suggest the sessions are engaging and valued by participants. Levels of satisfaction with the project are very high from those who responded. However, the online element of the project had much lower take-up and was not successfully implemented.

Sola summarised some parent feedback, which was very favourable, and a good quote from a community facilitator.

Sola proceeded to a slide called 'What Happens Next.' Some community facilitators trained by HENRY can run the project with their families and can volunteer for community kitchen programmes. Resources such as utensils and recipe cards have been passed to staff at Barkerend Health Centre who were keen to deliver the programme.

All 10 community facilitators have been linked up with Inn Churches where they will support with cooking sessions within primary schools on request, on their food education or food hub work strand.

Decision: The Partnership Board acknowledges that the project's funding period by Better Start Bradford has ended.

9. Forest Schools contract completion

Sola gave a Powerpoint presentation. The project was commissioned in 2018 to explore the importance of outdoor play and the natural environment on the healthy development of children.

The project had a total value of £863k and worked with children between the ages of 0-3 years recruited from nursery settings. Forest Schools practitioners worked alongside early years specialists to facilitate the group sessions. The project also ran standalone free family play sessions for local families in parks and green spaces. The BSB funding period for the project ended in March 2024.

Sola turned to project implementation changes. Due to scheduling clashes such as teacher strikes, schools training days, Eid, sports days and transition days, the 10-week, 2-hour sessions were reduced to 9 weeks. The completion definition was also reduced from attending 7 out of 10 sessions to 6 out of 9.

Since 2021, trainees were encouraged to co-deliver the Forest Schools sessions to implement learning and build up their confidence and experience in a Forest School setting. Due to a lack of adequate outdoor spaces, there was a variation in plan to offer nurseries support to improve resources for outdoor play. Sola said that unfortunately, many opted for other support such as equipment, but Better Place provided outdoor development support.

Sola noted that due to Covid, the delivery was altered to allow for the maximum number of people in the group according to Covid restrictions.

Sola moved on to Key Successes and Learning Points. The main delivery has been through nursery schools, some of which have used the project more than once, have trained staff and used the available budget to improve resources and enhance their outdoor areas.

Due to low parental participation, the project adapted its approach to initial sign-up sessions, using a letter of agreement to encourage and enable parents to attend. Nurseries were also asked to sign a service level agreement to encourage full participation, particularly around support of their early years staff.

It was found that commitment to the Level 3 Forest Schools training is higher than some staff and parents realised, so discussions regarding this were introduced to individuals and senior management within the nurseries. Relationships with nursery staff and a senior link person were key to successful recruitment of families into the project and parents and staff on to the training.

Nursery staff report clear benefits for the children, related to social and emotional learning, development of social skills, relationships and improved language skills linked to the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Sola turned to the evaluation of Forest Schools. A qualitative study suggests potential benefits to parents and children; social and emotional, such as attention, confidence, anxiety, independence, overcoming fears, caring for and understanding themselves and others, and social skills and relations. Language and communication outcomes include vocabulary, use of words and full sentences and listening skills. There are also physical development outcomes – physical activity, fine and gross motor skills, ability to move and be safe in the diverse and complex physical environment of natural spaces.

The training element of Forest Schools has been challenging, yet more early years staff than expected completed the Level 3 training. This is promising for sustainability; however, it was not possible to evaluate whether those completing the training go on to use their new skills in their settings and reports from the project suggest this may not be the case.

Sola read out some positive feedback, indicating that doing Forest Schools helped the children and some of their parents. Examples mentioned included confidence, understanding of nature, familiarity with weather conditions, exploring and parents enjoying attending with their children. Better Place have said there has been amazing partnership working with Forest Schools. There was also good feedback from school nurseries which took part.

Sola proceeded to a 'What Happens Next' slide. BSB funding of the project closed as planned on 31 March 2024, however the project has an ongoing contract with Better Place until September 2024. The project is looking into funding options and exploring with schools for continued funding and is part of a bid to the Heritage Lottery fund via Bradford Trident. If successful, this would allow the project considerable funding for the next three years.

An event was held in June to showcase some of the achievements of the project, attended by BSB and other organisations.

Josie said her team have done a detailed evaluation of the project before, and the project is fantastic, as is getting nurseries to participate and she mentioned the potential benefits. She hopes the Heritage Lottery bid is successful and the project would benefit inner city children.

Decision: The Partnership Board acknowledged that the project's funding period by Better Start Bradford has ended.

10. Baby Week update

Kerry confirmed that planning for Baby Week 2024 is well underway. Baby Week nationally is going very well and a national Baby Week Community Interest Company has been formed which we support. Nine districts started their own Baby Week during 2023 and three more have been added in 2024. Kerry presented about Baby Week at the Institute of Health Visiting conference last week and it was really well received.

Baby Week Leeds are doing the website for the national Baby Week and the national theme this year is 'Best Start.' Kerry commented that this is a very broad theme and there is buy-in nationally from the Local Government Association.

Locally, in Bradford, a Baby Week Steering Group has been set up from April 2024. This has great representation, including from Family Hubs, Start for Life, the Health and Care Partnership, museums, libraries and City of Culture. There will be a consultation about this year's Baby Week Bradford, but the theme will be 'Play' with a launch of 22 July.

Kerry shared this year's imagery, which has a strapline of 'Playful Starts and Happy Hearts.' There will be promotions and comms about this. She put a link into the Chat to the consultation and confirmed that we want to listen to parents and communities, we want to support the workforce and support the Innovation Hub webinars that are also planned for November. She asked all to please share the launch on 22 July.

Gill Thornton added that Play Bradford are doing lots of summer events and at them, Baby Week and the consultation will be promoted.

11. Follow up from Strategy Day

Gill Thornton thanked all for the hard work put in and there were lots of contributions on the Strategy Day. Sarah Wilson fed back earlier that she could not tell who were BSB staff and who were Board members.

All the action points from the day have been typed up and will be shared. Developing the strapline activity is being done by Comms and will go to BSB's team meeting. The staff team will vote for their top 5 strapline suggestions, which will go to the September Partnership Board for a decision.

Gill Thornton mentioned work about legacy and there is a leadership away day next week, which will work on legacy project groups. A project planning template has been developed and there is work on key objectives, work plan, remit and Partnership Board members will be invited to be part of the groups. Details will be sent out during August with the timeline and work needed, and all should please ask if they are interested in taking part but unsure. The core central BSB team will support all this.

Gill Thornton then referred to a possible legacy body and the expression of interest for a legacy consultant is to go out next week. The vacancy for our Workforce and Learning Manager will be put out next week too and she noted that one legacy project group is about dissemination. A selection panel will be needed for both roles and it would be good to have volunteers from the Partnership Board for this.

Vipin wished to record our thanks to Sarah Hinton for hosting the Strategy Day at Shine.

12. Programme monthly report

Kerry shared that Better Place have been awarded a £47k grant from Natural England to develop and deliver the 'Nurture Naturelets' project, which will create 52 micro nature sites for families with young children across the Better Place capital sites.

BSB were pleased to sponsor the Early Years part of the recent Bradford Literature Festival and this will be evaluated. We had a positive annual review meeting with the NLCF and Kerry thanked partners for attending.

BSB have worked hard on our relations with key partners, such as the Healthy Children and Families Board and the Prevention and Early Help Board. We have highlighted the post-2025 gap in provision and the need to align agendas. Gill Thornton supported a focus group to look at some research about demonstrating that the development of support for Early Years is important in supporting economic growth.

Kerry then mentioned our HIDVA work (Health Independent Domestic Violence Advisor). We are working closely with the local authority to fill a gap about a pathway for police notifications about domestic abuse victims in the early years as identified by Operation Encompass in our district.

Kerry then mentioned the two-day Leadership Away Day on 24 and 25 June at which we worked closely with Sarah Wilson (Programme Management Consultant) to plan for the Strategy Day and to shape and plan for the remaining months of the programme. In September there will be conversations with the internal team about decisions made about staffing structures.

In the Project Monitoring and Evaluation part of the report, Gill Thornton mentioned that the two ESOL projects are rated as 'Red' because courses were cancelled and there were changes in the team and problems with referrals. Despite this, the project has achieved a lot, retention of mums was good, it was a good innovation and it recruited some vulnerable women.

Kerry then mentioned HABIT (oral health project) and planning for a webinar about it is underway as part of our Learning Together programme. Recently there was an Innovation Hub contract meeting which was positive and they fed back about progress and targets achieved.

Our partnership with Bradford College continues and our Early Years Specialist was invited to take part in the prizegiving celebrations at the Ambition Hub there with the Early Years students.

Kerry then mentioned our Virtual Live Learning offer and we have had good evaluation back, and we are encouraging partners to join us in delivering the sessions. We are working on the sustainability of the offer.

Kerry referred to the Forest Schools celebration event, posters produced by our Comms team over the month to promote events and website development to enable it to become a depository of learning. She mentioned the 'Telling Our Story', event, which fed into the Strategy Day and this will feed into the 'strapline' work.

Kerry mentioned that our logo was included in the Bradford Literature Festival programme. She then referred to a blog about getting outdoors with twins, and a poster produced for the Institute of Health Visiting conference for which she wished to thank the Comms team.

Our FACE team have been very active and Kerry mentioned events at Horton Farm, the Pond Life Parade, Power of Play in the Environment at Horton Park, a Little Minds Matter event at Bradford East Family Hub and another event at Peel Park (the Great Get Together as part of Refugee Week). Kerry thanked the FACE team.

Vipin said we have seen a very detailed report which shows what has been done.

13.Any other business

Vipin asked everyone if they had felt able to participate in this meeting and all agreed that they did.

He said this has been a busy meeting and we have got through a lot and he thanked all for attending. We do not meet during August and he wished all a good summer.

14. Date of next meeting

The next meeting is on Thursday 19 September 2024, via Zoom, starting at 9.30 am.

The meeting closed at 7.25 pm.