



**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE  
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
16 JANUARY 2015**

**PRESENT: COUNCILLOR J D HOUGH (CHAIRMAN)**

Councillors B Adams (Vice-Chairman), W J Aron, Mrs J Brockway, S R Dodds, B W Keimach, Ms T Keywood-Wainwright, C R Oxby, Mrs H N J Powell, Mrs S Ransome, Mrs N J Smith, S M Tweedale, L Wootten, R Wootten, C L Strange and T M Trollope-Bellew

**Added Members**

Church Representatives: Mr S C Rudman and Mrs G Wright

Parent Governor Representatives: Mr C V Miller and Mrs E Olivier-Townrow

Councillors: Mrs P A Bradwell and D Brailsford attended the meeting as observers

Officers in attendance:-

Debbie Barnes (Executive Director of Children's Services), Stuart Carlton (Assistant Director Children's Early Help), Sheridan Dodsworth (Service Manager SEND), Jonas Gibson (Commissioning and Development Manager), Tracy Johnson (Scrutiny Officer), Mark Popplewell (Assistant Head of Finance Children's & Specialist Services), Sally Savage (Chief Commissioning Officer) and Rachel Wilson (Democratic Services Officer)

**60      APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / REPLACEMENT MEMBERS**

Apologies were received from Councillors J P Churchill, Mrs L A Rollings and Mrs S Wray.

The Chief Executive reported that having received notice under Regulation 13 of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, he had appointed Councillors C L Strange and T M Trollope-Bellew as replacement members on the Committee in place of Councillors J P Churchill and Mrs S Wray respectively, for this meeting only.

**61      DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

Councillor B W Keimach wished that it be noted that he was a stakeholder of Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Trust and would be leaving the room for consideration of agenda item 11 – Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services Review.

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Councillor Mrs J Brockway requested that it be noted that in relation to agenda item 4 – Children's Services Budget Proposals 2014/15 and 2015/16, she was a trustee of Sound Lincs.

**62      MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28 NOVEMBER 2014****RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2014 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**63      ALL-AGE AUTISM STRATEGY FOR LINCOLNSHIRE 2015 - 2018**

Consideration was given to a report which invited the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee to consider a report on the All-Age Autism Strategy for Lincolnshire 2015-2018 which was due to be considered by the Executive on 3 February 2015.

The Draft Lincolnshire All-Age Autism Strategy had been developed in response to the Government's national strategy for adults with autism – 'Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives' which was published in 2010. A recent refresh of the national strategy, Think Autism, was published in 2014 and put a focus on the need for more autism friendly communities. In response to the national strategy, a 3 month consultation was carried out in Lincolnshire to help inform the development of an adults' autism strategy for Lincolnshire. Analysis of the feedback revealed a number of key themes including one area of repeated discussion, which was the transition from children's to adults' services. It was recognised that this transition could often be a difficult time for individuals with an autism spectrum disorder and so a decision was taken to develop an all-age autism strategy.

It was also reported that an independent review of the services in Lincolnshire for individuals with autism was jointly commissioned by the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) and the Children's Services management team during 2014.

It was reported that an action plan had been developed which incorporated four key strategic programmes to deliver the Autism Strategy with underpinning measurable objectives. The action plan would be overseen by the Autism Partnership Board which would take a leadership role and would be accountable for the delivery of the plan. Work was still being undertaken to develop and strengthen the Autism Partnership Board, including a review of the membership. The Strategy would be formally launched in Spring 2015.

Members were provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained within the report and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- It was queried whether it was known how many people there were in Lincolnshire who required additional help, and also how many people there were with spectrum disorders who did not require any additional help. It was thought that there were 4237 people in Lincolnshire with some level of autism,

and the prevalence data from the review of children and young people projected that there would be approximately 1800 children and young people in the county with autism. However, it would be difficult to provide an exact number as it was a spectrum disorder and so people had different levels of need;

- It was clarified that an 'autism friendly society' was about awareness raising and training, and organisations making reasonable adjustments. There was a need to raise understanding of autism, especially among partners, as they may only need to make minor changes but they could have a big benefit to people with autism;
- Young people who were 16/17 years old and were at risk of homelessness regardless of whether they had autism would trigger a Team Around the Child (TAC). It was noted that it was not a different pathway if a young person had autism;
- It was welcomed that the work done with the Children's Review was being incorporated into the All-Age Autism Strategy;
- There were high functioning young people with autism who did not receive as much support, but for those at the other end of the scale there was a lot of knowledge and support available;
- It was noted that there were some young people with autism who had mental health issues, but these were often attributed to Autism and so did not receive mental health services. There were concerns that these young people would slip through the net;
- It was queried what the nature of the consultation with people with autism themselves had been and members were advised that as part of the engagement, the Autism Involvement Group was formed which was comprised of people of all ages with autism who agreed to take part in the consultation. Engagement was through a variety of different methods;
- Members were very pleased to read this report, and commented that it was excellent;
- It was commented that a diagnosis of autism was of great help to some families. Concerns were raised regarding what would happen when a young person reached the end of their education, and also that it was important to raise awareness as many people did not have first-hand experience of someone on the autism spectrum;
- If awareness of autism could be promoted, then people may notice traits within family members, and it could be ensured that services and support was available if a diagnosis was received;
- Members were informed that support to young people with autism would not stop when they reached the end of their education, although support could be in place until the age of 25 under the SEND reforms, in order to prepare the young person for adulthood;
- It was queried what publicity was planned to raise awareness of autism and this strategy. It was suggested that things were typical to autism should be highlighted, as some young people could be being held back due to a lack of diagnosis or understanding. One of the key events would be the launch of the formal Strategy which was planned for 2 April 2015, to coincide with World Autism Day;

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- Officers commented that they were happy to receive any suggestions from members on ways to promote the Strategy;
- It was suggested that there was a need for some of the timescale's on the action plan to be revised, as there were 14 actions listed for completion in March 2016, and it was thought that this was ambitious. Members were advised that the action plan would be reviewed by the Partnership Board on an annual basis.

#### **RESOLVED**

That the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee support the recommendations as set out in the Executive report.

#### **64      CHILDREN'S SERVICES BUDGET PROPOSALS 2014/15 AND 2015/16**

The Committee received a report which provided an opportunity to consider the Children's Services budgets for 2014/15 and 2015/16.

It was reported that the authority's vision was for "Every Child, in every part of the County to achieve their potential" and were underpinned by a number of principles which determined how services were commissioned and delivered in order to achieve the vision. These principles included Early Help; Safeguarding; Aspiration; Learning and Achievement; and Best Use of Resources. There were also four commissioning strategies within the Children's Services area which were:

- Readiness for School;
- Learn and Achieve;
- Readiness for Adult Life;
- Children are Safe and Healthy.

It was reported that the overall funding for these four commissioning strategies was £102.281m, of which £39.508m was determined as a high priority service, with the remaining services being a medium priority.

The Committee was guided through the report, and some of the points highlighted to members included the following:

- The proposals including the protection of services for safeguarding children, and it was noted that it was positive that the authority was in a position to be able to do this;
- Lincolnshire had the 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest planned spending on Looked After Children. This included fostering, adoption, residential care and leaving care support (£146 per pupil compared to the England mean of £277 per pupil);
- Lincolnshire had the 5<sup>th</sup> highest planned spending on home to school and college transport (£244 per pupil compared to the England mean of £120 per pupil);
- Since the Comprehensive Spending Review of 2010, Children's Services had worked hard to deliver a significant level of savings, and had been highly effective in reducing its spend;

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- Savings of £27.631m in the period 2010/11 to 2013/14 had been delivered, and officers were confident that the savings for the current year of £2.626m would be delivered in full;
- Lincolnshire was seeing a significant demand for children's social care, due to a sharp rise in looked after children;
- A number of savings within Children's Services had been identified to be delivered within 2015/16 following the Fundamental Budget Review process;
- The majority of capital spend in relation to schools was used to ensure sufficiency of school places;
- An additional £500,000 had been requested to provide support for foster carers and adoptive parents who needed extensions to their properties. This would usually involve ensuring the suitability of accommodation for children with disabilities and enabling properties to be developed in order to provide increased living space for siblings to be placed together for permanence or adoption;

Members were provided with an opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained within the report and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- Provisional budget information had been received which indicated that £5m of funding would be transferred from NHS England as part of the health visitors programme. Due diligence was ongoing around this at the moment, but it was thought that there was likely to be a 'sunset clause' so the authority would not be able to do anything differently for the next 18 months;
- Concerns were raised regarding the proposals to withdraw funding from the initiatives in schools which supported schools in addressing health outcomes using universal services to promote positive health messages. Members were advised that there was a need to make savings, and that many schools had underspends in their budgets and they were able to buy in these services if they felt they were appropriate;
- Schools and teachers were very aware of the healthy schools agenda;
- There were concerns that the withdrawing of some of these initiatives could mean that more social workers were required in the future;
- There would still be targeted programmes running in deprived areas, i.e. Positive Futures;
- Reductions to the school improvement service were not seen as a significant risk, as with more schools moving towards becoming academies, less support was required;
- The Music Service would be considering and consulting on changing to a new delivery model as without local authority funding it would be eligible for other grants, which could make the service stronger;
- Schools did receive money for sports, and officers were confident that schools would meet the gap and put interventions in place;
- Concerns were raised regarding the removal of county council funding from the Music Service, and it was commented that there was no evidence that it would be successful in gaining additional grants;

- It was commented that those children who would suffer most would be those whose parents could not afford to pay for the music lessons. There were concerns that this could have far reaching consequences;
- It was suggested whether the discretionary element of school transport could be looked at as an areas to find extra funding for services such as the Music Service. However, members were advised that most of the funding was allocated to the statutory element of the service with grammar and post 16 being the main non statutory transport issues;
- Members were informed that of the £200,000 proposed cuts to the Music Service, just under £100,000 of that related to 2 management positions;
- It was suggested that it would have been helpful if the report had shown how much of the total budgets of each activity the proposed reductions equated to;
- It was queried whether the authority could apply to the government for more money, as children were entitled to music and arts under the national curriculum;
- In terms of the School Improvement Service, any move to a new model would require pump priming and investment. Schools were funded separately, and their budgets went to the Schools' Forum meeting for considerations. The Dedicated Schools Budget was £480m and was ring fenced for education;
- Any proposal around the stopping of any service would be subject to consultation and impact analysis;
- The total underspend by schools was significant and was about £20m;
- There was no suggestion that any money should be taken away from schools;
- All grants that were provided to foster carers were subject to legal agreements, and if the person stopped being a foster carer, the money could be reclaimed;
- It was commented that the concerns regarding the Music Service were understood, but thought that it would be useful to see some modelling regarding what additional resources could be gained that they were not currently eligible for as it received funding from the County Council. It was also considered important that the costs of music lessons remained at a level that was accessible;
- It was commented that the authority frequently lobbied for increases to the schools grant, but counties always struggled in this area. It was also noted that the government was not particularly happy about schools having underspends. The Dedicated Schools Budget had been increased by approximately £3.7m which was some recognition for the problems faced by shire counties;
- There was a policy in place which allowed for a carry forward of 8% of the budget for primary schools and 5% of the budget for secondary schools. It was noted that any money which was clawed back from schools would need to be given back in equal parts to all maintained schools and academies;
- Within Children's Services there was normally an underspend of approximately £1m to carry forward to the following year, but it was not thought that it would be this much for this year. It was more likely to be about £500,000;
- There was a lot of work underway to make efficiencies within home to school transport;

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- One of the challenges of the curriculum was that it did not create the additional time required for teachers to provide these services themselves. There was often not time in the school day due to teachers having to fulfil Ofsted requirements
- Members were reassured that the authority was arguing nationally on the transport issues, and it was felt that there should not have to be a compromise for rural counties;
- There were concerns that the training given to governors was minimal, and the Executive Director agreed to look into the issues around governor support;
- It was noted that the LGA Children's Board had asked the government to carry out a review of Ofsted;
- In relation to the reduction of funding to Children's Centres of £0.9m, this would include withdrawal of services such as debt advice, counselling services, reduction to Homestart etc.;
- It was noted that these were currently proposals and there would be a need to consult and undertake impact analysis before any decisions were made.

**RESOLVED**

1. That the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee support the proposed budget;
2. That the following comment be passed to the Executive:
  - That the withdrawal of funding from sports provision, children's centres and the music service should be reconsidered;

**65      OFSTED INSPECTION OF CHILDREN IN NEED OF HELP AND PROTECTION, CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER AND CARE LEAVERS**

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee was invited to consider a report which set out the outcomes from the inspection of Lincolnshire's Children's Services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers which was carried out during October/November 2014.

The Committee was advised that at the time of the meeting, 1/3 of local authorities had been inspected, and Lincolnshire had received the second best judgement in the country, being rated as outstanding in adoption performance, and rated as good in the following areas – children who need help and protection; children looked after and achieving permanence; experiences and progress of care leavers; and leadership, management and governance.

Some areas for improvement were identified which included ceasing the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for homeless 16 and 17 year olds and young people leaving care; reviewing quality assurance activity; improving the rate of progress and educational outcomes for children looked after; taking action to reduce offending rates of care leavers.

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In response to some of the areas identified for improvements, members were advised that the authority very rarely made use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation, but this option would sometimes be necessary in an emergency. In relation to the quality assurance activity, it was reported that officers had used Ofsted's criteria, and so had challenged this area, however, there was no right of appeal. It was acknowledged that there was a need to continue to improve the rate of progress and educational outcomes for children looked after, however, Lincolnshire was already 3% above the national average. It was also noted that three of the areas for improvement under social work practice related to IT systems, and these should be improved following the move to the new system Mosaic in April 2015. The need to reduce offending rates of care leavers who received a custodial sentence was challenged by officers as there were only 11 young people who were in custody, and nationally this was a very low figure. It was agreed by the inspectors that this could be removed from the report, but it was left in the findings.

Members of the Committee were provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained within the report, and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- It was difficult to measure the impact of preventative work on child sexual exploitation (CSE) as it was not known what could have happened if that work had not been carried out;
- It was an aspiration for FAST teams to be co-located;
- In relation to CSE, Ofsted was very process driven, but the relationship between the child and the worker was very important. This was a different type of harm and so needed a different approach;
- Bed and Breakfasts were only used as emergency accommodation for care leavers or those 16/17 year olds that presented to the authority as homeless. It was hoped that a new contract would be awarded which would provide for crisis accommodation and crash beds;
- The authority worked with a network of B and B providers who were all DBS checked and could provide support;
- It was commented that it had been an extremely thorough inspection;
- Members were advised that the report had been published on 6 January 2015 and the authority had 70 days to produce an action plan.

The Committee wished to record its thanks to the officers for all their hard work during the inspection, and looked forward to seeing the action plan.

**RESOLVED**

1. That the report and comments made be noted;
2. That the action plan in response to the Ofsted Inspection be considered at a future meeting.

66      CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL UPDATE

The Committee received an update on the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel from its Chairman, Councillor D Brailsford. It was reported that at the meeting on 18 September 2014, the Panel considered the Corporate Parenting Strategy which was subsequently approved at the Council meeting on 19 December 2014 and performance information relating to the looked after children performance indicators. Cllr A Hagues also provided a verbal update on his visit to the residential home in Sleaford, which he was the visiting member for.

The Panel had since met on 11 December 2014 where it was due to consider the Annual Health report for Looked After Children and an update on the CQC review of health services for Looked After Children. Unfortunately, the officer from the south west CCG who was due to present the reports was off sick and so these two items were deferred to the next meeting on 12 March 2015. The Panel did consider a report on the educational attainment of looked after children and was concerned about the overall results which were not good.

It was reported that of the Early Years Looked After Children (LAC) 18% achieved a Good Level of Development overall compared to 67% for non LAC in the local authority and 60% nationally. This was a drop of 15% on last years' cohort.

It was also reported that Key Stage 2 Reading, Writing and Maths outcomes were not showing any signs of improvement overall. This included the gap between other LAC nationally and those who were non LAC in the Local Authority. For Key Stage 4, according to the provisional data 16% of LAC in Lincolnshire achieved 5 A\* - C including English and Maths in 2014. This compared to 54% for non LAC. However, compared to all LAC nationally, Lincolnshire had been comparable to previous national averages with a provisional dip in 2014.

The Committee was advised that work was currently ongoing with head teachers to ensure that Looked After Children were being assessed as cohorts of children, so they could be monitored more closely.

The Committee discussed the Closing the Gap Conference which had been held on 8 January 2015 and it was commented that there had been some very interesting presentations. However, it was felt that there had been a focus on how schools could use the pupil premium rather than on closing the gap. Some schools saw the pupil premium as another thing that was measured by Ofsted, rather than grasping the vision of what it could be used for.

**RESOLVED**

That the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel be noted.

**67      POTENTIAL TOPICS FOR SCRUTINY REVIEWS**

Consideration was given to a report which invited the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee to identify potential topics for its next scrutiny review taking into account the activities contained in the four commissioning strategies for Children's Services.

Members were advised that it was planned that the review would start after the General and District elections in May.

The Chairman invited Members to put forward ideas for the next scrutiny review or future reports to the Committee. Some initial ideas put forward included:

- Schools nurses
- A closer look at CAMHS and the tiers.

It was suggested that the Committee gave this some thought and contact the Scrutiny Officer after the meeting with any suggestions.

(NOTE: Mrs G Wright left the meeting at 12.15pm and Councillors L and R Wootten left the meeting at 12.20pm)

**RESOLVED**

That the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee identify potential topics for a future scrutiny review and contact the Scrutiny Officer with any suggestions.

**68      CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK  
PROGRAMME 2015**

Consideration was given to a report which enabled the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee to consider its own work programme for the coming year.

It was reported that a report on a proposal to expand capacity at Pinchbeck east Church of England Primary School (final decision) had been added to the 5 June 2015 agenda.

**RESOLVED**

1. That the content of the work programme as set out in Appendix A of the report be noted, subject to the inclusion of the additional item to the June meeting;
2. That the content of the Children's Services Forward Plan, as set out in Appendix B of the report.

69     CONSIDERATION OF EXEMPT INFORMATION

RESOLVED

That in accordance with Section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that the following item of business contained exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.

70     CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES REVIEW

(Councillor B W Keimach left the meeting for consideration of this item)

Consideration was given to a report which provided the Committee with an overview of the commissioning review of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service.

Officers responded to a number of questions from Members in relation to this review.

RESOLVED

1. That the Committee support the recommendations to the Executive as set out in the exempt report;
2. That the additional comments, as agreed, be passed to the Executive.

The meeting closed at 1.00 pm