



**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE  
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
25 NOVEMBER 2016**

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

Councillors R Wootten (Vice-Chairman), B Adams, W J Aron, S R Dodds, A G Hagues, B W Keimach, C R Oxby, Mrs S Ransome, Mrs L A Rollings, Mrs N J Smith, L Wootten, M A Whittington and Mrs S M Wray

**Added Members**

Church Representatives: Mr S C Rudman

Parent Governor Representatives: Dr E van der Zee

Councillor D Brailsford was also in attendance.

Officers in attendance:-

Debbie Barnes (Executive Director, Children's Services), Stuart Carlton (Assistant Director Children's Lead Early Help), Heather Sandy (Chief Commissioning Office - Learning), Roz Cordy (Children's Services Manager - Locality), Tracy Johnson (Senior Scrutiny Officer), Jennifer McKie (Senior Music Advisor, Lincolnshire Music Service), Martin Smith (Children's Services Manager - School Standards) and Rachel Wilson (Democratic Services Officer)

**40 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / REPLACEMENT MEMBERS**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs J Brockway and Mrs H N J Powell.

An apology for absence was also received from Councillor Mrs P A Bradwell (Executive Councillor responsible for Children's Services), Mr P Thompson (Church Representative) and Mrs P J Barnett (Parent Governor Representative).

**41 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS INTERESTS**

There were no declarations on interest at this point in the meeting.

**42 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21 OCTOBER 2016**

It was requested that the 16<sup>th</sup> bullet point to Minute 34 be amended to read:

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*It was commented that Church of England Schools were not seen as faith schools, and the Diocese's preference was for the governing body of church schools to remove faith criteria from their admission policy.*

**RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2016 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to the above amendment being noted.

**43 FUTURE OF THE MUSIC SERVICE - UPDATE**

Consideration was given to a report on the future of Lincolnshire Music Service, which was due to be considered by the Executive Councillor responsible for Children's Services on 9 December 2016. The report was an update following on from the decision in May 2015, that Lincolnshire County Council ceased to operate a music service and supported Lincolnshire Music Service in becoming a viable charitable entity.

Members were advised that this was a well respected and valued service with a turnover of around £3m. It was also noted that the DfE had announced the security of funding for music education until 2020.

It was requested that members support the continued operation of a music service as outlined in Option 1 of the report. It was noted that the 8% shortfall referred to in the report had been resolved. Members were advised that Option 1 was that the Lincolnshire Music Service continued to be a service offered by Lincolnshire County Council, but would exist as a traded, non-Lincolnshire County Council Funded Service.

Members welcomed the report and commented that the option outlined was a really positive solution.

**RESOLVED**

1. That the Committee support the recommendations to the Executive Councillor responsible for Children's Services as set out in the report.
2. That any additional comments be passed on to the Executive Councillor responsible for Children's Services in relation to this item.

**44 LINCOLNSHIRE SAFEGUARDING BOARDS SCRUTINY SUB-GROUP  
UPDATE**

Consideration was given to a report which enabled the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee to have an overview of the activities of the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Boards Scrutiny Sub-Group, in particular the Sub-Group's consideration of child safeguarding matters.

It was reported that the Scrutiny Sub-Group last met on 28 September 2016 and the draft minutes were included within the agenda pack. The Sub-Group welcomed two

new members, Dr Emile van der Zee and Councillor Mike Exton, who were the new Parent Governor and District Councillor Representatives.

The Sub-Group was updated on the work of the Lincolnshire safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and was advised that the Board was managing three serious case reviews.

The Sub-Group also received an update on Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and the development of the Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) meeting model. MACE had now been running for 3 months and provided a way of managing CSE and missing risk in the community. MACE meetings were attended by people directly working with the young person or managing the perpetrator. The new model would be reviewed after 6 months to evaluate the outcomes.

The Sub-Group agreed its meeting dates for 2017 and the next meeting of the Sub Group would be held on 11 January 2017.

Concerns were raised that the minutes did not seem to be very informative, however members were reminded that the Scrutiny Sub-Group met in private, and so there was a need for caution about the level of detail included in the minutes.

#### RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Boards Scrutiny Sub Group, held on 28 September 2016, be noted.

#### 45 CENTRE FOR PUBLIC SCRUTINY'S GUIDE TO SCRUTINISING CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS

It was reported that on 9 October 2015 the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee was asked to consider and comment on the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) 21 questions guide for Councillors on Safeguarding Children.

It was agreed following this that Officers would be requested to provide the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee with assurance in respect of the questions set out in the CfPS Guide 2015.

Consideration was given to a report which set out the work undertaken across Children's Services in response to questions 8, 9, 13 and 14, as set out below:

- Question 8 – Does the local area have a range of effective and evidence based services in place to assess and meet the needs of local children and their families?
- Question 9 – Are local assessments of need effective in ensuring children and their families are able to access early support and services to reduce risk and meet needs?  
How effective is access to these services in preventing potential safeguarding interventions?
- Question 13 – What evidence is there that the child is at the centre of local safeguarding arrangements?

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- Question 14 – Who are the most vulnerable children in the local area? What are their needs and how well are they met?

Members were guided through the report and 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:

- In relation to Question 9 and the number of TACs/early help arrangements in place, it was queried whether this was due to increasing need or staff being better able to identify children in need of additional support. It was noted that need was being recognised earlier, by schools and social workers and demand was increasing. It was noted that 64% of lead professionals on TACs were school staff.
- In relation to children being removed from families, it was queried whether this was a last option and whether work would be undertaken with the family to prevent this from happening. It was queried whether the authority was too cautious in this regard. Members were advised that children were best placed living in their family, but some families needed more support than others. It was very important that excellent assessments and risk analyses through signs of safety, so that risk could be carefully considered. It was important that this work was done so the right interventions could be put in place at the right time. Prior to the removal of children the family would go into pre-proceedings and it was confirmed that it was the court who made decisions to remove children not the local authority. It was confirmed by officers that mechanisms were in place to manage pre-proceedings work and that the Court made the judgement to remove children.
- A lot of research had been done into this matter by the Association of Directors of Children's Services, and with more awareness came more identification. It was also noted that one Head teacher had said that children in Lincolnshire were more likely to tell a teacher what was happening to them at home when compared with those children living in inner city areas due to cultural complexities.
- It was commented that expectations about what was acceptable in society with children was changing, there was also pressure in relation to the internet and social media. Values and attitudes towards children and young people also changed over time.
- Neglect was a very difficult issue in terms of when it was the best time to intervene, and when should the authority give support and try and help the family and at what point there needed to be statutory intervention. A member commented that in their work with the Adoption Panel, they were always impressed by the amount of work that was put in to keep a child in the home. It was thought it must be very difficult for those staff on the frontline who were making these decisions on a day to day basis. It was acknowledged that it was a very difficult judgement call to make, but that staff were professionally trained to undertake this work and there was careful management oversight of decisions.
- It was thought that austerity measures were having an impact on demand management and were reducing every organisations capacity to deal with the demand for services.

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- There was concern about the increase in the numbers of TAC, and it was queried how schools were managing that increase, as some schools were having redundancies in pastoral support. Members were informed that officers were seeing some excellent early help assessments from schools. It was also noted that 8 TAC consultants had been put in place across the county who could provide additional capacity for advice, support and supervision for schools.
- Concerns were raised regarding the involvement of other organisations in TAC, as schools could feel that they were leading the process and not getting engagement from other agencies such as health or the Police. It was noted that concerns in relation to health were improving and that this would be enhanced further through the insourcing of health visiting services. There was some engagement from PCSO's and some had been seconded into the early help team through the Families Working Together service.
- It was queried that if there were cases where abuse was suspected, would that be when the Police got involved. It was noted that if this was the case then a threshold would be triggered and child protection teams would be contacted and a child protection enquiry would be required.
- It was noted that the decision to remove children from a family was not the local authority's, but was made by the courts, and there was a need to assess the viability of all family members before and as part of an application to the court.
- In relation to domestic violence, it was noted that were thousands of cases where police attended an incident where children were in the household.
- It was noted that the Early Help locality teams did have a small commissioning budget of around £30K to enable them to provide bespoke services for specific areas. It was also noted that social workers had access to Section 17 budgets if additional support was required.

**RESOLVED**

That the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee be assured on the contents of the response provided.

**46      SCHOOLS THAT WORK FOR EVERYONE - GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION**

Consideration was given to a report which provided a summary of the key proposals in the consultation document 'Schools that work for everyone' (published by the Department for Education (DfE) on 12 September 2016) and included an amended proposed response to the consultation for the Committee to approve for submission. It was noted that the consultation would close on 12 December 2016.

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:

- Members commented that officers had done a good job, and this version more explicitly outlined the strong views of members.

- It was commented that there was not always the confidence that grammar schools had sufficient experience in terms of school improvement in particular for schools rated as inadequate. This would not be the case in every circumstance and all cases would be assessed individually.
- With regard to an article in the local press about a school asking parents to make a contribution towards text books, it was queried whether this was a one off situation, or would there be more stories like this emerging. Members were advised that schools budgets had been protected and had not seen the cuts that local authorities had, however, the budget had been cash flat, and in real terms every single school would say that they were struggling. When a school converted to an academy it originally received an education support grant of around £600 per pupil, but that has now reduced to around circa £70 per pupil and was expected to reduce further. This had disproportionately affected secondary schools.
- The local authority used to give smaller schools a greater block allocation of funding, but the government had introduced a cap on this block. Lincolnshire was one of the lowest funded authorities for schools in the country.
- It was queried whether a workshop or report on how schools were funded would be useful for the Committee.
- It was acknowledged that the officers had done a very good job with the consultation response.

**RESOLVED**

That the response document attached at Appendix A of the report be approved for submission to the consultation.

**47      CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK  
PROGRAMME**

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 there was one amendment to the work programme. A report on a DfE Innovation Bid, which would be for pre-decision scrutiny, had been added to the agenda for the meeting 20 January 2017. A bid would be submitted for some funding from the Department for Education which would tie the Council into match funding, which meant a decision was required. The funding would primarily be for services relating to Looked After Children and those at risk of being looked after.

It was also noted that a report in relation to how schools were funded would be added as a future item for consideration.

It was suggested whether the names alongside the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Boards Scrutiny Sub-Group and Corporate Parenting Panel Update could be amended for the June 2017 meeting as this meeting would be after the Council's Election.

**RESOLVED**

1. That the content of the work programme, as set out in Appendix A of the report, be noted.
2. That the content of the Children's Services Forward Plan, as set out in Appendix b of the report, be noted.
3. That the amendments highlighted above be noted.

48      PERFORMANCE - QUARTER 2 2016/17

Consideration was given to a report which provided key performance information for Quarter 2 2016/17 that was relevant to the work of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.

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:

- It was queried whether there was a pattern emerging in relation to those children who were not achieving. It was noted that indicators in relation to 'Young People not in education, employment or training' and 'Pupils aged 16-18 participating in learning' were mirror images of each other and there was a correlation between the two. These indicators would need to be closely monitored, and for this particular data set there was always a data lag in quarter 2, and officers would not make any assumptions based on September's data.
- It was noted that approximately £1m had been taken out of the careers guidance budget, so the impact of this needed to be monitored.
- 'Achievement gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers at key stage 4' – officers were aware that much of this data related to academies, but it was something that was high up on head teachers agendas, as they were judged by Ofsted on it.
- An emotional wellbeing service was also in development, as many of those that did not achieve were also in need of emotional support.
- A more focused approach had been taken this year in challenging those academies where the gap was biggest, and the local authority was referring them to the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) when performance did not improve.
- In relation to whether there was a correlation between those children who did not achieve and those who were not in education, employment or training, it was noted that young people did not always go onto their right pathway and so could drop out part way through a course. It was commented that it was a concern that schools were not always ensuring that children were on the best programme for them.
- It was suggested that some schools with sixth forms were desperate to hold onto young people, whether it was the right pathway or not.
- For secondary schools which were causing concern there was a protocol between the local authority and academies, and officers were working on a protocol between the local authority and the RSC.

- In terms of complaints received, it was queried whether there was a downward trend in complaints. It was noted that these were only the complaints that the local authority had received in relation to schools, but there would probably be many more which had gone directly to the schools.
- 'Average time taken to move a child from care to an adoptive family' and 'Average time taken to match a child to an adoptive family' – it was commented that it was positive that these were both ahead of target. It was noted that these two measures ran concurrently. It was queried whether the target could be reduced down any further. Members were advised that Lincolnshire was an outstanding authority for adoption and it was suggested whether the Committee would like to receive a report on the journey of a child in the adoption process. It was also added that the report could focus on permanence as well rather than just adoption.
- It was queried whether there was anything that members could do as a committee to further challenge the gap. Members were advised that it was not an engagement issue as academies were very open with the authority. It was more about how locality support could be used to support children.
- The pressure was on schools to narrow the achievement gap. They were reporting that they were doing all they could, and it was commented that it would be interesting to carry out research in some of the most disadvantaged communities, as there was a need to better understand what disadvantage looked like in different areas so that schools were better able to meet the needs of their children.
- It was commented that disadvantaged children in selective areas needed more assistance, and this was why a locality model was needed. It was reported that secondary schools had never felt more connected to the local authority since the new sector led model was introduced.
- It was requested that staff be thanked for their work in achieving targets, as it was acknowledged that Lincolnshire did have challenging targets.
- It was confirmed that schools were being monitored in terms of those that were choosing not to buy in services which were provided for free in the past, to determine whether this had an impact. It was also noted that officers were trying to be creative with training, such as by recognising and reducing duplication within the system.
- It was commented that it was nice to see the KPIs presented in the way they were, as it was very clear and easier to understand.
- In relation to permanent exclusions, it was queried whether there had been a problem in the county. It was noted that there was still a significant issue of too many young people excluded permanently from school, but it had been identified as an issue, and so far a 25% reduction had been seen since the new pathway was put in place in September 2016.
- It was queried whether the number of days that schools had been in special measures was normal. It was noted that there were schools which were a concern as they were drifting and that a sponsor was not secured quickly enough. There was a concern that delay could lead to more children leaving the school which would in turn make it a less attractive option to potential sponsors. It was also noted that an academy in special measures would not be monitored again by Ofsted and so would not have the chance to come out of



special measures. Once a school entered special measures it became the responsibility of the RSC. The sponsor for South Witham had taken over and the school was improving.

- It would be important to identify patches of deprivation rather than looking at general areas, as it was commented that if poverty in Grantham generally was looked at, it would be a different result to if one particular estate was looked at.

At this point in the meeting it was moved, seconded and:

**RESOLVED**

That in accordance with section 100(A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the consideration of Appendix D to the report on the grounds that if they were present there could be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.

The Chairman invited Members of the Committee to ask questions in relation to Appendix D of the report and officers responded to those questions raised.

**RESOLVED**

That after the consideration of exempt information, as defined above, the remainder of the meeting be held in public.

**RESOLVED**

That the comments made in relation to the performance information be noted.

The meeting closed at 11.50 am

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