



**CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
25 FEBRUARY 2011**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR S F WILLIAMS (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors P A Carpenter, M J Exton, M W Gilbert, J R Hicks, J D Hough (Vice-Chairman), B W Keimach, C R Oxby, R A Shore, R B Singleton-McGuire, M Smith, C J Underwood-Frost, and C N Worth.

Councillor Mrs P A Bradwell (Executive Councillor for Children's Services and Adult Education) attended the meeting as an observer.

Added Members: Mrs E French, Mrs J E Pilsworth, Dr B Roberts, Mr S C Rudman and Mrs K A Seddon.

Officers in attendance: Debbie Barnes (Assistant Director Children's), Andy Breckon (Assistant Director – School Improvement Service) Sue Westcott (Assistant Director Children's), Dick Pike (Head of School Administration), Tracy Johnson (Scrutiny Officer) and Katrina Cope (Team Leader Democratic Support).

67. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Miss A M Jenkyns.

An apology for absence was also received from Mrs G Wright.

The Executive Support Councillor for Children's Services and Adult Education, Councillor A Williams also submitted his apologies.

68. DECLARATIONS' OF MEMBERS' INTEREST

Councillor J D Hough declared a personal interest in agenda item 4 (Minute No. 70 below refers), as his partner was a Non-Executive Director of the Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Trust and Councillor Hough was also a member of that Trust.

Councillor C R Oxby declared a personal interest in agenda item 5 (Minute No. 71 refers) as his wife provided assistance to autistic children travelling to school.

Councillor M J Exton declared a person interest in agenda item 4 (Minute No. 70 refers), as a governor at The Deepings School.

Councillor M Smith declared a personal interest in agenda item 4 (Minute No. 70 refers), as a governor at the Skegness Grammar School.

Councillor C J Underwood-Frost declared a personal interest in agenda item 4 (Minute No. 70 refers), as a governor at the Trent Valley Academy.

Mr S C Rudman declared a personal interest in agenda item 4 (Minute No. 70 refers), as a governor at the St Peter and Paul's High School and Our Lady of Lincoln Catholic Primary School.

Councillor M W Gilbert declared a personal interest in agenda item 4 (Minute No. 70 refers), as a governor at the Boston Grammar School Federation.

Councillor S F Williams declared a personal interest in agenda item 4 (Minute No. 70 refers), as a governor at Deeping St Nicholas Primary School.

69. MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 14 JANUARY 2011

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee held on 14 January 2011, be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

70. PROPOSALS FOR THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES CORE OFFER PROPOSALS 2011/2014

Consideration was given to a report from the Assistant Director for Children, which provided the committee with information relating to the services Lincolnshire County Council proposed to continue to deliver, as part of its core offer post March 2011.

The Assistant Director for Children guided members through the report, making particular reference to:-

- The background to the report;
- An overview of Children's Services Budget, including the 2010/11 Budget Allocation and 2010/2011 Budget breakdown. It was confirmed that the Council would be receiving £24 million of Early Intervention Grant funding;
- Priorities – Early Intervention and Prevention; Safeguarding; Aspiration and Well being; Achievement; and best use of Resources.
- Future developments which included increasing opportunities for young people; supporting schools to deliver the English Baccalaureate; Graduate Leader Programme; providing a remodelled commissioned service to promote positive mental well being; reviewing of services to children with disabilities; two year offer for children from disadvantaged communities to access 15 hours early intervention; enhanced apprenticeships for Looked After Children; Arts, sports, and music with projects to support the Olympic legacy; and additional investment in elective home education. The Committee indicated that they would like to receive a further report with regard to elective home education and noted that this was already scheduled into the work programme;
- Budget Reductions – Particular reference was made to the remodelling of the Locality Team. It was noted that the proposal was to create one integrated Locality Team. Details of the resources of the team were detailed at page seven of the report;

- Support function reductions – To reduce performance reporting where it was not required for DfE returns, or essential to service delivery; reduce staff involved in commissioning; reduce training and workforce development offer to staff; and conduct a property review;
- Services which promote learning – It was reported that resources were being devolved to schools with the Authority acting as a broker of school support to drive improvement. Also, in line with this the authority seeks to change its offer to schools which will enable schools to purchase their own support based on local needs;
- Transport - It was noted that many of the transport reductions would be implemented within a five year time frame; and
- Transformation Projects within Children’s Services.

During discussion, members raised the following issues:-

Note: Councillor R A Shore declared a personal interest, as a member of an Academy.

- Youth workers – With the reduction in the number of youth workers, within the Big Society, a question was raised as to how members of the public were going to be trained to act as volunteers. It was noted that the Community Development Youth Worker would be engaging with people within communities to bring in volunteer helpers. It was further noted that the situation would be monitored;
- Early intervention – It was highlighted that there was a need to be able to intervene at an early age in order to make a difference. Reassurance was given that Health Visitors would be integrated into Children’s Centres and that the Early Intervention Grant would continue to fund this for 2011/12;
- Transportation reductions;
- Special School provision – It was noted that the Council would be looking at provision in all the seven districts;
- The Effect of Academies on the Council’s role. It was highlighted that the role of the local authority was changing and that there was a need to have measures in place to build up relationships with Academies in the future. The intention was that Academies would be buying services from the local authority. It was reported that at the Council meeting on 11 February 2011, a motion had been agreed in relation to this matter and that this would be considered later in the agenda. It was agreed that a monitoring report would need to be received in the future with regard to the issues raised;
- The availability of Locality Teams - It was highlighted that the remodelling of the Locality Team would strengthen the service to families. The service would be provided on a rota basis;
- Community development; and
- Children’s Centre facilities - Reassurance was given that Children’s Centres would be offering universal services, but it was up to the Partnership Board on how they deliver the commissioning intentions for their locality.

RESOLVED

That the comments raised in relation to the proposal for Children’s Services core offer be noted.

71. PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE PROVISION OF HOME TO SCHOOL/TRANSPORT FOR POST 16 STUDENTS

The Committee gave consideration to a report from the Assistant Director for Children, which provided information relating to proposed changes to certain elements of the Council's discretionary post 16 home to school/college transport policy. The consultation proposed changes to the designated transport areas; provide transport to only the nearest FE college or sixth form; remove transport along unsuitable walking routes less than 3 miles; and increase the annual contribution by students from £202.00 to £390.00. It was noted that there was no statutory requirement for the local authority to provide transport for post 16 learners. Details of the proposed changes were set out in Appendix A to the report.

It was reported that the proposals were designed to make savings and provide fairer and more equitable transport provision while at the same time continuing a high level of support for post 16 students by funding circa 60% of the total post 16 transport costs. It was noted that consultation had commenced on 5 January 2011 and was due to close on 16 March 2011.

The Head of School Administration guided the Committee through the report from which the following comments were raised:-

Note: Dr B Roberts declared a personal interest in discussions, as a corporate member at the John Leggott College, Scunthorpe.

- The rurality of the County and the effect the changes would impose on post 16 students in rural villages;
- Removing the choice and discretion from post 16 students as they would get transport to only their nearest college or sixth form;
- The ceasing of the Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) which helped families on low incomes to subsidise their travelling. It was noted that confirmation was yet to be received whether EMA would be replaced. Some members felt that it was unfair to accept the proposals until the implementation of alternative funding for EMA was in place. It was suggested that the Government should be lobbied with regard to clarification of the alternative funding arrangements;
- Consultation meetings were being held around the County. Information relating to the recently held meeting in Louth was brought to members' attention. A request was also made for a consultation meeting to be held in South of the County and Skegness. It was highlighted that a further report would be presented to the Committee at its April meeting which would provide the Committee with the opportunity to discuss responses received as part of the consultation;
- The proposals did not take into consideration deprivation/low income;
- Particular concerns were expressed in relation to the element of choice of small sixth forms as these quite often were unable to offer a full range of subjects;
- Health and safety issues relating to unsafe routes; and
- Some concerns were expressed as to whether the Council should be providing post 16 transport at all, as a number of councils no longer made any provision.

RESOLVED

That the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee accept the consultation document detailed at Appendix A to the report, but request that implementation of the proposals be deferred until such time as alternative funding arrangements for EMA were in place to assist deprived families in the County.

72. PERFORMANCE – QUARTER 3 2010/11

A report from the Assistant Director for Children was considered, which provided the Committee with a summary of Quarter 3 2010/11 performance for Children and Young People by each of the five key outcomes listed below and management outcomes:-

- Be Healthy;
- Stay Safe;
- Enjoy and Achieve;
- Make a Positive Contribution; and
- Achieve Economic Wellbeing.

Full details relating to performance for quarter three was set out in Appendices A and B to the report.

During consideration of the report, the following issues were raised:-

- Page 8 of Appendix A – Enjoy and Achieve – NI103b Special Educational Needs – statement issued within 26 weeks. Concern was expressed with regard to failing targets of statements. Reassurance was given that work was in progress and that the target would come back on line in the next quarter;
- Simplifying the reporting mechanism with regard to areas of concern. It was reported that this was an area that would be revised;
- Page 8 of Appendix A – Enjoy and Achieve - CSO99 percentage of pupils in grammar schools achieving 5 or more A* to A grade GCSEs including English and Maths. It was highlighted that this target was aspirational for local grammar schools to achieve. It was noted that private schools were not included within this indicator;
- Page 8 of Appendix A – Enjoy and Achieve – NI101 Looked After Children achieving 5A* - C GCSEs at KS4 – What was being done to improve this target. It was reported that this would be taken up by the Corporate Parenting Panel, as it was not an area for complacency; and
- Narrowing the gap – It was reported that there had been significant improvement in the last 18 months in relation to foundation stage profile. It was highlighted that the base was very low because the number of children were from a small group in the first place. It was noted further that the reason why the gap looked as big as it did was due to data lag.

RESOLVED

That the performance for Quarter 3 for Children and Young People be noted.

73. REVIEW AND RECONFIGURATION OF SPECIAL SCHOOL AND MAINSTREAM UNIT PROVISION – PUBLIC CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

Pursuant to Minute Number 41 from the 22 October 2010 meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, consideration was given to a report from the Executive Director of Adults and Children, which provided the Committee with an update following the period of public consultation in relation to the Review and Reconfiguration of Special School and Mainstream Unit Provision.

It was reported that the consultation had gone well and that a number of key themes had been raised and fully discussed at these meetings and these included:-

1. The need for assurance that the local authority would not require a child to change special schools to reduce transport costs if they are settled in their present school.
2. Funding streams to make necessary structural solutions.
3. The need to retain a sufficiency of places in special schools.
4. The effective management of a wider range of need within generic special schools.
5. Developing the expertise of mainstream schools to effectively meet more complex needs and the means by which they should be funded.

It was noted that from the consultation there had been a consensus of agreement from all parties for the implementation of all the 13 recommendation set out in the review report. It was felt that Recommendation 4 needed to be amended to reflect concerns raised by parents.

During a short discussion, concern was expressed with regard to the wording of the recommendation 4, in relation to existing transport arrangements being provided to existing schools. Reassurance was given that this was the case under the proposal.

RESOLVED

That subject to clarity in relation to existing schools, (Recommendation 4), the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee note the comments received on the public consultation in relation to the Review and Reconfiguration of Special School and Mainstream Unit Provision.

74. CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE OF HOLBEACH, THE GEORGE FARMER TECHNOLOGY AND LANGUAGE COLLEGE AND CROWLAND, THE ST GUTHLAC SCHOOL

The Assistant for the Director School Improvement Service presented a report for consideration by the Committee, which outlined a proposal to close The George Farmer Technology and Language College and The St Guthlac School on 31 August 2011, on the condition that they were replaced on 1 September 2011 with a new co-educational Academy.

It was reported that The George Farmer Technology and Language College and The St Guthlac School were both rural secondary schools in the south of the county operating within a selective education system. The George Farmer was a popular

oversubscribed school, with a sixth form (roll of 999). The St Guthlac School was a small school for ages 11-16 and a roll of only 339. The St Guthlac School had been experiencing a number of significant difficulties for several years and since September 2007 had been in a hard federation with George Farmer. The schools had worked well together and progress had been made but a long term sustainable solution was now required and the formation of an Academy was the preferred option.

A short discussion ensued, from which the following comments were raised:-

- Support was shown for the proposal as it would benefit the children concerned; and
- The success of the George Farmer apprenticeship scheme and its commitment to the community.

RESOLVED

That support be given to the proposal to close The George Farmer Technology and Language College and The St Guthlac School on 31 August 2011 on the condition that they are replaced on 1 September 2011 with a new co-educational Academy.

(This report requires discussion and feedback on the proposal within the formal consultation period, which forms the first part of the statutory process, commencing on 26 January and potentially leading to a final Executive decision in July and implementation in September).

75. CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report from the Executive Director Adults and Children, which presented the minutes of the Corporate Parenting Panel meeting, held on 20 January 2011 for the Committee's consideration.

The Assistant Director for Children guided members through the minutes presented.

RESOLVED

That the draft minutes of the Corporate Parenting Panel meeting held on 20 January 2011 be noted.

76. LINCOLNSHIRE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD SCRUTINY SUB-GROUP

A report from the Executive Director of Performance and Governance was considered, which informed the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee of matters considered by the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board Scrutiny Sub-Group at its meeting held on 4 February 2011.

RESOLVED

That the draft minutes of the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board Scrutiny Sub-Group meeting held on 4 February 2011 be noted.

77. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2011

Consideration was given to a report by the Committee's Scrutiny Officer, which provided members with an opportunity to review the work programme for the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee for 2011.

The Scrutiny Officer advised that the motion from the Council meeting held on 11 February 2011 by Councillor J R Marriott still needed to be included within the Committee's work programme and that she would be discussing this matter with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED

That the work programme as detailed at Appendix A to the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 12:45pm.