



**CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE  
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
8 APRIL 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, M Smith, C J Underwood-Frost, and N Worth.

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

Added Members: Mrs J E Pilsworth, Dr B Roberts and Mrs G Wright

Officers in attendance: Debbie Barnes (Assistant Director Children's), Lynne McNiven (NHS Lincolnshire), Phillip Garner (NHS Lincolnshire), Sarah Ferneyhough (Lincolnshire Sports Partnership), John O'Connor (Head of Service, School Administration), Tracy Johnson (Scrutiny Officer) and Rachel Wilson (Democratic Services Officer).

**78. 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.

**79. DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were received at this point in the meeting.

**80. MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 25 FEBRUARY 2011**

**RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee held on 25 February 2011, be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**81. SUMMARY OF THE 2009/10 NATIONAL CHILD MEASUREMENT PROGRAMME (NCMP)**

(Note: During discussion of this item, Councillor C J Underwood-Frost declared a personal interest as the Chairman of West Lindsey District Council's Planning Committee)

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Consideration was given to a report presented by Lynne McNiven and Phil Garner from NHS Lincolnshire, which set out current developments, future investment plans and challenges faced by NHS Lincolnshire if its services were to have a positive effect on the reduction of childhood obesity levels in Lincolnshire. It was noted that this item had previously been discussed by this Committee at its meeting on 10 September 2010.

It was reported to the Committee that the results of the National Childhood Measurement Programme for 2009/10 were now available. This programme had been in place for the past 3 - 4 years, and a lot more children were now taking part and children were measured in the reception class and also again in year 6. The results have shown that the numbers of children who are overweight or obese have risen significantly, and this would be where the NHS would be targeting services.

Nationally the numbers of overweight and obese children had stayed about the same, but the figures showed that the numbers of overweight and obese children in Lincolnshire were creeping up. However, whilst nationally, numbers of overweight children could be linked with areas of deprivation, this was not quite as clear cut for Lincolnshire, as results had shown that the numbers of overweight children measured in year 6 reduced significantly for the most deprived population. Therefore it could not be stated that deprivation was absolutely linked to obesity in the county, and so there was a need to tailor interventions to the individual needs of primary school children.

It was reported that it was planned to give out child sized plates to all reception children when the next set of measurements commenced in September 2011, as portion size was an issue in contributing to obesity. Feedback would be requested from the parents asking what they wanted and needed. There were critical changes which needed to be made if this issue was to be successfully tackled.

The Members of the Committee were provided with the opportunity to ask questions and some of the points raised during the discussion included the following:

- It was hoped that the reintroduction of hot school meals into primary schools would have an effect, provided the food was nutritious and the portion sizes appropriate
- A key aspect was also how food was managed in the home, schools should not be relied upon to be the sole provider of healthy food options
- Work had shown that a lot of Lincolnshire children were very active regardless of their weight
- Concerns were expressed over the power of marketing as large events were usually sponsored by large companies such as Coca Cola or McDonalds and supermarkets usually only had promotions on processed foods
- The Change for Life campaign had been very successful and some retailers were now looking more closely at this issue to increase awareness of food choices. It was reported that NHS Lincolnshire had recently begun to work with the Lincolnshire Co-operative to look at things such as where the fresh food is placed in the store, and they have been very receptive to this process.

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- Work was planned for later in the year which would examine the background of children who were overweight in reception classes.
- NHS Lincolnshire had been running a pilot called 'Fit Kids' which was be aimed at encouraging activity within a home setting. It was requested whether NHS Lincolnshire would be able to report back to this Committee once the pilot had been completed.
- Healthy food was often too expensive for families on low incomes
- The Change for Life campaign had promoted the idea of families eating together at regular times
- There was a need to change the attitudes of professionals on this issue as some of the stigma and taboos about being overweight needed to be broken down in order to tackle it. NHS Lincolnshire would be providing intervention training for nurses and health workers on this subject, as there could often be a lot of guilt and denial with this issue.
- A huge aspiration would be to make sure that the streets were safe for children to play in again
- Through targeted action and publicity there was a need to find the best way to make a difference, and if everyone got involved that could help to make an improvement in Lincolnshire
- Physical activity was very important
- NHS Lincolnshire had been working with the Access Team for the past two years and they could now report that there were another 40,000 children either walking or cycling to school. This had been accomplished in a number of ways, one of them being making premises safe for children to get to on their bikes.
- There were a number of activities available for children which were free

It was queried whether the training which had been previously mentioned would be made available to health professionals working for the County Council as well, and it was thought that there would not be a problem with this. This training was being funded by Public Health, and tackling obesity was one of its key priorities.

#### RESOLVED

1. That the report and comments made be noted.
2. That a report on the Fit Kids pilot be brought to a future meeting.

#### 82. IMPACT OF THE FREE SWIMMING INITIATIVE IN LINCOLNSHIRE

The Committee considered a report which provided them with further information on the impact of the Free Swimming Initiative in Lincolnshire. The report set out the impact on swimming attendances from the free swimming initiative and how this had been affected since the reintroduction of pricing.

It was reported that the free swimming initiative had been in place for just over a year and was offered to all children aged 16 and under in Lincolnshire between April 2009 and July 2010. It was announced by National Government in June 2010 that the funding for this initiative would be discontinued from July 2010.

It was reported that since the free swimming ended, providers had changed what they offered and had changed their packages in order to encourage participation. However, during the initiative an increase in children from areas of deprivation using

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swimming facilities had been seen, but since the free swimming ended, there had been a decline in children from these areas using the pools.

During discussion of this report, the following points were raised:

- There were discretionary pricing options which could be looked into further
- How could it be ensured that people made the right choices when it came to healthy activities
- There was a good evidence base to inform officers of how to target obese children successfully
- There was a need to change eating habits, as well as behaviour to incorporate physical activity
- NHS Lincolnshire was committed to investing in promoting exercise
- 73% of those who were accessing the free swimming were already regular swimmers
- It was found that the over 60's who also could access free swimming, were using the pools to swim and stay active whilst the under 16's tended to not focus on swimming.
- A reduction in under 16's swimming was found, but there was an increase in family memberships at Yarborough Leisure Centre
- It should be the role of the County Council to promote those activities which were available for children and families, and there were opportunities now to work with partners to promote these activities.
- Had any comparison been carried out between leisure pools and swimming pools to establish if there was any difference in take up of swimming lessons following the free swimming initiative?
- There needed to be a change in attitude towards whether sport and 'playing' were the same thing
- It was suggested that as it was the policy of the County Council to aim for the majority of residents to be within 7 miles of a Household Waste Recycling Centre, the same policy should be applied to swimming pools.

**RESOLVED**

That the report and comments made be noted.

**83. PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE PROVISION OF HOME TO SCHOOL/COLLEGE TRANSPORT FOR POST 16 STUDENTS – CONSULTATION FEEDBACK**

Consideration was given to a report which provided Members of the Committee with information and analysis on the responses received during the consultation period of 5 January to 16 March 2011 on the following proposals:

- To increase from 1 September 2011 the current annual student contribution from £202 per annum (or three termly payments of £69) to £390 per annum (or three termly payments of £132)
- a) That transport provision would, for students enrolling for the first time in FE colleges and sixth forms in September 2011, be made only to the college or sixth form nearest to a students home address (other than where a student was both on roll at the school in Year 11 and had a statutory entitlement to

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transport before transferring to the sixth form of the same establishment even if there was another sixth form closer to the student's home address)

b) Where a FE college had a satellite centre at which full time courses were offered, transport provision would be offered only where the journey from home to that site was closer than the journey to the students nearest college.

c) The County Council would no longer make transport provision for students enrolling for the first time in September 2011 to other than the nearest college or sixth form, regardless of whether the course a student wished to study was available at their nearest college or sixth form. The only exceptions to the proposal were:

- Attendance of learners with recognised learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LLDD) at other than their nearest college or sixth form where it was agreed by the local authority
- Level 2 or above Land Based courses at specialist colleges where the home to the nearest college offering the course does not exceed 45 miles (daily journeys would be arranged for the beginning and end of the normal college day on week days only).
  - Agriculture
  - Environmental Studies
  - Horticulture
  - Arboriculture
  - Large animal management
- The County Council would no longer provide transport for post 16 students who lived less than 3 miles from their nearest college or sixth form where all or part of the journey included an unsuitable walking route

The Members of the Committee were provided with the opportunity to discuss the responses to the consultation and to ask questions to the officers present. Some of the points raised during the discussion included the following:

- It was maybe time to look at the whole funding issue of providing subsidised transport to get people to school and colleges. Were there alternative ways of managing this such as transport being provided by the colleges themselves?
- The discretionary payment started in 2006 to assist in the running of the service. It was believed that this contribution would still be competitive when compared with similar authorities, even if the proposed increase was introduced.
- The authority could not dictate to colleges what provision they should have
- Should the demand for courses be looked at more closely or were some courses too specialised and could only be run by certain colleges?
- 90% of respondents had disagreed with the proposed changes and so this needed to be taken into account
- That the proposed increase be phased in over a number of years
- There was a need to look at what courses should be provided in Lincolnshire in order to encourage young people to stay in the county, once they have completed their courses.
- Was there any scope for adopting the Australian model of providing vocational courses which could be completed online? The Open University was one of the most successful institutions for further and higher education.
- The Wolf Report had commented that a lot of courses had been created to keep young people in education
- There was a need to provide relevant courses to educate young people

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- It was not a statutory requirement to provide post 16 travel
- It should be about young people being able to study the most appropriate course for their needs
- Some colleges ran very similar courses but with very different titles
- As yet there was no requirement to means test for transport, if this was introduced there would be an administrative cost to this
- There was a need for colleges to be more open about the courses they provide and the opportunities they could lead to in the future
- There was a need for flexibility as many 16 year olds did not know what they wanted to do as a career
- Means testing of the EMA replacement should be explored, and one possibility was that if a young person qualified for an EMA or the EMA replacement, then they would be eligible for subsidised transport to college
- There were concerns that if funding was devolved back to schools there would be no way to ensure that it was spent on what it was meant for

Following the discussion, it was suggested that the recommendations which should be put forward to the Executive included the phasing in of the increase in contribution over a number of years, and that if the most appropriate course for a young person was not available at the nearest college, transport to the college offering the appropriate course should be provided, and that officers should have delegated authority to decide on what would be considered to be an appropriate course.

The Executive Support Councillor for Children's Services and Adult Education informed the Committee that he would take their comments back to the Executive.

**RESOLVED**

That the following recommendations be put forward to the Executive:

1. That in line with the consultation, the increase in the subsidy should be introduced over a sliding period of 4 years with an understanding that inflation costs would need to be in addition;
2. That if the most appropriate course for a young person was not available at the nearest college, transport to the college offering the appropriate course should be provided, and that officers should have delegated authority to decide on what would be considered to be an appropriate course.

**84. 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. It was agreed that the following items be added to the work programme:

- Report on the 'Fit Kids' pilot to a future meeting
- Stamford Endowed School to the 13 May meeting

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The Scrutiny Officer highlighted that the agenda for the next meeting on 13 May 2011 was very lengthy and with the agreement of the Chairman, it was proposed that the reports on the Health White Paper, Academies Motion from Council on 11/02/11, and the Traveller Education Policy and Action Plan Update would be deferred to future meetings.

**RESOLVED**

That the work programme as detailed at Appendix A to the report be approved, subject to the above amendments being included.

**85. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED**

That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3, of Schedule 12A of the Act, as amended.

**86. LEAVING CARE CONTRACT UPDATE**

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Assistant Director, Children's Services who provided an update on the Leaving Care contract. It was requested that a brief update on the progress of the action plan be submitted to the meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee scheduled to be held in June 2011.

**RESOLVED**

That the comments made in relation to the report and action plan be noted.

The meeting closed at 12:45pm.