



**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
3 FEBRUARY 2012**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR S F WILLIAMS (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors P A Carpenter, C J Davie, M Exton, J R Hicks, J D Hough, B W Keimach, C R Oxby, R B Singleton-McGuire, M Smith and C N Worth.

Added Members: Dr B Roberts, Mr S C Rudman and Mrs G Wright.

Councillor Mrs P A Bradwell (Executive Councillor for Children's Services and Adult Learning) was also in attendance.

Councillor Mrs M J Overton attended the meeting as an observer.

Officers in attendance: Keith Batty (Principal Advisor 11 – 19, School Improvement Service), Andy Breckon (Assistant Director of Children's Services and Director of the School Improvement Service), Stuart Carlton (Assistant Director of Children's Services), Paula Holdsworth (General Manager of Specialist Services – Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust), Tracy Johnson (Scrutiny Officer), Elaine Radley (Head of Primary Education, School Improvement Service) and Graham Watts (Democratic Services Officer).

60. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M W Gilbert, A H Hagues, C J Underwood-Frost and R A Shore.

An apology for absence was also received from Mrs J E Pilsworth (Added Member).

It was reported that Mrs Pilsworth's term of office as a Parent Governor Representative Added Member was due to end later this month. The Chairman stated that he and the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, of which she was also a Member, would be writing to Mrs Pilsworth to thank her on behalf of both Committees for her valuable contributions over the past four years.

The Chairman also informed the Committee that Sue Westcott, Assistant Director of Children's Services, would be leaving the authority shortly to take up an Assistant Director post at Peterborough City Council. The Committee wished Mrs Westcott best wishes for her future endeavours and thanked her for her valuable contribution and support during her time at Lincolnshire County Council.

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61. DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor J D Hough declared a personal interest in relation to minute number 63 as his partner was a Non-Executive Director for Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and he was a Member of the Trust.

Councillor M Smith declared a personal interest in relation to minute number 66 as he was a Governor of a school in Skegness.

Councillor S F Williams declared a personal interest in relation to minute number 66 as he was a Governor of a primary school.

Councillor C N Worth declared a personal interest in relation to minute number 66 as he was a Governor at a number of schools in the county, including two Federated Schools and a school that was currently considering becoming a Federated School.

62. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 5 JANUARY 2012

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee held on 5 January 2012 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

63. CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES UPDATE

The Committee considered a report by the Assistant Director of Children's Services, which updated Members on the child and adolescent mental health services now available in Lincolnshire as commissioned under Lincolnshire County Council's and NHS Lincolnshire's new contracting arrangements.

Members noted that total investment in the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service locally remained at £7 million per annum, of which NHS Lincolnshire was the primary funder. The service in Lincolnshire was provided by the Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and operated on a four-tier framework, as set out in the report.

As part of the new service, the performance management information that the Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust provided to demonstrate effective delivery had been re-designed with new targets set. This ensured clear monitoring and management of key performance measures. Some key improvements in performance against new stretch targets included the following: -

- the average waiting time from referral to intervention for looked after children was now 2.4 weeks, above the target of four weeks;
- the average waiting time for Tier 2 cases was now 4.2 weeks, above the target of six weeks;

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- only four young people were re-referred to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service having been discharged from the service within the previous 12 months;
- the proportion of service users disengaging from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service was low and much better than the Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust's wider Trust average;
- positive service user feedback was being received;
- the Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust had passed the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board's Section 11 Assessment.

A number of key issues for further development were highlighted in the report, which included the following: -

- the signing of a Section 75 Agreement by Lincolnshire County Council and NHS Lincolnshire. It was envisaged that this would be signed off by 31 March 2012;
- the governance arrangements for the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service needed to be reviewed by Lincolnshire County Council and NHS Lincolnshire to ensure a joined up approach to commissioning in respect of children's and adults' mental health services in Lincolnshire;
- looked after children needed to be seen as a priority across all child and adolescent mental health services with 'fast track' access to all services;
- commissioners needed to agree who would be funding the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service in the Lincolnshire Secure Unit from 1 April 2012 onwards, based on Department of Health guidance;
- the Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust needed to provide commissioners with information on looked after children from outside of Lincolnshire in receipt of child and adolescent mental health services, so that their originating Primary Care Trust could be charged, with the income being reinvested into services for Lincolnshire children.

It was noted that child and adolescent mental health services provision had changed in Lincolnshire to ensure that the universal workforce was better able to recognise early when a child or young person had a mental health concern and then make an appropriate referral.

During discussion, it was reported that the Corporate Parenting Panel expressed concerns at its meeting on 2 February 2012 in respect of health assessments audits for looked after children, in terms of both physical and mental health. Assurances were given that these concerns would be addressed and it was reported that clear processes were in place with regards to mental health service provision for looked after children.

Questions were put forward regarding levels of disengagement and the intervention of parents in terms of the percentage of parents who refused services on behalf of their children. In addition, Members questioned whether there were any hotspots in the county where there were particularly high levels of young people aged under 18 who were self-harming or had attempted suicide. This information would be held by NHS Lincolnshire and officers agreed to ensure that it was circulated to all Members of the Committee outside of the meeting.

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In closing, the Committee requested an update report on the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service in approximately six months, which would include statistics relating to self-harming and attempted suicide rates with a breakdown by area in Lincolnshire, as well as an overview of this information relating to looked after children.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted and a further report on the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service be submitted to the Committee for consideration in approximately six months.

64. THE RAISING OF THE PARTICIPATION AGE IN POST-16 LEARNING

Consideration was given to a report by the Principal Advisor 11 to 19 of the School Improvement Service, which summarised the requirements of the legislation that would raise the age of compulsory participation in post-16 learning to 17 from September 2013 and to 18 from September 2015. A presentation was also provided at the meeting to complement the report and the following points were noted: -

- participation in learning included: -
 - work-based learning, such as Apprenticeships;
 - full-time education in a college of further education, a school sixth form or a sixth-form college;
 - foundation learning with an independent private provider;
 - independent specialist provision for learners with the most profound learning difficulties or disabilities;
 - part-time education or training (more than 280 guided learning hours per year) if they were employed, self-employed or volunteering for more than 20 hours per week;
- there would be no specific policing of the school's additional responsibilities as a result of the increase in the participation age;
- employers could be fined if they failed to provide young people with the required hours of education or training;
- progression and performance measures would be put in place, but accountability measures would not be introduced;
- local authorities would retain their statutory duty to enable, encourage and assist young people's participation in education and training. As the Government maintained the commitment to raise the participation age to 18 by 2015, the Early Intervention Grant would help local authorities to support vulnerable young people to engage in education and training, intervening early with those who were at risk of disengagement;
- for those learners with Statements of Special Educational Needs, Disabilities and Statutory Assessment and Provision, if transferring at 16 or 19, the local authority had responsibility to assess needs and broker appropriate learning provision under Section 139 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000. This would be carried out by Learning Disability Advisers who formed part of the local authority's Additional Needs Team;

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- for those learners on the Special Educational Needs, Disabilities and Statutory Assessment and Provision Register without a Statement, generally the school would ensure progression was well-managed and appropriate, using the Team Around the Child process if there were significant other needs;
- the local authority, through its Team Around the Child process and Learning Disability Advisers, would provide support to those young people classified as vulnerable and at risk of being not in education, employment or training;
- schools would have responsibility to identify and intervene for those young people between the ages of 16 to 19 not classified as vulnerable but at risk of being not in education, employment and training;
- there were four main strands to the rollout of raising the participation age which involved Children's Services Locality and Additional Needs Teams and the Careers Service, the 14 to 19 Team and the Careers Service, the 14 to 19 Planning and Allocations Team and the Education Business Partnership. The Lincolnshire 14 to 19 Strategic Partnership, which comprised of members representing the majority of stakeholders in the 14 to 19 agenda, had endorsed this four-strand approach to the implementation of the raising of the participation in Lincolnshire. The strands were further detailed in the report.

The following likely priorities for the County Council as part of the rollout of raising the participation age were noted as follows: -

- vulnerable young people who were not in education, employment or training;
- guidance and needs assessments for young people with Statements of Special Educational Needs, Disabilities and Statutory Assessment and Provision in Key Stage Four;
- support for school management teams where the school had exhausted all possibilities to provide appropriate careers or destination guidance to vulnerable young people.

Reference was made to the scrutiny review recently undertaken by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on improving access to post-16 learning in Lincolnshire. A Skills and Learning Action Plan was appended to the final report of the scrutiny review, which was a plan jointly being delivered by the 14 to 19 Team, the Children's Commissioning Team and Economy and Culture. The scrutiny review made a number of recommendations and recommendation 14 in particular related to the Skills and Learning Action Plan and requested that the Executive endorsed and implemented the Plan to ensure that the issues around the skills gap, lack of Apprenticeships, work experience and raising of the participation age were addressed.

A number of points were raised during discussion, some of which included the following: -

- a number of young people interviewed as part of the scrutiny review had indicated that they would be interested in setting up their own businesses and it was unclear at this stage how the raising of the participation age would affect them should they choose to do this;

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- in answer to a question regarding support to small businesses, it was noted that the only real incentive to provide young people with the required number of hours of training was that failure to do so could result in a fine;
- the Executive Councillor for Children's Services and Adult Learning had reported that the Council had invested in Apprenticeship Champions, who could work with small and medium businesses to support the development of Apprenticeships in Lincolnshire. The Executive Councillor for Economic Development was also undertaking lots of work with small and medium businesses in the county on this issue;
- when the country's current economic circumstances changed there would be more employment opportunities available, so it was important to encourage young people to take up opportunities for further education, training or Apprenticeships;
- questions were raised regarding the support available to vulnerable people in terms of Apprenticeship schemes. It was agreed that a separate report on this issue would be submitted to a future meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee;
- all of the young people in attendance at the mock meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on 11 November 2011 stated that they had found their work experience placements at Key Stage Four extremely useful. In view of this it was suggested that the funding to support work experience placements should be continued.

It was reported that the Department for Education had commenced a period of consultation to seek views on how raising the participation age would work in practice. It focused on the policies that would form the secondary legislation and covered aspects such as the definition of residency, the definition of full-time education, any wider ways of working that would be considered as participating and the amount and use of any fines. It was agreed that a working group would be established to consider a response to the consultation on behalf of the Committee. Councillors C J Davie, M Exton, J D Hough, M Smith and C N Worth expressed an interest to be involved in this piece of work.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That the four-strand approach to the local implementation of the raising of the participation age, as outlined in table 1 of the report, be endorsed.
- (3) That the implementation of recommendation 14 of the improving access to post-16 learning provision in Lincolnshire be further supported.
- (4) That a working group be established to meet and consider a response to the consultation on how raising the participation age would work in practice on behalf of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.

65. IMPROVING ACCESS TO POST-16 LEARNING PROVISION IN LINCOLNSHIRE – ACTION PLAN ARISING FROM RECOMMENDATIONS

A report by the Principal Advisor 11 to 19 of the School Improvement Service was considered, which presented the Action Plan in response to the recommendations arising from the improving access to post-16 learning provision in Lincolnshire scrutiny review.

A copy of the Action Plan was appended to the report, outlining whether individual recommendations had been accepted by the Executive Councillor for Children's Services and Adult Learning and what action would be taken in each case. Of the 15 scrutiny review recommendations, two were not accepted as follows: -

- recommendation number three – the Council had already lobbied the Government and local Members of Parliament. Schools and colleges now received the funding to allocate to students and the Government had not indicated that it would review the bursary;
- recommendation number six – transport in Lincolnshire, including school and college transport, was organised by the County Council and delivered by private sector operators who also operated the public transport network. The issue of a countywide post-16 learning concessionary fare scheme had been considered a number of times in the past and each time it was found to be prohibitively expensive due to the investment in infrastructure needed to operate a concessionary scheme.

The Committee accepted the reasons why recommendations three and six were not accepted by the Executive Councillor, but agreed that the timescales in the Action Plan were unrealistic and should be revised by officers in consultation with the Chairman. Some of the actions, for example, were due for completion at the end of this month as the report was originally scheduled to be considered by this Committee in December 2011.

The scrutiny review's final report was one of the subjects for discussion at the mock meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee with young people held as part of the 11 Million Takeover Day on 11 November 2011. A summary of the comments raised by young people at that meeting was appended to the report.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That the Action Plan in response to the recommendations arising from the improving access to post-16 learning provision in Lincolnshire scrutiny review be amended by officers, in consultation with the Chairman, to reflect more realistic timescales.
- (3) That an update on the Action Plan be submitted to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee in six months.

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66. STRATEGY FOR SUSTAINING SMALL AND MEDIUM SIZED PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN LINCOLNSHIRE AND CREATING COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

NOTE – Councillor R B Singleton-McGuire declared a personal interest in this item as he was a school Governor.

NOTE – Mr S C Rudman declared a personal interest in this item as he was a Governor of a small Roman Catholic school.

The Committee considered a report by the Assistant Director of Children's Services and Director of the School Improvement Service, which set out a proposed strategy to bring schools together into informal collaborative partnerships with additional funding to support infrastructural changes in the areas of teaching and learning, administration and support for vulnerable pupils, with the intention of securing improved outcomes for all pupils. A presentation was also provided at the meeting to complement the report and the following points were noted: -

- one of the greatest challenges in the next decade would be maintaining rural education;
- the following initiatives had been tried in the past: -
 - ad-hoc arrangements when the opportunity had arisen or like-minded Head Teachers or Governors coming together to form a partnership or federation, known locally as 'friendships';
 - the creation of Executive Head Teachers to run some Federations when one Head Teacher had left;
 - the establishment of some 'pyramid' or 'vertical' Federations run by local Secondary Schools;
 - the creation of Trusts or Multi-Academy Trusts to consolidate the arrangements;
- some of these measures were successful, whereas some had failed due to the fact that very few small schools in rural settings were sustainable in the emerging climate;
- it was felt that a more innovative scheme was needed, for the following reasons: -
 - there was a need to protect the rural school infrastructure by improving provision;
 - there was a need to maintain individual schools with their own Head Teachers and Governing Bodies;
 - Head Teachers needed to be allowed to focus more on teaching and learning;
 - there was a need to raise standards, particularly for pupils with Special Educational Needs;
 - schools needed to be supported to become 'good' more effectively, particularly because from 1 September 2012 there would be a move to the 'no notice' inspection process;
- standards needed to be raised in the majority of Lincolnshire's small and medium sized rural schools as they now fell below the Government's new Floor Standard targets;

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- the proposed solution was to provide additional support to small and medium sized primary schools by developing Collaborative Partnerships between groups of local schools in geographical areas;
- it was proposed that a Collaborative Partnership would be made up as follows: -
 - a group between three and seven schools within a 15 mile radius;
 - each school in the Partnership would have less than 200 children on roll;
 - each school would retain its own Head Teacher and Governing Body;
 - each school would retain its own distinctive ethos;
- this proposal could not be based on 'friendship' groups;
- Partnerships would appoint a shared, highly skilled Partnership Business Manager. These individuals would not take on an Executive Head Teacher role. The Partnerships would also appoint an experienced, shared Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator, who would support vulnerable children;
- additional resource would be available to support other shared activity as appropriate to each Partnership;
- strategic leadership of the Partnership would be provided through a Lead Strategic Group comprising the Head Teachers and the Chairmen of Governors. The Lead Strategic Group would be chaired by a Co-ordinator with proven primary leadership experience, who would be responsible for the line management and deployment of the shared staff;
- schools would be required to enter into a contractually binding agreement;
- each Collaborative Partnership would need to cater for more than 210 pupils;
- Head Teachers and Chairmen of Governors would need to agree to work as a single group, firstly to develop a common vision for the Partnership and secondly to deploy the common resource across the Partnership's schools;
- individual schools would need to establish a staffing structure that would ensure Partnership resources were maximised.

There were two elements of additional funding required for Collaborative Partnerships, as follows: -

i) Start-up Funding

£20,000 per school would be available for a maximum of two years and would be used to: -

- employ a single Partnership Business Manager, whilst restructuring took place;
- employ a single Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator across the Partnership;
- cover potential redundancy costs;
- establish true partnership working.

ii) Partnership Premium

£100,000 per annum would be allocated to each Collaborative Partnership and would be classed as on-going funding. This would be allocated to the Partnership, not to individual schools.

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It was reported that small schools were already looking at opportunities to work together and five possible Partnerships had expressed a keen interest to proceed in this way. Taking into account the geography of Lincolnshire and the location of small and medium primary schools, there would be a total of 39 possible Partnerships. Initial Collaborative Partnerships would commence in April 2012 with full implementation anticipated in September 2012.

Discussion ensued, during which Members welcomed the proposals as an innovative way of maintaining rural education in Lincolnshire.

RESOLVED

That the proposals set out in the report regarding the introduction of Collaborative Partnerships for small and medium sized schools in Lincolnshire be supported.

67. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2012

Consideration was given to a report by the Committee's Scrutiny Officer, which enabled Members to discuss the work programme for the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee for the coming year.

It was reported that there was one amendment to the work programme in respect of the Committee's meeting scheduled to be held on 1 June 2012. An item on the Council's new Early Intervention Strategy had been added to the work programme for that meeting as part of the Strategy's consultation process.

The Chairman also informed Members that the meeting of the Committee originally scheduled to be held on 9 March 2012 would now be held on 5 March 2012.

RESOLVED

That the work programme for the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee be approved, subject to the inclusion of the above amendments and the additional items agreed in minute numbers 63 and 65 above.

The meeting closed at 1.10 p.m.