

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
 6 SEPTEMBER 2013**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR J D HOUGH (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors B Adams (Vice-Chairman), W J Aron, S R Dodds, R J Hunter-Clarke, B W Keimach, C R Oxby, Mrs S Ransome, Mrs N J Smith, Mrs C A Talbot, Mrs S M Wray and D Brailsford

Added Members: Mrs E Olivier-Townrow, Mr S C Rudman, Mr P Thompson and Mrs G Wright

Councillor D Brailsford attended the meeting as an observer.

Replacement Members: Councillors C J T H Brewis, A Bridges, Mrs J Brockway, M S Jones, S L W Palmer, T M Trollope-Bellew and A H Turner.

Officers in attendance: Debbie Barnes (Executive Director Children's Services), Keith Batty (Assistant Director of CfBT Education Services), Andrea Brown (Democratic Services Officer), Stuart Carlton (Assistant Director of Children's Services), Tim Culpin (Head of School Improvement), Maggie Freeman (Head of Service 14-19), Jill Hodges (Director of CfBT Education Services), Tracy Johnson (Scrutiny Officer) and Tony Warnock (Head of Finance – Children's and Specialist Services).

The Chairman took the opportunity to welcome and introduce the newly appointed Director of CfBT Education Services, Jill Hodges, to the Committee.

23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs J P Churchill, S M Tweedale, PJ O'Connor, J R Hicks, L Wootten and R Wootten.

Mr C V Miller and Dr E van der Zee (Added Members) also submitted apologies for absence.

The following Councillors were in attendance as replacement members:-

- Councillor M S Jones for Councillor S M Tweedale
- Councillor Mrs J Brockway for Councillor L Wootten
- Councillor A Bridges for Councillor R Wootten
- Councillor C J T H Brewis for Councillor P J O'Connor
- Councillor S L W Palmer for Councillor J R Hicks
- Councillor T M Trollope-Bellew for Councillor A G Hagues
- Councillor A H Turner for the current vacancy on the Committee

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Apologies for absence were also received from Councillor Mrs P A Bradwell, Executive Councillor for Adult Care & Health Services and Children's Services.

24 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

25 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 26 JULY 2013

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee, held on 26 July 2013, be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

26 SCHOOL FUNDING REFORMS 2014/15

Tony Warnock, Head of Finance – Children's and Specialist Services, introduced the report explaining the relevant key areas for Members' attention before referring to the "Next Steps" section of the report.

During discussion, the following points were noted:-

- The position in relation to funding for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) was explained further. Each school are allocated a basic sum of £6k to deal with the basic elementary needs for children with SEN. In addition, children who have a higher level of SEN would attract further funding in order to support them. There was no requirement, therefore, to change the funding formula as the initial £6k was a notional sum. Officers were requested to reword the bullet point to include this clarification.
- It was asked if church schools would qualify for the sparsity factor despite many church schools being located in urban areas but whose pupils travel from rural areas. It was explained that the sparsity factor was to protect rural schools but the LA needed to ensure that the Dedicated Schools Grant delivers value for money. This was measured on a 'per pupil' basis with the most expensive schools being up to two and a half times more than the least expensive so a balanced approach needed to be taken. It was confirmed that there was no differentiation between church schools or any other school, as set out within DfE Regulations, therefore no consideration could be given to specific schools when agreeing budgets.
- Schools are able to allocate their budgets how they feel best suits their needs, no monies can be ringfenced by the Local Authority. However, as a Corporate Parent, it was hoped that the Local Authority could influence schools in relation to the Looked After Children formula and prior attainment.
- In relation to funding for pupils aged 16 and above, it was confirmed that schools receive money directly from the Education Funding Agency (EFA) for the amount of pupils they had on their roll from the previous year. Should a

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- considerable increase in pupils be evident, the schools could apply separately for additional funding.
- "Necessary Small School" was referred to within the report and also within government guidance. The meaning of this phrase was not defined in any DfE documentation and, therefore, open to interpretation.
 - It was confirmed that the other local authorities were not always informing Lincolnshire County Council when a "Looked After Child" was placed in a Lincolnshire school from another county, despite having a duty to do so.
 - During the last financial year, the primary maintained schools averaged a carry forward of just over 8% of their annual budget. Schools had been advised to build their reserves following the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) in 2010. The policy does state, however, that primary schools should not have more than 8% of their overall budget in reserves and anything above that amount should be earmarked for capital projects.

The Chairman thanked the Head of Finance – Children's and Specialist Services for presenting a clear and concise report.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

27 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR 16-19 (25) EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR 2014/15

Keith Batty, Assistant Director of CfBT Education Services, introduced the report, which asked the Committee to consider a report on the Strategic Priorities for 16-19(25) education and training for 2014/15, based on the strategic analysis carried out during the summer months.

During consideration of the report, the following points were noted:-

- Staff members continued to work closely with providers in order to provide careers advice and guidance and had been successful in encouraging collaboration. It was acknowledged that the degree of collaboration needed to guarantee the provision had not yet been reached.
- The careers services provided by CfBT was impartial and currently bought in by 39 schools, most of whom were working towards a Quality Assurance award to assure governing bodies that they were providing independent support.

At 11.30am, Councillor Mrs C A Talbot left the meeting and did not return.

- Any pupil who did not achieve A*-C grading in English and Maths GCSE must complete this in post 16 education as well as their chosen course. Should any pupil drop out, the school or college would not retain the funding.
- The basis of the strategy was to ensure that Further Education Colleges and other partners had the relevant specialisms to support all pupils, LCC promoted collaborative partnerships.

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- Transport issues remained a concern with availability and access in a rural county continuing to be a significant challenge. It was anticipated that funding into Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP) in Lincolnshire may be an opportunity to explore other modes of transport and access.
- Although the report was clear in providing an overview of the issues, Members felt that an action plan to resolve these issues was missing. An action plan from the scrutiny review had previously been considered and was scheduled, on the Work Programme, to be presented at the meeting in April 2014.

RESOLVED

1. That the report be noted;
2. That the following comments of the Committee be noted:-
 - a. Concerns about the impact of transport policy and costs on young people's choices was raised. It was highlighted that student finances do impact on the use of transport for travelling to post-16 learning or training, such as the high cost of car insurance preventing young people getting to apprenticeships. The Committee was advised that participation remained good but availability and access in rural areas was a challenge. The Committee was informed that the Greater Lincolnshire LEP would be receiving significant additional funding for Lincolnshire and it was planning to look at how to support other modes of transport to improve access.
 - b. Concerns over the viability of some school sixth forms and the financial pressures faced by schools were highlighted. The Committee agreed that schools should be encouraged to collaborate together wherever possible but questioned how this would be achieved.
 - c. The Committee requested that an action plan be compiled setting out how each priority would be achieved. It was highlighted to the Committee that the priorities were the Council's public statement regarding what needs to be secured for post-16 education and training, and the providers' action plans would be set out how these priorities would be achieved. However, the Council has its own actions in relation to the priorities and officers agreed to bring these back to the Committee.
 - d. The Committee also requested that future annual reports on Strategic Priorities for 16 – 19 (25) Education and Training be brought to the Committee in draft form for discussion and comment before the final version for the Executive's decision is brought to the Committee in September.

28 PERFORMANCE - QUARTER 1 2013/14

Stuart Carlton, Assistant Director of Children's Services, introduced the report which provided key performance information for Quarter 1 2013/14 relevant to the work of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.

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During discussion, the following points were noted:-

- In regard to Connected Persons, it was explained that guidance had changed so that children could be placed with friends/family, if appropriate were recorded as looked after.
- Relevant checks, including police checks and assessments, were still undertaken to ensure that friends/family members were suitable to provide a home to the child. Fostering and adoption checks were rigorous enough to ensure that these persons were suitable to look after *any* child whereas Connected Persons were checked to see if they were suitable to look after a particular child.
- Prior to the Connected Person legislation, a child could be placed with a family member if taken into care but they were not classed as a Looked After Child so targets have had to be changed as a result of the legislation.
- Private Fostering figures were not included within the report as a separate annual report on private fostering was presented to the Corporate Parenting Panel.
- It was acknowledged that the spend for Looked After Children was low in relation to others but that the preventative family support schemes and support were high in comparison. The figures highlighted that prevention was helping in this particular area.
- The performance indicators were complicated as each indicator was measured in a different way. The report may suggest that there is underperformance against a certain indicator but the way in which the indicator was set may mean this was not actually the case.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

At 12.30pm, Councillors T M Trollope-Bellew and C J T H Brewis left the meeting and did not return.

29 CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL UPDATE

Councillor David Brailsford, Chairman of the Corporate Parenting Panel, introduced the report which presented the draft minutes of the meeting held on 18th July 2013 for the consideration of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.

It was confirmed that the next meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel was scheduled for 3rd October 2013 and would include a one hour training session at the start of the meeting which the Members of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee were invited to attend.

Concern was noted in relation to Visiting Members and the fact that not all homes had been visited within the relevant timescales. Members were encouraged to undertake a visit and were reminded that those with current DBS/CRB checks could do these unaccompanied, but those who were waiting for their checks to be completed would need to be accompanied.

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RESOLVED

To note the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel as set out within the report and draft minutes of the meeting held on 18th July 2013.

At 12.35pm, Councillor A Bridges left the meeting and did not return.

30 RELATIONSHIP WITH ACADEMIES

Tim Culpin, Head of School Improvement, introduced the report which outlined the proposed process in place from June 2013 with certain principles behind the policy also being included within the report. 107 schools in Lincolnshire were academies and, as a result of the policy, contact would only be made with the DfE *after* leaders of the relevant academy had been spoken to.

During discussion, the following points were noted:-

- In response to a question which asked what checks would be undertaken on the inspectors, the Director of CfBT Education Services, Jill Hodges, advised that she would be attending a meeting with the Regional Director of Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) to discuss the consistency of inspections across the county as this was felt to be critical. She went on to explain that the country had been split into eight different regions with open dialogue between the local authority, schools and the Ofsted inspectors.
- Complaints made directly to Ofsted could result in an inspection, whether the schools is an academy or a maintained school.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

31 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK
PROGRAMME 2013/14

Tracy Johnson, Scrutiny Officer, presented the Committee's work programme for 2013/14. It was highlighted that the agenda for the 18th October 2013 was currently very long and would be revisited by officers in consultation with the Chairman.

It was suggested by the Director of CfBT Education Services, Jill Hodges, that as Ofsted were inspecting the effectiveness of school improvement services and arrangements the Committee might wish to scrutinise the self-evaluation written by the Head of School Improvement at CfBT at a future meeting. This self-evaluation will describe the effectiveness of arrangements against seven criteria provided by Ofsted, including performance data.

RESOLVED

That the contents of the work programme be noted.

The meeting closed at 12.55 pm