

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
 10 JANUARY 2014**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR J D HOUGH (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors B Adams (Vice-Chairman), Mrs J Brockway, J P Churchill, S R Dodds, A G Hagues, R J Hunter-Clarke, B W Keimach, C R Oxby, Mrs S Ransome, Mrs L A Rollings, Mrs N J Smith, Mrs C A Talbot, S M Tweedale, R Wootten and Mrs S M Wray.

Officers in attendance:-

Katrina Cope (Team Leader Democratic and Civic Services), Tracy Johnson (Scrutiny Officer), Tony Warnock (Head of Finance - Children's and Specialist Services), Debbie Barnes (Executive Director Children's Services), Mark Popplewell (Assistant Head of Finance Children's & Specialist Services), Keith Batty (Assistant Director of CfBT Education Services), Stuart Carlton (Assistant Director of Children's Services), Jo Kavanagh (Head of Service Families Working Together), David McWilliams (Head of Performance Assurance), Matthew Clayton (School Organisation Planning Manager) and John Herbert (Youth Development Officer).

56 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors W J Aron, J R Hicks, and L Wootten.

Apologies were also received from Mrs G Wright (Church Representative - Added Member) and Dr E van der Zee (Parent Governor Representative – Added Member).

57 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTEREST

No declarations of Members' interests were made at this stage of proceedings.

58 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 29 NOVEMBER 2013

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee held on 29 November 2013 be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee for approval.

59 CHILDREN'S SERVICES BUDGET 2013/2014 AND 2014/15

Consideration was given to a report by the Executive Director of Children's Services, which invited the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee to consider a report on Children's Services budgets for 2013/14 and 2014/15.

The views of the Scrutiny Committee would then be reported to the Executive prior to the finalisation of the 2014/15 budget proposal for full Council consideration in February 2014.

The Executive Director advised that overall, Children's Services remained on course to deliver £27.5m of savings in full and on time, despite the continued growing pressures around children's social care. In the fourth year of the Comprehensive Review, the savings target for 2013/14 was £5.113m and although there was a degree of uncertainty around the budgets for social care and home to school/college transport, the Departmental Management Team remained confident that this year's savings would be delivered in full.

It was reported also that the savings target for 2013/14 had been increased from the original Comprehensive Review saving target of £1.782m to help respond to the reduction in the Early Intervention Grant and the conversion of schools to academy status. It was noted that in recent years, Children's Services had managed to carry forward an underspending of 1% which had provided a welcomed degree of flexibility to respond to a number of small, one-off budget pressures that tend to emerge. Despite all the uncertainty Children's Services remained confident that an underspending would arise at the end of the financial year.

The significant budget pressures for 2014/15 were:

- Insurance costs – As a result of high value claims, insurance costs had risen steeply over the last few years. Despite re-aligning other budgets, a shortfall of £0.197m was still expected next year;
- Budget pressure relating to frontline social care. It was highlighted that Children's Services was experiencing a greater demand on child protection services. Caseloads had increased by over 30% from 2,842 in 2008 to 3,802 in 2013. As a result of work pressures, it had been proposed to increase the number of social workers and that the Council had been requested to make available additional funds to address this. The estimated cost for this would be £0.403m; and
- That the Council had been requested to fund the additional part-year transport costs of £0.1m which was expected to arise when the Lincoln's new University Technology College opened in September 2014.

Other unquantified budget pressures for 2014/15 included:-

- Out of County residential care – Due to identified pressures, budgets had been re-aligned and £0.193m had been added to the budget in July 2013. It was noted that there had been an increase in the number and complexity of out of county placements;

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- Special Guardianship Orders – Due to changes in legislation there had been an increase in the number of orders which required placements with friends and relatives to come 'under looked after' status. 2012/13 saw an increase of 30 orders and in the current year there had been a further 12;
- Social Care Regulated Services - There had been an increase in the number of Regulation 24 payments and, out of county fostering placements;
- SEN Code of Practice – It was highlighted that due to impending legislation changes, there would be radical changes to the learning difficulties and disabilities system in England from September 2014;
- Raising the Participation Age – The Local Authority's aim was to secure 100% participation in post-16 education and training; and
- Troubled Families – It was reported that the Government had indicated that the scheme would be extended in 2015/16 and that it would be providing 40% of the funding. The Local Authority and partner agencies would be expected to finance the difference up front which would create a significant challenge.

Full details of the saving requirements and proposals for delivering the revenue savings for 2014/15 were detailed in the report. The Executive Director made particular reference to:

- 2013/14 efficiencies, for which various savings had been identified as a result of the budget setting exercise which totalled £0.305m;
- Part of the short break development initiative relating to children with disabilities had ceased delivering a proposed saving of £0.019m;
- Fees for the CfBT management had been re-profiled making a proposed saving of £0.203m;
- The phasing out of the essential care user allowance, creating a proposed saving of £0.197m;
- A review of Connexions buildings, giving proposed savings of £0.050m;
- The dis-establishing 4 ftes (Early Years Sufficiency Team) plus reduction in grants – which would deliver proposed savings of £0.634m;
- The Food in Schools Team (2 ftes) being transferred to Public Health. It was highlighted that the budget would not be transferring which created a saving a proposed saving of £0.057m;
- A reduction in the number of transport days per annum from 195 to 189 transport days over the next two years giving a proposed saving of £0.748m; and
- Extended provision transport costs. Proposed savings of £0.250m.

In conclusion, the Executive Director advised that the Directorate had worked extremely hard to manage internally a number of budget pressures, through reducing costs and re-aligning budgets, and the £2,636m savings target for 2014/15 could be delivered by the proposals detailed in the report presented. However, a request had been made for the Council to fund investment in front line social care work (£0.403m) and the transport costs for the University Technology College (£0.1m). Looking ahead, the financial outlook for 2015/16 was that the Council would be required to make very significant savings again.

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Supporting documents appended to the report were:--

- Appendix 1 – Children's Services current non Dedicated Schools Budgets 2013/14; and
- Public Health Budgets relating to Children's Health 2013/14.

During discussion, the Scrutiny Committee raised the following issues:-

- Business mileage savings – The Committee was advised that following consultation, the buying out of the essential car user allowance had been agreed, which had resulted in the savings;
- Staff reduction – The net effect on staff was as per pages 6/7 of the report, namely - the dis-establishment of the Property and Technology post and the four fte's from the Early Years Sufficiency Team. It was noted that some of the four fte staff would be redeployed;
- Increase in funding for social care front line staff – The Committee expressed their support for the extra funding. It was noted that it is council policy that 1% of underspends could be carried forward to the following years budget;
- The impact of Free School meals on the budget. It was noted that for the universal offer for free school meals the council had been awarded capital grant and would receive revenue into the dedicated schools budget – a proposed spend of the capital grant was under development;
- Pupil premium – It was reported that this funding was additional to the budgets that schools receive from the Dedicated Schools Grant. The government was planning to introduce a national, fair funding formula in 2015/16 and as Lincolnshire's funding was comparatively low at present, it was hoped that the county's share of national funding for schools would increase;
- Cost of insurance – The Committee was advised that due to one high value claim, the cost of insurance had risen steeply over the last few years. As a result external premiums had risen, and the costs of the insurance internally were recharged to each directorate. It was noted that there was a degree of self-insurance by the Council, which helped reduce costs;
- Home to School Transport – The Committee was advised that a report would be presented to a future meeting of the Scrutiny Committee. It was agreed that the report should also include the effect of providing transport to the Technical College;
- Troubled Families – The Committee was advised that the government provided £10,000 to turn a family round with a reward of £4,000 where work was completed. Therefore the more success, the more money coming in;
- Out of County Placements – A question was asked whether the figure in the report included CAMHS (Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services). The Committee was advised no, as CAMHS at Tier 4 was commissioned by the regional team not the Local Authority. At the moment work was underway to look at the complex needs of Tier 3 cases;
- The DfE's Section 251 benchmarking information relating to planned spending of safeguarding children. Lincolnshire's planned spending of £136 per pupil compare to the England mean of £162 per pupil;

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- Carry Forwards – The Committee was advised that only 1% of underspends could be carried forward;
- Performance Indicators – Congratulations were extended to Children's Services for being in the top quartile for many indicators. Members were advised that further work was needed to improve exclusion figures; Key Stage 2 narrowing the gap and Key Stage 4 narrowing the gap;
- With regards to Appendix 2, the Public Health budgets relating to children's health, some discussion was held on the amount of budget for teenage pregnancies and whether the remaining budget would be spent in three months. Some Members felt that they required further clarification in relation to the Public Health budgets and how much money would be available to take things forward to support the health part of Children's Services;
- Concern was expressed regarding the SEN Code of Practice. Members were advised that potential costs were currently unknown. Lots of work was currently going on, and that it was hoped that the financial implications would be clearer by the end of March 2014. The government had made available £75,000 of funding for the first year, with further funding of £75,000 promised for 2014/15 to help implement the reforms. It was stressed that a communications plan was to be put into place for parents and carers. Members were advised that children currently on a statement would stay on it for a while whereas any new applications in the next academic year would lead to the issuing of a health, education and care plan as opposed to a statement; and
- Questions were raised as to when the Committee would have the opportunity to input into the fundamental review for 2015/16. Members were advised that nothing had yet been agreed by the Corporate Management Board.

RESOLVED

That the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee considered the budget proposals for 2013/14 and 2014/15 and offered the following comments to the Executive:

- a) Support for the proposed additional funds of £400,000 for social workers;
- b) Support for the additional capital of £200,000 for the foster care service;
- c) The Committee discussed the potential transport costs arising from the opening of the University Technical College and requested that the funding of these additional costs does not come from existing budgets;
- d) The Committee also discussed the integration of services around health, and questioned how much funding would be coming from health and whether there would be a pooling of budgets; and
- e) The Committee raised concerns over future financing for 2015/16 and requested early involvement of the Committee in the decision making process.

**60 THE LINCOLNSHIRE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP, CHILDREN AND
YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN 2013-16**

The Head of Performance Assurance presented a report, which provided the Committee with an opportunity to consider the latest version of the Lincolnshire and Young People's Plan for 2013/16, which was detailed at Appendix A to the report presented. This was for pre-decision scrutiny prior to an Executive Councillor decision on 27 January 2014.

The plan was the strategic plan for services which supported children and young people in the county of Lincolnshire. The Partnership's vision was "That every child in every part of the County should achieve their potential" and identified how the local authority and its relevant partners would work collaboratively and in partnership to improve the outcomes for every child, young person and family in Lincolnshire. Data contained within the plan had been taken from past performance, needs assessments, consultation with local children and families and agreed priorities between partners.

It was noted that the statutory duty to produce a Children and Young People's Plan had been revoked in October 2010, but that local partnerships were free to publish their own strategic plan as they saw fit. A list of the relevant partners involved in the plan was shown on page 18 of the report. The relevant partners listed were not under any formal duty to 'have regard' to any voluntary plan. However, the Children's Trusts' duty to cooperate remained in force and the Local Children's Trust arrangements were still underpinned by the 'duty to cooperate' under Section 10 of the Children Act 2004 and that currently there were no plans to repeal that duty.

In April 2013, the Strategic Partnership had come together to agree the four strategic outcomes, which corresponded to the Child's journey and transition into adulthood. Full details were contained in Appendix A.

Note: Councillor Mrs L Rollings wished it recorded that she was a teacher at an Academy, and as Head of Support she was involved in combatting obesity.

During consideration of the plan, the Committee expressed overall support for the plan and raised the following comments:-

- Some members of the Committee found the vision of the plan not to be dynamic enough. Officers welcomed any suggestions that members might have;
- That troubled families needed to be monitored and that there should be an aspiration of zero exclusions. Reassurance was given that work around risk assessments would be done and it was noted that the introduction of a programme 'Signs of Safety' would support risk assessments of children at risk of harm. It was highlighted that Signs of Safety was already being used in the authority and considered to have wider application;
- The inclusion of cyber bullying – Officers were happy to include this in the plan;

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- The need to ensure that the gap was being narrowed in relation to key stage 2, 3 and 4;
- The inclusion of sexual exploitation – The Committee was advised that this matter would be dealt with by the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board;
- Health Visitor investment and reducing childhood obesity – It was highlighted that obesity work was being led through Public Health. In relation to health visitors, more debate was to be had with colleagues in Public Health, with regard to the recruitment of health visitors;
- The key vulnerable groups as identified by the Joint Lincolnshire Needs Assessment as detailed on page 30 of the report;
- The totals did not add up correctly on page 43. Members were advised this was because not all children were in school;
- The Committee also felt that quarterly reports should be made available to the Committee to monitor the plan's progress;
- Out of date figures pertaining to teenage pregnancies. It was reported that these were the most up to date figures. It was noted that now an information protocol was in place, more information would now be captured in a more timely way;
- Looked After Children education figures. It was reported that these figures were reported to the Corporate Parenting Panel and that the full figures would be made available to the Panel at the end of March;
- Health and Safety, and the need to keep children safe to and from school and promoting healthy eating; It was agreed that further information was required concerning input from Public Health into Children's Services. It was also noted that there was a specific obesity group which reported to the Strategic Partnership;
- Performance of Academies. Evidence available suggested that some Academies had performed well, but some had not. It was highlighted in the Annual Ofsted Report that sponsored academies were likely to make more progress than stand alone academies;
- That the Early Help offer applied to all children;
- The need for reassurance regarding how the 85 Actions were to be keyed into the main document; and
- Analysis of secondary progress. The Committee was advised that analysis was being done concerning 11+ achievements, and this was being looked at by a Strategic Board.

RESOLVED

That the Committee supported the recommendations to the Executive Councillor to adopt the Children and Young People's Plan, but highlighted that there was a need for the action plan to be tied into the main document and requested that the document be modified to incorporate references to the actions contained in the action plan.

**61 PROGRESS REPORT AND ACTION PLAN ON THE LINCOLNSHIRE
 YOUTH OFFER**

Consideration was given to a report from the Head of Service – Families Working Together, which provided the Committee with information relating to the progress made on the development of the Lincolnshire Youth Offer and provided an update on current service delivery, plans to identify gaps in delivery and advice of the action plan to address any gaps.

It was reported that a number of actions had been undertaken to try and establish the level of participation and engagement by young people in positive activities, but that securing accurate data on this was a challenge. It was highlighted that there was an estimated 72,000 young people aged between 11 and 19 in Lincolnshire and that 80,000 young people had registered to take part in activities such as sports based activities, Duke of Edinburgh Awards, National Citizenship Service, Scouts, Cadets etc.

In September 2013 a positive activity survey for young people had been launched, which had received 242 responses. From the responses, it was hoped to identify what positive activities young people were involved in; the type of activities and also identify what young people thought was missing from their localities.

Other areas highlighted included the creation of the development hub; Positive Futures; and the real bus – mobile units.

A summary of Youth Centre provision was detailed on pages 109/110 of the agenda which totalled 40 centres. It was highlighted that the Youth and Community Development workers were engaged with 17 new locations being explored for the delivery of positive activities.

Full details of the integrated youth offer were detailed in the report.

In conclusion, it was reported that there was significant evidence to suggest that large numbers of young people were accessing a range of positive activities and that by working with a range of providers, Children's Services could ensure that the activities that young people wanted were delivered in Lincolnshire, that the gaps in service were minimised, ensure the best deployment of the mobile units, and ensure Positive Futures continue to be responsive to emerging needs.

During discussion, particular reference was made for the need to include provision for all in the community; involve the views of young people in all that was planned; and make youth activities available to young people who needed it most, i.e. young people in rural communities, immigrants and young carers. Reference was also made to ensuring that members of the Youth Cabinet were involved in getting the message out to other young people in the county. Another issue raised was that some of the activities required uniforms/kit, which some of the young people were unable to afford. It was highlighted that there were some grants available for groups to apply for which might help in this type of situation.

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It was also highlighted that reference to Healthwatch 'status unknown' needed removing from the Draft Priority Action Plan: Delivering Positive for Youth (DfE, Dec 2011) attached at Appendix 2 to the report. It was highlighted that when the action plan was written, Healthwatch was in shadow form.

Note: Councillor Mrs L Rollings wished to have it recorded that she was involved with the Youth Centre in Gainsborough.

RESOLVED

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the comments raised by the Committee, as detailed above, be fed into the Action Plan for the Lincolnshire Youth Offer.

62 MEMBERS' VISITS TO CHILDREN'S CENTRES

The Committee received updates from various Councillors and Added Members regarding their visits to Children's Centres. The overall feedback from all members was that the visits had been very informative and that the staff had been very welcoming. It was reported that there was a lot of good work going on at the centres and that they were very well used by the community. Members had been very impressed with the services that were being provided from some rather small spaces.

It was highlighted that the St Giles Children's Centre was finding it difficult to keep up with pressure of accommodating the needs of the community.

RESOLVED

That the feedback provided by members from their visits to Children's Centres be noted.

63 SCHOOL SUFFICIENCY IN LINCOLNSHIRE

The Committee received a report from the School Organisation Manager, which looked at the sufficiency of school places in Lincolnshire in detail and outlined the process and criteria involved in addressing the pressure of the County when deciding on how to increase capacity.

It was reported as a large rural county the pressures on school places in some urban areas were hidden by the surplus capacity across some of the more rural areas. The report compared the national picture against the local Lincolnshire picture when broken down to smaller geographic areas. The report highlighted that there were local areas of pressure on primary places which would eventually lead onto pressures on secondary places.

In conclusion, the national picture suggested that Lincolnshire did not have an issue regarding pressure on school places at a county level. It was more evident at a local level that there were pockets of primary pressure around the county, mostly

concentrated around urban areas. The sufficiency of secondary places was not anticipated to become a pressure until 2018 for the majority of the county, although it might be slightly sooner in some parts. This would be monitored and planned for to ensure that the required capacity was made available for when it was needed.

It was highlighted that basic need funding was carefully prioritised to ensure that resources were efficiently used to address all requirements within budget whilst meeting the needs of the local community. If a formal proposal to expand a school or build a new one was put forward, then all necessary statutory processes were followed and then a final decision would be taken to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, prior to any Executive Councillor decision.

Some members felt that the sustainability of smaller rural schools was very important as most were a key component in a rural community. Reassurance was given that the funding formula by Lincolnshire County Council was supportive of smaller local schools. Without many of the Council's small rural schools some pupils would have significant distances to travel.

Another area of concern was whether Ofsted reports affected the popularity of schools. It was reported that popularity could have an effect when looking at expansion, but this was a short term variable and one of many factors taken into consideration. At the end of the day the Council needed to create places where children lived. Further comments were raised in relation to capacity issues bringing rural children into urban schools. Members were advised that only extra capacity would be added within a pressure point area and it was not the intention to enable children to travel from a rural area to an urban one. If the pressure point related to a rural area then it would be the rural area that would be considered for additional capacity. The Local Authority always tried to add capacity in the areas where the pupils live, closest to the communities that need them. This then avoids excessive transportation requirements which was another factor also carefully considered before adding school places.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

64 CHILD POVERTY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN UPDATE

RESOLVED

That the item be deferred to a future meeting.

65 EARLY HELP OFFER AND STRATEGY

RESOLVED

That the item be deferred to a future meeting.

66 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK
PROGRAMME 2014

A report by the Scrutiny Officer was considered, which provided the Committee with an opportunity to consider its work programme for the coming year.

The Scrutiny Officer advised that there were no amendments to the work programme presented at Appendix A to the report and that the reports on the Child Poverty Strategy and Action Plan Update and the Early Help Offer and Strategy would be added onto a future agenda.

Members were also reminded to sign up to the programme of member visits to Solutions 4 providers if they had not already done so.

RESOLVED

That the work programme, as set out in Appendix A to the report presented be noted.

1. That the Children's Services Forward Plan, as detailed at Appendix B to the report presented be noted.
2. That the Children's Services Forward Plan, as detailed at Appendix B to the report presented be noted.

The meeting closed at 1.05 pm