



**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
8 SEPTEMBER 2017**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR R L FOULKES (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors M D Boles, Mrs K Cook, Mrs W Bowkett, S R Dodds, M T Fido, A P Maughan, L Wootten and R Wootten.

Added Members

Church Representatives: Mr S C Rudman and Reverend Sue Evans.

Parent Governor Representatives: Dr E van der Zee.

Councillors: Mrs P A Bradwell (Executive Councillor for Adult Care, Health and Children's Services) and D Brailsford (Executive Support Councillor for Children's Services) attended the meeting as observers.

Officers in attendance:-

Katrina Cope (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Tracy Johnson (Senior Scrutiny Officer), Jo Kavanagh (Interim Assistant Director, Early Help), Sally Savage (Chief Commissioning Officer) and Martin Smith (Children's Services Manager, School Standards).

17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R J Kendrick and C Matthews and Mrs P J Barnett (Parent Governor Representative).

18 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

There was no declaration of members' interest made at this stage of the meeting.

19 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 21 JULY 2017

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 21 July 2017, be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

20 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR FOR ADULT CARE, HEALTH AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

The Chairman on behalf of the Committee welcomed Reverend Sue Evans (Church Representative) to her first meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.

The Chairman also reminded members of the Committee to bring in their identification documents to enable the Senior Democratic Services Officer to initiate the necessary Disclosure and Barring Service checks.

21 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMISSIONING STRATEGIES

The Committee gave consideration to a report from Sally Savage, Chief Commissioning Officer, which provided the Committee with the Children and Young People's Commissioning Strategies that set out a vision for future priorities for Children's Services.

Appended to the report was a copy of the strategy for each of the four children's commissioning areas, these were:-

Appendix A – Safe and Healthy Commissioning Strategy 2017 – 2020

Appendix B – Readiness for Adult Life Commissioning Strategy 2017 – 2020

Appendix C – Readiness for School Commissioning Strategy 2017 – 2020

Appendix D – Learn and Achieve Commissioning Strategy 2017 – 2020

It was reported that each strategy proposed a series of recommendations to support sustainability and continuous improvement of the service; and to provide a strategic framework to support ongoing decision making. The strategies also provided an overarching strategic approach as to how the Council worked together with families to enhance children's lives.

The Committee noted that each of the four strategies detailed the objectives that needed to be accomplished to ensure positive outcomes for children and young people were achieved.

During consideration of the four strategies the following points were raised:-

Safe and Healthy Commissioning Strategy 2017 – 2020, (Appendix A)

- Support to children and families - The need to ensure intervention was made as early as possible in any process to help prevent exclusions; and other emotional conditions. Some reference was also made to the potential stigma attached when a young person was referred to the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). Officers advised that was why the new service would be promoting positive wellbeing. It was felt that all staff needed to receive training, to ensure that they were able to support a child or young

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person. Officers confirmed that the new Emotional Wellbeing Service would be provided by the same contracted supplier who delivered CAMHS;

- Unaccompanied Asylum seeking children – One member expressed concerns that some of the unaccompanied asylum seekers coming into a school environment actually seemed a lot older than what was initially thought, which was presenting some schools with potential safeguarding issues. The Committee was advised that this was a challenging issue across the country; and that all available measures were being used to define age in these circumstances;
- One member enquired about the new Emotional Wellbeing Service which was due to commence on 1 October 2017. Officers advised that the service would offer support to schools to build up their resilience and to upskill school-based staff enabling them to become more confident to meet the emotional wellbeing needs of their pupils. It was highlighted that the service would bridge the gaps in current provision in Lincolnshire and signpost/refer pupils to other services as and when required. Officers advised that referral to the service could be made by the pupil, the school, or parents. Officers advised further that the principle behind the Emotional Wellbeing Service was to ultimately make it financially sustainable;
- Future in Mind Strategy – The Committee was advised that this was a government strategy for improving the mental health and wellbeing of young people, which also linked into the NHS five year view on improving young people's mental health;
- One member suggested that members of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee should receive some training on 'Signs of Safety'. Officers agreed that arrangements could be made for some training to be received at a date and time to be confirmed;
- A further suggestion was made for an explanation relating to the tiers pertaining to CAMHS. It was felt that an explanation would be useful, particularly to newer members of the Committee;
- Some concern was expressed as to whether CAMHS was dealing with requests for treatment within the required timeframes. Officers advised that there should not be a prolonged wait; however, there could be a period of waiting to allow the child to be prepared for therapy. The Committee was advised that there was a built in delay mechanism to ensure the best package was defined for the child, and the family;
- Further concerns were raised regarding the implications of teachers' comments on some children. It was felt that some teachers had no idea of the impact some remarks and comments had on young people, particularly in the secondary arena;
- The Pathway of Safer Families for Children – The Committee was advised that the Pathway of Safer Families for Children was initially started in Boston and Lincoln, but had now been expanded to West Lindsey. It was reported that Safer Families for Children was a faith based provider of an outsourced service offering support for struggling families with a child under 12 years of age; and providing 'edge of care' support as an alternative to short-stay foster care. It was noted that the early intervention approach was designed to stabilise families at a time of crisis, therefore preventing the escalation of

need, and lowering the risk of child abuse and neglect, and also reducing the number of children taken into care;

- The synergy between children in need and Looked After Children – Officers advised that the number of children was increasing nationally as well as locally; and work would be done to look at what was behind the increase in numbers; and
- Clarity regarding the increase in Intense Needs Supported Accommodation (INSA) - Officers advised that the increase was as a result of a growing number of young people with complex and multiple needs. For those at risk of homelessness accessing INSA, the expenditure had increased by nearly 140% in two years. The Committee was advised that the Council currently had arrangements with a number of providers, including one in Nottingham; and that Lincolnshire County Council was also looking into whether to purchase a property itself to provide all round care.

Readiness for Adult Life Commissioning Strategy 2017 – 2020, (Appendix B)

- Concern was raised regarding funding relating to the Leaving Care Service. Officers confirmed that the Leaving Care Service was currently contracted out to Barnardo's; and that Barnardo's invested money into the service;
- One member expressed concern relating to data pertaining to re-offending rates, as these had increased from 32.2% to 32.9%. The Committee was advised that the reason for the increase in the figure was because the cohort of young people had reduced and therefore the number of people re-offending was getting smaller and smaller. The Committee was advised further that the newly launched diversionary project in conjunction with Lincolnshire Police would also have an effect on the cohort. Officers reassured the Committee that the overall picture for re-offenders in Lincolnshire was a positive one;
- A question was asked relating to the outcomes on page 53. It was felt that the outcomes needed to include reference to vulnerability. A question was also asked as to what was being planned to engage/interact with young people with anti-social behaviour issues. Officers advised that the new work stream Partners in Practice (the next item on the agenda) would involve working with teenagers to develop relationships; and ensure that provision was available to all young people. It was noted that this was an ongoing piece of work and an update on progress of the new work stream would be received by the Committee in 2018;
- A question was also asked as to whether the statistics contained on page 57 relating to 16 – 18 year olds was before the changes in legislation. It was confirmed that the careers service had been taken out; and that the Council was only undertaking its statutory role. Some concern was expressed to the removal of the careers service as some 16 – 20 year olds found it hard to know what to do. During discussion, it was highlighted that some schools just encouraged students to take the university route, when that was not always the route some students wanted to take. One member also highlighted that students going down the wrong career path then resulted in some emotional wellbeing issues in some circumstances. It was highlighted that some careers advice given to students was not always impartial, and one member

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expressed disappointment that the careers advice had been removed. Officers confirmed that the Council still provided advice to its Looked After Children. It was also highlighted that some Head teachers did not encourage careers advice in schools. One member asked to receive an update pertaining to the work being undertaken with the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership concerning business opportunities as this was very important to keep skills in Lincolnshire to fill the skills gap. Some members felt that some information as to how the skills gap would be resolved would be useful to know as a Committee. Some of the Committee felt that this matter should be considered by the Lincolnshire Schools Forum; and

- Some reference was made to the number of untoward incidents in supported accommodation. It was explained that the reporting of incidents was part of how the contract had been set up. Officers further explained that the incident could be something as simple as the young person missing an appointment. It was highlighted that most of the incidents occurred at Lincoln. Officers advised that this was due to the fact that most supported accommodation was in Lincoln. Officers also confirmed that there was some accommodation in Grantham and Stamford. It was noted that occupancy levels in certain areas would require immediate review to ensure that the service continued to deliver value for money for the Council and was best placed to meet the needs of young people.

Readiness for School Commissioning Strategy 2017 – 2020, (Appendix C)

- It was noted that £0.350m of savings had been achieved for 2017/18 by decommissioning the Family Nurse Partnership element of the service. Officers advised that this service would be transferring to and being directly delivered by the Council from 1 October 2017; and
- Readiness for School – Some members felt that there needed to be good play provision available at the Children's Centres. A question was asked as to whether some of the targets that were underperforming on page 85 would be improved by the new model. It was confirmed that all parents were encouraged to use Children's Centres; and that it was a fact that some children were not at the development stage they should be at, as it was well known that not all children developed at the same rate. A further question was asked as to whether children who attended Children's Centres were tracked. Officer confirmed that children attending Children's Centres and those subject to a Plan were tracked in order to direct the right resources to those children who needed it. Officers confirmed further that a lot of planning had been done for transferring of the 0 -19 service on 1 October 2017 to ensure minimum change. From day one there would be a universal service available to all families. Work was also ongoing to looking into how teams could be better integrated within a locality. As a result of the transfer of the service, it was hoped that this would have a positive impact of the target figures. One member highlighted that healthy eating needed to be promoted from a young age, to help reduce obesity. Officers confirmed that healthy eating would be part of the 0 - 19 service. Officers confirmed further that Health Visitors would receive training to deliver support; and that Lincolnshire Partnership Foundation Trust (LPFT) would be providing specialist provision i.e. postnatal

depression. It was also highlighted that the role of parents was instrumental in supporting the 0 -19 service.

Learn and Achieve Commissioning Strategy 2017 - 2020, Appendix D

- Positive comments were received pertaining to the sector led approach, showing that schools working together could achieve professional and specialist development; which had improved outcomes in teaching and learning;
- The role of the Regional Schools Commissioner - It was highlighted that the relationship between with the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Council had improved greatly;
- One member enquired as to whether the Council had enough staff to deal with all the impending changes. Officers highlighted that the strategies together had lots of synergies and support in these areas;
- Exclusions – It was noted that for secondary schools the number of exclusions for 2017/18 had rose to 116; and that a key priority for 2017/18 was to target support and challenge the small number of secondary schools that had accounted for a disproportionate number of secondary exclusions in 2016/17; and
- Domiciliary Care provision – It was noted that there were 48 children and young people accessing the service, with a list of names of those awaiting domiciliary care that was constantly monitored and reviewed.

RESOLVED

1. That support and endorsement be given to each of the four strategies.
2. That the planned review timetable as set out in section 9 of each strategy be approved.
3. That a Signs of Safety Workshop be arranged for members of the Committee at a date and time to be agreed.

22 PARTNERS IN PRACTICE PROGRAMME

The Committee gave consideration to a report from Tara Jones, Children's Service Manager – Partners in Practice, which provided the Committee with an overview of Lincolnshire's Partners in Practice Programme.

In the absence of the Children's Services Manager – Partners in Practice, Jo Kavanagh, Interim Assistant Director of Children's Services (Lead Early Help) guided the Committee through the report.

The Committee noted that as part of the Department for Education (DfE) reform programme 'Putting Children First' document, three fundamental pillars of reform were established. To achieve the required outcomes set out under each of the three pillars, the DfE had established a Partners in Practice Programme, which brought

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together the country's eight leading authorities, of which Lincolnshire was one of the authorities.

It was noted further that the Partners in Practice Programme would improve practice in Lincolnshire and other Children's Services by transforming the quality of children's social care services and early help arrangements; and support the reform of the wider system. It was reported that Lincolnshire had a proven track record of continuous improvement and good performance; and the vision was to improve Children's Services in Lincolnshire and elsewhere.

The Committee was advised that the Partners in Practice Programme was scheduled to run until 31 March 2020; and was made up of three work streams, which aligned directly to the three fundamental pillars of the DfE reforms. Details of the three work streams and the projects associated with each work stream and the names of the responsible officers were contained within the report presented. It was highlighted that the Governance and Accountability project was currently on hold due to devolution and its wider impact on children's services across Lincolnshire.

In conclusion, the Committee noted that the project plan for the four year programme was continuing to be developed; and that monies had been agreed by the Department for Education; and that monies would be transferred via a Section 31 grant.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- Reference was made to the Government's commitment to roll out a new national assessment and accreditation system by 2020. It was noted that the introduction of the National Assessment and Accreditation System (NAAS) would provide, for the first time, a consistent way of providing assurance to effectively assess social workers knowledge and skills. It was noted further that phase one of the NAAS roll out would involve local authorities that were 'Partners in Practice' piloting the assessment and accreditation system along with a group of volunteer local authorities. The project would ensure that social workers received refresher training, coaching and mentoring and the opportunity to attend masterclasses, so that the relevant level of knowledge and skill was achieved. Officers highlighted that there was a degree of nervousness as it was hoped that the accreditation would not create barriers to becoming a social worker as at the moment there was uncertainty as to which roles would be accredited;
- The Committee was advised that the money available from the DfE, would be used based on the content of the bid submitted. It was further confirmed that the amount received would total £1m, which would be received over a period of time. It was further highlighted that in instances where the Council provided help to other authorities, the Council was paid for this help separately. The Committee agreed that it was commendable that the Children's Services team were leading the way; and that it was an excellent achievement for Lincolnshire. One member felt that it would be useful for the Committee to have some more financial details, to have some reassurance that there was no financial burden on the Council;

- One member requested that the Committee should receive evaluation information relating to the changed ways of working, once the project was implemented. It was felt that a progress report should be received by the Committee in six months' time; and
- One question raised with regard to Project 5 was whether the Youth Offending Service would be integrated, to help parents and children. Officers confirmed that all work with children and young people was working with the whole family.

RESOLVED

1. That the proposals for the Partners in Practice Programme be endorsed.
2. That a progress report be received in six months' time (to include details of the financial impact of the programme).

23 CORPORATE PARENTING SUB-GROUP UPDATE

The Committee received a short update from Councillor David Brailsford, Chairman of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Group.

The Committee noted that at its last meeting, the Corporate Parenting Sub-Group had received training in a number of areas, which had included:-

- Corporate Parenting - This had provided an overview of adoption and fostering, residential homes, Looked After Children, Visiting Members and the role of a Corporate Parent;
- Types of Placements for Looked After Children – It had been agreed that a working group would be set up to look at the development of a refreshed strategy;
- Voices for Choices (V4C) – The Sub-Group had received an update on the activities of the V4C, the Children in Care Council;
- Role of the Virtual School – An overview had been provided concerning the responsibilities of the Virtual School and how schools were supported; and
- Performance measures – The Sub-Group had been advised of the performance measures relating to Looked After Children, plus a number of performance indicators that were not contained in the Council's Business Plan relating to Looked After Children and care leavers, which were reported to the Sub-Group for monitoring.

The Chairman advised that the Sub-Group was due to meet on 21 September 2017, when it would be receiving further training on residential services, role of visiting members, the independent visiting service and Barnardo's Leaving Care Service.

The Committee was advised of the importance of the role of Visiting Members; and those Visiting Members present who had not yet managed to visit their allotted home were encouraged to do so. It was agreed that the Senior Scrutiny Officer would send a reminder email to all Visiting Members.

Attached at Appendix A to the report presented was a copy of the draft minutes from the Corporate Parenting Sub-Group meeting held on 6 July 2017.

RESOLVED

That the work of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Group be supported and that the minutes from the Corporate Parenting Sub-Group held on 6 July 2017 be received.

24 THEME PERFORMANCE - QUARTER 1 2017/18

Consideration was given to a report from Debbie Barnes, Executive Director of Children's Services, which provided the Committee with key performance information for Quarter 1 2017/18, relevant to the work of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.

Attached to the report were the following Appendices:-

- Appendix A – Council Business Plan Measures
- Appendix B – Complaint and Compliments Report
- Appendix C – Ofsted School Status Report
- Appendix D – Performance Monitoring of Contracts – Exempt

The Committee was reminded that Appendix D to the report contained exempt information, and if the Committee wished to discuss details pertaining to Appendix D, a vote would need to be taken to move into exempt session.

In guiding the Committee through the report the Chief Commissioning Officer Children's Services made particular reference to indicators that had not been achieved or were improving, but not achieved, these were:-

- Page 175 – Juvenile first time offenders – The Committee was advised that a lower number of young people were entering the criminal justice system for the first time, indicated better performance. It was further noted that the number of young people entering the criminal justice system for the first time was mostly controlled by external influences. It was reported that there was no expectation that the figure was likely to rise sharply in the near future. Reference was also made to the diversionary project being conducted in partnership with Lincolnshire Police;
- Page 181 – Looked After Children – It was noted that there had been a rise in the number of children looked after over the last two quarters; and that the senior management team were undertaking a number of measures to understand what was causing the increase; and to have assurance that those coming into care were appropriate; and that there were robust exit strategies in place;
- Page 183 - Children who are subject to a Child Protection Plan – The Committee noted that the performance for this indicator had exceeded its target;

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- Appendix B – Customer Satisfaction Information – One member enquired as to why the number of complaints had reduced. Officers advised that this was due to school data being removed; and
- Page 197 – A question was asked as to why the percentage relating to secondary schools appeared to be disproportionately higher than others. Officers reassured the Committee that the figures related to Academies and that relationships with Academies remained positive; as did relationships with the Regional Schools Commissioner. One member expressed concern as to whether the views of the local authority were taken into consideration when being reviewed by the Regional Schools Commissioner. Officers confirmed that legally the Regional Schools Commissioner did not have to note any issues, however due to the improved working relationship, this was now improving.

At this point in the meeting it was moved, seconded and

RESOLVED

That in accordance with Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for consideration of Appendix D to the report on the grounds that if they were present there could be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.

The Chairman invited members of the Committee to ask questions in relation to Appendix D of the report and officers responded to questions raised.

RESOLVED

That the performance for Quarter 1 2017/18 be received by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee; and that officers note the comments raised by the Committee.

25 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee gave consideration to a report from Tracy Johnson, Senior Scrutiny Officer, which enabled the Committee to consider and comment on the content of its work programme as detailed at Appendix A.

The Committee was invited to put forward items for potential consideration:-

- Home to School Transport in relation to Grammar Schools (Officers advised that this item was due to be reviewed in 2018); and
- Partners in Practice for 6 months' time.

RESOLVED

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That the work programme as detailed in Appendix A to the report presented be received, subject to the addition of a progress report concerning Partners in Practice in 6 months' time.

The meeting closed at 1.10 pm