

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
 20 OCTOBER 2017**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR R L FOULKES (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors R J Kendrick (Vice-Chairman), M D Boles, Mrs K Cook, Mrs W Bowkett, S R Dodds, M T Fido, C Matthews, A P Maughan, L Wooten and R Wooten.

Added Members

Church Representative: Mr S C Rudman.

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) were also in attendance.

Officers in attendance:-

Debbie Barnes (Executive Director, Children's Services), Katrina Cope (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Simon Evans (Health Scrutiny Officer), Andrew Hancy (Business Support Manager) and Martin Smith (Children's Services Manager, School Standards).

26 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

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

27 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Reverend S Evans (Church Representative) and Dr E van der Zee (Parent Governor Representative).

28 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 8 SEPTEMBER 2017

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 8 September 2017, be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to two typographical errors on page 5 being amended (second bullet point, start of the fifth sentence, addition of an 's' to the word Officer and removal of the word 'to' from the sixth sentence).

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

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

The Executive Councillor for Adult Care, Health and Children's Services advised the Committee of an article on the Young Inspectors, which had featured in the October's edition of 'Children & Young People Now'. It was agreed that a copy of the article would be circulated to all members of the Committee after the meeting.

The Committee was also advised that the 0-19 Health Service, comprising of Health Visitors and Schools Nurses had joined the council on the 1 October 2017; and the staff were settling in well.

It was also reported that the Sector-Led service had managed to secure £0.5m to invest in supporting schools to help with their teaching of English and Writing. It was hoped that the sector would be able to do the same with Maths, to help those schools that required assistance.

30 SECTOR-LED SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT MODEL

The Committee received a presentation from Martin Smith, Children's Services Manager School Standards, which provided the Committee with an explanation of the sector-led model for school improvement; and also provided an update on the progress made in implementing the model.

The presentation made reference to the background behind the Sector-Led approach in Lincolnshire. It was highlighted that the local authority was now one of a range of partners who together were supporting school improvement. The partners included teaching schools, the Lincolnshire Learning Partnership (LLP), the Diocese of Lincoln, school clusters, Multi-Academy Trusts; and individual schools and academies.

It was noted that the picture nationally was that local authorities who were coping best were finding new ways of maintaining dialogue with schools; thinking about functions that brought in key partners at middle tier level; developing governance mechanisms and processes that covered their whole area; and understanding the new role of the local authority to achieve local connectivity.

The Committee was advised of the composition and role of the Local Authority (LA) and the Lincolnshire Learning Partnership. Reference was also made to the commitment of the Lincolnshire Learning Partnership Board to ensure that no school was more important than an individual child's needs; and to the commitment expected from schools in contributing to support each other to improve and share knowledge to ensure that no school failed. The Committee was advised that currently 340 schools had signed up to being part of the LLP; and further information was provided to the positive impact of the LLP to date.

A short video was provided to the Committee concerning the work of the Teaching Schools Alliance; and the Mobilise Choice System.

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In conclusion, the Committee was advised that for 2017/18; further clarity would be developed around the function of the LLP Board, and its governance and role within the emerging system to ensure that relationships were explored further between the Lincolnshire Teaching School Together, the Lincolnshire Learning Partnership and the Council to ensure transparency of roles moving forward.

Following a question raised by a member in relation to the role of the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) with regard to private schools, the Committee was advised that the RSC had no role in private schools but had a role with state funded schools. The Committee was advised further that the role of the RSC was to act on behalf of the Secretary of State for Education and act as a middle tier between academies and free schools. Some of the RSCs responsibilities included: taking action where academies and free schools were underperforming; deciding on applications from local authority maintained schools to convert to academy status; and improving underperforming maintained schools by providing them with support from an Academy sponsor. It was also highlighted that the RSC had no direct relationship with Ofsted.

During discussion, the Committee raised the following points:-

- One member felt that it was important to ensure that the service was equipped to meet changing demands. Officers reassured that this had already been discussed at Head Teacher briefings; and with the sector led model, schools were now able to influence the agenda to cope with change;
- One member highlighted that it would be useful for the Committee to have further information on the peer reviews. Officers advised that the peer reviews had been well received; and that it was apparent that the development of middle leadership in schools was an area to be developed further;
- A concern was raised as to whether any more could be done to reduce the number of exclusions. Officers advised that steps were already being taken with regard to this matter, with particular reference being made to closer working with some secondary schools. Overall, the direction of travel was positive;
- A question was asked as to whether schools had confidence in commissioning with regard to the sports premium. Officers reassured that what was delivered locally met the required needs. Confirmation was given that the market met the need for the sports premium;
- One member highlighted that the Roman Catholic Diocese of Nottingham were taking an active role in the partnership. Officers agreed that the information provided needed amending to reflect this participation;
- A member enquired as to what was a teaching school. Officers advised the Committee that a teaching school was a school which had been designated by the Department for Education as a strong school with capacity and expertise to support others. Other schools then joined the teaching school to give and receive support from other schools. It was noted that schools were responsible for their own improvement and that schools brought training and professional development from other schools;
- Some concern was raised with regard to the loss of highly trained and skilled young people out of Lincolnshire. The Committee noted that the economic

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concerns for this issue was the responsibility of Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership. It was highlighted that a lot of work was being undertaken with regard to apprenticeships. It was further highlighted that some Councillors were going to be visiting schools to share their experiences. Some reference was also made to the Apprenticeship Levy and its impact on employers;

- Some members extended their support to the emerging model, but a question was asked as to whether as a result of Academisation, had Lincolnshire currently got the right educational offer for young people in the right place, as in some areas, it would appear that educational provision was lacking. The Committee was advised that the local authority could no longer open up new educational provision as all new schools needed to be Free Schools/Academies. It was also noted that small secondary schools could sometimes find it challenging to provide a full secondary school curriculum with challenges in staff recruitment. Clarification was given that it was up to academies or new educational providers, working with the Community to apply for Free Schools in their area, not the local authority. An explanation of the process of Academisation was briefly explained to the Committee. One member expressed concern regarding a local school; and the committee suggested that the member should speak to the church representative outside of the meeting;
- A question was asked as to whether sport was offered in all schools. Officers clarified that the LA did not gather this level of data; the LA considered a school's performance based on its results and other national datasets. The Committee was advised that the LA only had access to data that was publicly available for Academies; and
- A request was also made for some Signs of Safety Analysis to be presented to the Committee.

RESOLVED

That the presentation on the Sector-Led School Improvement Model be received.

31 CORPORATE PARENTING SUB-GROUP UPDATE

The Committee received a verbal update from Councillor D Brailsford, Chairman of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Group, which provided an update on the work undertaken by the Sub-Group since the previous meeting on 6 July 2017.

Appendix A to the report provided the Committee with a copy of the draft minutes from the last meeting of the Sub-Group held on 21 September 2017 for information.

The Committee was advised that at the meeting on 21 September 2017, the Sub-Group had received further training on a number of areas, which included:-

- Residential Services in Lincolnshire – This item provided the Sub-Group with an overview of residential provision for Looked After Children in Lincolnshire;

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- Role of Visiting Members – The Sub-Group had received an overview of the role of elected members in children's safeguarding including the Lead Member and the Visiting Members who conducted visits to the seven residential homes;
- Independent Visiting Service – The Sub-Group had received an overview of the children's homes regulations; and the Regulation 44 reports which were completed following visits to children's homes by the Independent Visiting Service; and
- Barnardo's Leaving Care Service – This item had provided the Sub-Group with a summary of the Leaving Care Service in Lincolnshire, which was provided by Barnardo's.

The Committee was advised that the next meeting of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Group was due to meet on 7 December 2017, when it would be receiving in-depth training on Legal Services care proceedings; and private fostering. The Sub-Group would also be considering the revised Looked After Children Placement Sufficient Strategy.

During a short discussion, members of the Committee raised the following issues:-

- One member enquired whether visiting members could have a breakdown of the children as some of the children's issues were very complex. The Committee noted that this information had been made available previously to visiting members. Officers agreed to raise the matter with the Assistant Director Children's, Safeguarding;
- One member advised that page 39 had made reference to the Showmen's Guild of Great Britain, rather than the Showmen's Guild, (East Midlands); and
- The timescales for leaving care – Officers advised the Committee that the local authority had responsibility for young people in care up to the age of 21 (25 years old if they were in education or training). It was noted that the Government was currently consulting on extending this support to the age of 25 years. It was highlighted that there were some care leavers who were able to live independently, but were unable to find suitable accommodation in some parts of the county in multi-occupancy homes. It was agreed that this needed to be discussed with district councils. It was highlighted further that new legislation might place additional statutory duties on district councils and Officers agreed to share the consultation with district councils.

One member advised that dual hatted members could also assist in this matter by speaking to their respective district councils asking them to exempt care leavers from council tax.

RESOLVED

That the work of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Group be supported and that the draft minutes from the Corporate Parenting Sub-Group held on 21 September 2017 be received.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENTS

Consideration was given to a report from Andrew Hancy, County Manager Business Support, which provided feedback on the public consultation which proposed alternative options on the future provision of Enhanced Resource Provision (ERP) units supporting children with significant hearing impairments across Lincolnshire.

It was reported that in June 2017 a review of the Enhanced Resource Provision (ERP) units had taken place to ensure that children with a hearing impairment were being provided with the highest quality support in schools, and that they were receiving support when they needed it, from a school as close to their home as possible. The Committee noted that the review had evidenced that the number of children accessing support through an ERP had reduced significantly over recent years; and that the units were currently underutilised. It was highlighted that the review had concluded that many parents and carers preferred to have their children attending local schools as they had confidence that the needs of their children were being met. Further feedback indicated that parents and carers preferred not to have their child travelling excessive distances to a dedicated ERP unit; and that they preferred their child going to a local school with family members and their friends.

The Committee noted that as well as the ERP units, the council employed a Lincolnshire Sensory Education Support Team (SEST), which was staffed by specialist qualified teachers who provided learning support to children with sensory impairments. It was noted that SEST currently supported 545 children across Lincolnshire with a sensory impairment from birth to school leaving age. It was noted further that 98% of these children were supported within their local mainstream schools with outreach support being provided from SEST.

It was reported that depending on the level of the child's need they were likely to have an Education, Health and Care Plan in place, which provided any additional support or resources required to meet their needs within a mainstream school setting or specialist setting.

The Committee was advised that at present there were four schools (two primary and two secondary) across Lincolnshire who had a ERP unit providing targeted support to nine children with significant hearing impairments. It was highlighted that specialist teaching at the units was provided by SEST. The Committee noted that those children who were educated in schools with an ERP, the majority of their time was spent being supported in main stream classes with their peer group. Then dependent of the level of support required the children would then spend time in the ERP unit receiving targeted teaching and being supported by Teaching/Learning Assistants.

In conclusion, as a result of the feedback received a number of alternative models for service provision had emerged, the four options were summarised at the bottom of page 18, with further details of each of the options being shown in the consultation document at Appendix A 'Proposed Changes to Enhanced Resource Provision Units Supporting Children with Hearing Impairments, Have your Say'. The Committee noted that the consultation had commenced on 18 October 2017 and was due to

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close on 29 November 2017. The Committee was advised that the proposals were not about reducing the level of provision from SEST, the intention was to enhance it by providing targeted support where and when it was needed.

The Committee was advised that a further report would be presented to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee at its 19 January 2018 meeting.

During discussion, the Committee raised the following issues:-

- One member enquired if Option 4 (Decommission the ERP Units and support children in mainstream school setting) was adopted, who would fund it? Officers advised that it was the local authority's responsibility. A further point raised was whether option 4 removed parental choice, particularly in cases where children had a hearing impairment, as well as other complex needs;
- The cost of the classroom – Officers confirmed that the exercise was not a cost reduction exercise. The main driver was to ensure that the service provided was meeting the needs of the service users. Officers clarified that there was not a separate unit in the physical sense. The definition of a unit in this particular instance was; children in a mainstream classroom environment that would spend an allotted period of time, (dependent on the level on need) with a Specialist Teacher or Support Teaching Assistant in a separate area;
- One member felt that Option 3 (No further placement of children into the ERPs – all new placements into local mainstream school) should enable the child currently at the units to continue to access education in that school;
- Some members felt that a further option should be to maintain provision at Ruskington Primary School and Thomas Cowley High School;
- It was further suggested that there should be a fifth option that provision at Ruskington Primary School should be maintained (as this school had the highest number of pupils – six in total). Officers advised that the primary school was supportive of the proposals. It was further noted that the schools who had been spoken to had indicated that they preferred having children in a mainstream environment, with the children attending their local school in their local community. A further suggestion was made to having the option of one ERP at Ruskington as a variance to Option 2 – Reduce the number of ERP units from 4 to 2 across Lincolnshire. One member enquired as to whether the children in mainstream would be subject to bullying. Officers reassured the Committee that children were currently in mainstream classes mixing with their friends and colleagues; and were also socialising at break times; the only time the children were separated was when they were having one to one time with their Specialist Teacher/Teaching Assistant;
- One member expressed concern at the lack of modern research comparing mainstream education to individual units. It was highlighted that some schools were equipped to deal with children for example with the provision of hearing loops; and staff being trained to deal with communicating with children with hearing impairments. Some members of the Committee highlighted their personal experiences relating to the provision of equipment in schools available to children with hearing impairments to help them in a mainstream environment;

- Clarification was given that the SEST provided support to children with sensory impairment, which included hearing, visual and multiple sensory impairment. The Committee noted that Thomas Cowley did employ their own specialist teacher. Officers advised that the proposals were in line with the national direction of travel;
- The use of Google URL shortening service for any website addresses to help feedback on line; and
- The Committee agreed that when the report was presented to the January 2018 meeting an Appendix should be included to say what the impact was for the children currently in ERP.

RESOLVED

1. That the report presented be received.
2. That the feedback on the options as detailed above be considered by officers.
3. That the report presented to the 19 January 2018 Children and Young People Scrutiny meeting should contain information relating to the impact of the proposals on the children currently in Enhanced Resource Provision units.

33 LINCOLNSHIRE SAFEGUARDING BOARDS SCRUTINY SUB-GROUP UPDATE

The Committee received a short update from Councillor S R Dodds, Chairman of the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Boards Scrutiny Sub-Group concerning in particular the Sub-Group's consideration of child safeguarding matters.

Appendix A to the report provided the Committee with a copy of the draft minutes from the last meeting of the Sub-Group held on 26 September for Committee's information.

The Committee was advised that the Sub-Group had received training on the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Board (LSCB), which had highlighted the multi-agency membership of the Board, its role and key functions. It was highlighted that the national and local objectives for the period 2016-2018 included four local objectives around sexual exploitation, emotional wellbeing, healthy relationships; and reducing risk taking behaviours.

It was reported that the next meeting of the Sub-Group would be held on 15 January 2018.

RESOLVED

That the work of the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Boards Scrutiny Sub-Group be supported and that the draft minutes from the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Boards Scrutiny Sub-Group held on 26 September 2017 be received.

34 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.

Simon Evans, Health Scrutiny Officer presented the report and advised that there was nothing further to add, other than the potential item suggested earlier in the agenda relating an item on the protocol with the Regional Schools Commissioner.

RESOLVED

That the work programme as detailed at Appendix A to the report presented be received, subject to the addition of an item relating to a protocol with the Regional Schools Commissioner being added to a future agenda.

The meeting closed at 12.50 pm