



**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
18 OCTOBER 2019**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR R J KENDRICK (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors A P Maughan (Vice-Chairman), M T Fido, R L Foulkes, C Matthews, S R Parkin, M A Whittington, L Wootten, R Wootten and S P Roe.

Added Members

Parent Governor Representative: Miss A E I Sayer.

Councillor: D Brailsford (Executive Support Councillor for Children's Services) was also in attendance.

Officers in attendance:-

Michelle Andrews (Head of Early Years), Matthew Clayton (Admissions and Education Provision Manager), Katrina Cope (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Roz Cordy (Interim Assistant Director of Safeguarding), Sheridan Dodsworth (Head of SEND), Simon Evans (Health Scrutiny Officer), Jo Kavanagh (Assistant Director Early Help), Dave Pennington (Service Manager Property Development), Heather Sandy (Interim Director of Education), Martin Smith (Interim Assistant Director of Education), Viki Thomas (Principal Advisor Early Education and Childcare) and Carolyn Knight (Quality and Standards Manager).

26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs W Bowkett, Mr S C Rudman (Church Representative) and Mrs P J Barnett (Parent Governor Representative).

It was noted that the Head of Paid Service, having received notice under Regulation 13 of the Local Government (Committee and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, had appointed Councillor S R Roe to replace Councillor Mrs W Bowkett for this meeting only.

An apology was also received from Councillor Mrs P A Bradwell (Executive Councillor Adult Care, Health and Children's Services).

27 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTEREST

Councillor A P Maughan wished it to be noted that in relation to agenda item seven – Update on the Building Communities of Specialist Provision Strategy, that the

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schools mentioned in the report were clients of the Accountancy firm he was an employee of.

Councillor M A Whittington also wished it to be noted that he had an adopted son who was in receipt of services from Barnardo's.

28 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 6 SEPTEMBER 2019

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 6 September 2019 be agreed and signed by the Vice-Chairman as a correct record.

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

The Executive Support Councillor for Children's Services welcomed the newly appointed Vice-Chairman to his first meeting in the role.

30 CHILDREN'S SERVICES INSPECTION BY OFSTED - REPORT AND
ACTION PLAN

The Committee gave consideration to a report from the Roz Cordy, Interim Assistant Director Safeguarding, which presented the action plan that had been developed in response to the inspection of Children's Services under the Ofsted Inspecting Local Authority Children's Services (ILAC's) Framework in April 2019.

The Committee was advised that the Ofsted inspection under the ILAC's framework conducted in April 2019 had resulted in an overall judgement of 'Outstanding' for the services, which Lincolnshire Children's Social Care Services provide for children and families in Lincolnshire.

Attached at Appendix A to the report was a copy of the Ofsted report; and Appendix B provided a copy of the action plan which ensured that the areas highlighted for potential development or improvement in the Ofsted report were addressed.

During discussion, the Committee raised the following points:-

- Page 20 - Paragraph 10 - The comment in relation to child protection minutes being overly detailed. The Committee was advised that work had been carried out with all parties, and that the concerns raised had now been rectified;
- Page 21 – Paragraph 16 – Clarification was given that Ofsted were happy with the support provided by the district councils. Their issue related to legal and to how they were assessed. It was noted that Futures4Me were engaging better with this particular group;

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- Page 27 – Paragraph 44 – Reference was made to positive nature of staff and their commitment for Lincolnshire; and to the fact that staff turnover was low. The Committee expressed their thanks to all staff involved. The Committee agreed that a letter should be sent to all staff congratulating them for their commitment; and
- Feedback from the Peer Review which highlighted that more needed to be invested in back office functions. The Committee noted that investment had been made within Children's Services and Adult Services and that other directorates should be able to have the same development opportunities. The Corporate Plan was to have a one council approach.

In conclusion, the Committee was advised that being selected to be a Partner in Practice had changed the way Children's Services worked. The Committee was advised further that Partners in Practice had changed the ethos of Children's Services and encouraged the service to work more innovatively.

RESOLVED

1. That the progress on the action plan in response to the inspection of Children's Services under the Ofsted Inspecting Local Authority Services Framework be noted.
2. That a letter be sent from the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee thanking Children's Social Care staff for their enthusiasm and commitment.

31 PROPOSAL TO EXPAND THE CAPACITY AT ATHENA SCHOOL, LINCOLN FROM 72 TO 104 (FINAL DECISION)

Consideration was given to a report from Heather Sandy, Interim Director, Education, which invited the Committee to consider the proposal to expand the capacity at Athena School, Lincoln from 72 to 104 (final decision), which was due to be considered by the Executive Councillor for Adult Care, Health and Children's Services on 1 November 2019.

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Sheridan Dodsworth, Head of Special Educational Needs and Disability and Matthew Clayton, Admission and Education Provision Manager.

Attached at Appendix 1 to the report was a copy of the Executive report and associated Appendices.

The Committee noted that the Local Authority (LA) was co-ordinating the process following statutory guidelines published in the Department for Education (DfE) guide 'Making prescribed alterations' to maintained schools. The Committee noted further that on the 5 June 2019, a four week period of consultation had commenced, which had closed on 3 July 2019, details of which were shown in Appendix A to Appendix 1 of the report. It was highlighted that following consultation, a decision had been taken on 22 July 2019 to publish a Statutory Notice on 8 August 2019, which had

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initiated a four week Representation Period up to 5 September 2019. It was highlighted further that the process was now entering the final stage when the LA as decision maker, had to take the final decision regarding the proposal within two months from the end of the Representation Period (by 5 November 2019).

It was highlighted to the Committee that in September 2018, Athena School was virtually at capacity at the beginning of the school term with 71 children on roll, and over-capacity with 75 on roll during the school year. It was highlighted further that the proposal being consulted on was to permanently expand the capacity of the school by incorporating the former St Christopher's Annex on the adjacent site with some remodelling and refurbishment of the existing buildings. Appendix E to Appendix 1 provided some indicative plans for the Committee to consider. The Committee noted that if the plans were to proceed, the school would be able to offer up to 32 additional places above their current capacity of 72, to a new capacity of 104. It was noted further that if the proposal was to be approved, it was proposed that building works would begin later in 2019.

The Committee was advised that the increase in numbers would ensure that the provision of school places was planned to promote high educational standards, enable fair access to educational opportunity for every child and promote the fulfilment of each child's potential. The proposal would also provide an opportunity to extend and enhance further the already excellent provision in place at Athena School to benefit more children, not just the additional pupils but the ones that were already on roll. It would also enable the LA to fulfil its statutory duty of ensuring that there were sufficient places to accommodate all pupils of statutory school age in Lincolnshire.

The Committee extended strong support for the recommendations on the basis that it represented a value for money solution to the demand for additional Social Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) places at key stages three and four in Lincolnshire area.

The Committee also noted that it was unlikely that a planning application would be required for the building works, with the exception of the planned installation of a three metre fence to safeguard pupils at the school, which was a particular requirement given that the site was adjacent to the A15 (South Park Avenue, Lincoln). The Committee also accepted the rationale for the height of the fencing and agreed to highlight to the Executive Councillor the need for sensitivity over its installation.

During discussion, the Committee sought clarification on several points, which included:-

- Phasing of the Building Works – That some internal works were likely to be undertaken during 2019, but most of the building works would be undertaken in early 2020;
- Transition Planning – Most, but not all, primary aged pupils at the Fortuna School would transfer to Athena School at secondary age; this was dependent on their needs; and that transition planning for all pupils would begin in year 5; and

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- Admission of Additional Pupils – It was noted that additional pupils would be admitted to the Athena School over a period of time, probably two terms.

In conclusion, the Committee strongly supported the planned expansion of Athena School, but sought further information on several specific details, such as the capital funding required; and on how much would be saved by placing pupils locally as opposed to independent or out-of-county placements. It was agreed that a briefing paper would be prepared for consideration at a later date.

RESOLVED

1. That the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee strongly supported the recommendations as detailed in the report, on the basis that they represented a value for money solution to the demand for additional SEMH places at key stages three and four in the Lincoln area.
2. That the comments as detailed above be passed to the Executive Councillor Adult Care, Health and Children's Services to take into consideration prior to making a decision on 1 November 2019.

32 UPDATE ON THE BUILDING COMMUNITIES OF SPECIALIST PROVISION STRATEGY

The Committee gave consideration to a report from Sheridan Dodsworth, Head of Special Educational Needs and Disability, which provided an update on the implementation of the Building Communities of Specialist Provision Strategy.

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Sheridan Dodsworth, Head of Special Educational Needs and Disability, Eileen McMorrow, Senior Project Officer, Special Educational Needs and Disability and Dave Pennington, Head of Property Development.

The Committee was advised that implementation of the strategy had commenced in January 2019 and that work would continue for the next five years with final school changes being made in September 2024.

The report presented provided an update on the first ten months of delivery on the capital programme. Appendix A to the report provided the Committee with an overview of the SEND schools outline programme. Details of the progress made were shown on pages 60 to 64 of the report.

Appendices B to F provided design plans of some of the schools for the Committee to view.

The Committee noted that Social Emotional and Mental Health Needs (SEMH) groups had been tasked to produce Lincolnshire's SEMH strategic vision for Lincolnshire County Council approval by September 2020.

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It was noted further that the proposed model for satellite provision was being developed within the design work stream. Representatives from mainstream and special education and Local Authority officers had collaborated to develop an aspirational model for satellite provision, which would enable children and young people attending special schools to have access to a wider curriculum and greater mainstream opportunities. It was reported that 14 mainstream schools had expressed an interest to host a satellite; and the Local Authority (LA) anticipated further expressions of interest from mainstream partners.

Other workstreams that were being developed were Community Led Panels, Health, Specialist Equipment Contract; and Workforce Development.

Councillor S P Roe wished it to be noted that as the location of St Christopher's School was opposite his mother's farm, he left the meeting during discussion and voting thereon.

In conclusion, the Committee was advised that significant progress had been made across the capital investment programme with eight out of the fourteen schools being actively engaged in feasibility and design of their planned development. It was noted that in accordance with the outlined programme, six schools would be needs operational by the autumn term 2021, with at least two more coming on line in 2022. Despite the delay identified to the final delivery on St Christopher's School due to the unsuccessful special free school bid, the whole strategic vision would still be implemented in five years from approval as set out in the original strategy.

During discussion, the Committee raised the following points:-

- A question was asked as to why the Free School Bid had been unsuccessful. The Committee was advised that the LA had been very disappointed at being unsuccessful in the last round of government free school applications, mainly due to other areas being able to demonstrate a greater need; as nationally other LA's were either at or nearing crisis point;
- Confirmation was sought as to whether there was sufficient capacity within the LA to ensure that projects were being overseen. Assurance was given that there was capacity; and that a corporate approach was being implemented between Children's Services and Property to ensure better oversight and monitoring of the projects. It was reported that for each project, milestones were assessed on a weekly basis; and that there was no concerns regarding timescales or slippage; and that each project had contingency built in to it;
- A request was made for further information relating to the satellite provision;
- Workforce issues – The Committee was advised that special schools had fewer problems with recruitment; and
- The need to ensure that parents were aware of the advantages of the satellite scheme; and the advantages for young people being able to stay within their communities.

The Committee expressed their support for the Building Communities of Specialist Provision Strategy and the update received; and a request was made by some

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members of the Committee to visit some of the sites. Officers welcomed visits by members of the Committee.

RESOLVED

That progress on the Building Communities of Specialist Provision Strategy be noted.

33 IMPROVEMENT PLAN - SCHOOL READINESS

Councillor S R Roe re-joined the meeting.

The Committee gave consideration to a report from Jo Kavanagh, Assistant Director, Early Help, which invited the Committee to review the improvement plan – school readiness.

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Jo Kavanagh, Assistant Director, Early Help, Michelle Andrews, Head of Early Years and Viki Thomas, Principal Adviser for Early Education & Child Care.

The Committee was advised that the statutory framework for early years foundation stage set the standards for learning development and care for children from 3-5 years. The Committee was advised further that Lincolnshire had compared well to national figures, however, in the last two years Lincolnshire had in recent years seen a data fall below the national average.

The Committee was advised that there were seven headings within the plan.

These were:-

- Raising a good level of development;
- Ensuring sufficiency of good quality provision;
- Focusing of effective transitions;
- Accessing children centres services;
- More effective early identification of need;
- Raising the aspirations of providers; and
- Ambition 1 – Social Mobility.

Appendix A to the report provided a copy of the Improvement Plan. It was noted that the improvement plan included working in partnership with Early Years Providers, and schools both directly and through the work commissioned to Lincolnshire Teaching School's Together (LTT). In addition, it included working with other service areas including Special Education Needs and Disabilities Team (SEND), Ethnic Minority and Traveller Education Team (EMTET), Children's Health Teams, and external agencies commissioned nationally to work with Local Authorities.

The Committee noted that there were almost 700 providers registered to deliver early years entitlement places to children across Lincolnshire.

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The report also made reference to Children's Centres, Health Visiting and Community based maternity hubs, details of which were shown on page 87 and 88 of the report.

The Committee was advised that there had been many changes across the early years and Children's Centre sector in the last three years in Lincolnshire, all of which would have a positive impact on families and children's outcomes both from a health and wellbeing perspective. The Committee was advised further that Lincolnshire's overarching approach would be set out in a strategy along with the Local Authority's (LA's) ambitions later in the year. It was noted that the strategy would ensure the foundations were in place to enable Lincolnshire children to succeed.

In conclusion, the Committee was advised that the improvement plan allowed the LA to focus on areas of learning that needed to be improved; and enabled resources to be geographically targeted. It was noted that the improvement plan had been developed to set out how working collaboratively would improve the early educational experiences and outcomes.

During discussion, the Committee raised the following points:-

- Home Learning Environment – The Committee was advised that there was a realisation that more could be done to encourage and support parents; and that lots of work was being done to support school readiness;
- Good Level of Development (GLD) – Details for the 2018 academic year were shown on pages 82 to 84 of the report; and Table B provided further analysis at a district level, some concern was expressed that some district councils were below the national average. It was highlighted that from the data provided there was early signs that progress was being made to improve children's outcomes. It was highlighted further that 'writing' was the Early Learning Goal in which Lincolnshire children did less well. Table C on page 85 provided details of the 17 Early Learning Goals and the percentage of children expected or exceeding judgements and the areas of learning achieved;
- Page 83 – Children where English was an additional language. The Committee noted that the gap had widened in Lincolnshire in 2018 by 1%. The Committee noted that in Lincolnshire there had been a lot of newly arrived non-English speaking residents; and that work was on-going to respond to the increase. One member enquired whether more detailed information could be obtained to identify specific areas to target resources. Officers advised that the Local Authority could obtain information at postcode level; which then enabled the school and areas of need to be identified; to enable resources to be targeted. The Committee noted there was not an easy solution to the problem; and that the 2019 data would not be available until later in the year. One member felt that Councillors would benefit from seeing the wider data;
- The complexity of deprivation and the need for more work with families;
- Gender gap between boys and girls – The Committee was advised that this was part of Children's Services core business; and not a theme for the current year; and

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- Children's Centres – Some members expressed their support to the range of services provided by Children's Centres. Members of the Committee were encouraged to visit their local Children's Centre.

RESOLVED

That the Improvement Plan – School Readiness be received and the comments raised above be noted by officers.

34 ANNUAL REVIEW OF COMPLAINTS FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Consideration was given to a report from Jo Kavanagh, Assistant Director of Early Help, which updated the Committee on the performance of Children's Services in relation to complaints relating to Social Care in line with statutory requirements.

A copy of the Annual Complaints Report for 2018/19 was attached at Appendix A to the report.

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Carolyn Knight, Quality and Standards Manager. The Committee was advised that during 2018/19 there had been significant changes in relation to how complaints within Children's Services were managed. As a result complaints in 2018/19 were at the lowest they had been in ten years, down from 158 (2017/18) to 119, of which only seven had been substantiated.

The Committee noted that the restorative way of working had made an impact on the numbers.

During a short discussion, the Committee raised the following points:-

- The complaints process – Reassurance was given that the restorative practice was having an impact. Confirmation was given that complaints could be made on-line via the web, or by telephone, or by letter. The Committee was advised that every complaint was responded to; and that a statutory process was followed. The Committee noted that the Complaints Manager was positioned within the Customer Services Team;
- Confirmation was given that complaints just related to social care. Reassurance was given that complaints were investigated; and officers were spoken to accordingly;
- Looked After Children Complaints – The Committee was advised that there were no young people persistently making complaints. If a LAC made a complaint; processes were in place and the young person had access to the advocacy service;
- The need to ensure that learning was gained when mistakes were made. Reassurance was given that this was the case;
- Confirmation was given that any complaints made concerning Barnardo's would be picked up through contract management; and
- Corporate Risk Assessment for Social Workers – The Committee was advised that processes were in place to protect social workers; with telephone calls to

practice supervisors; and each social worker was equipped with a personal alarm.

RESOLVED

That the Annual Report of Complaints for Children's Services be received and that the priorities for 2019/20 be endorsed.

35 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to a report which enabled the Committee to comment on the content of its work programme, to ensure that its scrutiny activity was focussed where it could be of greatest benefit.

The Health Scrutiny Officer advised the Committee that there was one amendment to the work programme presented. The Special Education Needs and Disability Transport would not be considered by the Committee now on 22 November 2019, as the issues relating to this item were wider than the scope of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED

That the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee Work programme presented be agreed with the addition of the amendment detailed above.

The meeting closed at 12.50 pm