



**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
24 JULY 2015**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR J D HOUGH (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors R Wootten (Vice-Chairman), B Adams, W J Aron, Mrs J Brockway, S R Dodds, A G Hagues, B W Keimach, Ms T Keywood-Wainwright, C R Oxby, Mrs S Ransome, Mrs L A Rollings, Mrs N J Smith, S M Tweedale, Mrs S M Wray and Mrs C A Talbot

Added Members

Church Representatives: Mr S C Rudman

Parent Governor Representatives: Mrs E Olivier-Townrow

Councillors: Mrs P A Bradwell and D Brailsford attended the meeting as observers

Officers in attendance:-

Keith Batty (Director of Programme, CfBT Education Services), Matthew Clayton (School Organisation Planning Manager), Maggie Freeman (Head of 14 - 19 Planning Allocation), Clare Hughes (Principal Development Manager (Enterprise and Skills)), Tracy Johnson (Scrutiny Officer), Andrew McLean (Service Manager Commissioning), Andrew Morris (LSCB Business Manager), Heather Sandy (Chief Commissioning Officer for Learning), Janice Spencer (Assistant Director Safeguarding) and Rachel Wilson (Democratic Services Officer)

12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs H N J Powell and L Wootten.

The Chief Executive reported that having received notice under Regulation 13 of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, he had appointed Councillor Mrs C A Talbot as a replacement member on the Committee in place of Councillor L Wootten for this meeting only.

It was noted that apologies were also received from Added Members Mr P Thompson and Mr C V Miller.

13 DECLARATIONS OF COUNCILLORS' INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest at this point in the meeting.

14 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 5 JUNE 2015**RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 June 2015 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

15 MONKS' DYKE TENNYSON COLLEGE OPTIONS

Consideration was given to a report which informed members of the proposal from the Governing Body of Monks' Dyke Tennyson College (MDTC) to close the Mablethorpe site and consolidate provision on the Louth site. It provided information about the statutory process and the role of the Local Authority as decision maker regarding the proposal of the Governing Body to close the Mablethorpe site. The report also explored options for the provision of future secondary education in Mablethorpe and informed Members that at the direction of the Department for Education (DfE) MDTC was also proposed to become a sponsored academy in response to the need to raise academic standards.

Members were advised that the option to do nothing was not available as the governors had voted to close the site. There were 16 options which had been put forward, however there were only two of those options where the County Council could be involved.

The Chairman reported that a small group of councillors had met with the Head Teacher and visited the school, and so invited them to share their experience with the rest of the Committee, and some of the comments made included the following:

- Members were impressed by the standard of commitment from the teachers;
- There were concerns regarding the difficulties that the children had coping with changes which made members nervous about the proposal to close the school and what would happen to the children and how they would cope with the change of location;
- One of the main concerns was regarding the amount of time that children would need to travel from Mablethorpe to Louth.

The Chairman informed the Committee that a local councillor for Mablethorpe, Councillor T Howard, had requested to speak to the Committee regarding the proposed closure of Monks Dyke Technology College site in Mablethorpe. Some of the comments made to the Committee included the following:

- It was believed there should be secondary education provision in Mablethorpe;
- It was reported that the decision by the governors to close the school had not been unanimous;
- The Committee was asked to consider the effect that travelling from Mablethorpe to Louth would have on young people;
- The effect on primary school children who currently had the option to go to a secondary school in their neighbourhood;
- Mablethorpe was the largest community on the north of the Lincolnshire coast;

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- It was queried what message this would send out in terms of economic development if there was no secondary provision in the town;
- The effect on parents with more than one child;
- There were only two parents in Mablethorpe that had elected to send their children to Cordeaux School;
- There had been a lot of uncertainty about the future of this school for a significant period of time;
- The school was a hub for the whole community with a number of local events centred around the school;
- There was a need for stability for this school in the future.

Members of the Committee were provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information within the report, and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- It was queried whether any future building in the area had been taken account of. Members were advised that there was very little development proposed, and no housing development with planning permission which would have an impact on pupil numbers was planned;
- It was commented that 60 houses had recently been built, and it was planned for that total to reach 180. However, members were advised that to make an impact on pupil numbers, there would need to be a housing development with hundreds of homes;
- There were concerns that the town would not be able to attract future development if there were no secondary school places available;
- The dedication of the staff and the management within the school was recognised;
- There were concerns that travelling would have a significant impact on the children;
- There was a need to find out what the Mablethorpe community would want;
- There were concerns that families would not choose to settle in a town which did not have a viable secondary school;
- The concerns were understood and financial constraints recognised, but it was commented that the County Council should be doing everything possible to maintain secondary education in Mablethorpe;
- It was queried whether the money which would need to be spent to transport all the pupils to the Louth site could instead be invested in the school. However, members were informed that the money for school transport came from a separate funding stream and so it could not be redeployed. It was also noted that the cost of transport, whilst significant, was still significantly less than the amount which would be needed to keep the school open;
- Work which had been done around potential transport costs was mainly around designated areas, however, some initial estimates indicate that the transport costs would be around £250,000 per year;
- The majority of the sixth form courses were delivered at the Louth site;
- There would always be problems with ensuring that the pupils at the school received a diverse education, and it was understood from the report that the children were not getting the education they deserve;

- In relation to the school becoming an academy, it was noted that no sponsor had been found who was willing to take on both sites;
- The school had been inspected in 2014 and graded by Ofsted as 'requires improvement';
- Due to very low pupil numbers the breadth of curriculum subjects which were offered was extremely limited;
- It was reported that in 2016 the DfE would be introducing new requirements to secondary schools to increase the curriculum choice for pupils which would put further pressure on the school and which the school would not be able to comply with due to low pupil numbers;
- The size of the year groups at the Mablethorpe site were small, which impacted upon the "setting" of subjects in accordance with ability levels and needs. In some subject areas, pupils in a year group were taught in a single class which meant that individual learning needs could not be met in the same way as pupils at the Louth site;
- It was acknowledged that the staff were doing a tremendous job but in extremely difficult circumstances;
- It was commented that children only get one chance at secondary school, so it was important to ensure they receive the best possible experience;
- It was confirmed that issues around the viability of the school had been discussed for many years, and so this wasn't a situation which had arisen quickly;
- In relation to funding, the school was supported by a "split site allowance" which helped to cover the cost of running a single school across two separate sites. However, this was considerably less funding than when the two sites operated as two separate organisations. It was noted that funding levels were governed by DfE Policy, not the local authority;
- Due to the distance between the two sites (15 miles) it had not always been possible to share staff across both sites. The need for staff to regularly travel between sites had impacted upon the timetable and the availability of staff to support pupils outside formal lessons;
- It was queried whether there would be any consultation with parents due to the travel time. Members were advised that it would be the school which would carry out the consultation process, and it was the responsibility of the governing body to consult with parents;
- Whilst it was recognised that the school would consult on the closure, it was suggested that there was a need for the County Council to discuss with the Mablethorpe community what they would like for the future;
- There was a need for the local authority to do everything it could to maintain the secondary education provision in the town;
- It was commented that the governing body had made its decision to propose closure of the site, and it was important that people's expectations were not raised regarding the school staying open before the outcome of the consultation and the subsequent decision was made known;
- It was also noted that no suitable academy sponsor had come forward who would be willing to take the school with both sites;
- Sometimes hard decisions needed to be made in the best interests of the pupils and their education;

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- It was noted that if the site in Mablethorpe did close, the pupils there would still have a school, this was not a decision to close the school as a whole. If the pupils did not want to go to Louth, it would be a parental choice as to where the children continued their education;
- It was hoped that the school site in Louth would become part of a multi-academy trust;
- It was noted that no sponsor had come forward that would offer the necessary funding to retain both sites and the DfE would need to approve the sponsor. It was also noted that work would continue to try and find a suitable sponsor;
- Members were advised that the estimated cost of building a new school as outlined in Option 9 would be around £15million, and there would also be significant transport costs, as it would be drawing pupils from an area which served three other schools. It was noted that this option was outside of the control of the local authority.

RESOLVED

1. That the MDTC governors' decision to propose the closure of the Mablethorpe site be acknowledged;
2. That the Committee were aware of the reasons for the proposal from the Governing Body, directly linked with the financial constraints of providing a broad and balanced curriculum across two sites with very low pupils numbers;
3. That the Committee were aware that standards concerns had driven the DfE to require that MDTC became an academy with a strong sponsor;
4. That the Committee were aware of and understood the statutory process underpinning the proposed closure of the Mablethorpe site and the LA's role as decision maker and support to the process;
5. That the Committee accepted the evaluation of the range of options (16) around provision of future secondary education in Mablethorpe;
6. That the Committee accepted that there were only two options within the scope of the LA decision making control (options 2 and 3);
7. That the Committee were fully aware of the issues and constraints around the options and LA scope of control.

It was noted that the Committee did not accept the last action which stated that the Committee were, prior to the Governing Body of MDTC commencing the statutory process, fully informed around the complexities of closing MDTC Mablethorpe site, in order that the LA could perform its role as decision maker from a position of knowledge and awareness, as the Committee had further queries regarding the costs of transport for the children to attend the site in Louth and what the new Designated Transport Area (DTA) would be for the Mablethorpe area.

16 NEW KEY STAGE 4 PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Consideration was given to the new performance measures to be introduced in 2016 for all secondary schools and its potential impact on Lincolnshire schools.

It was reported that the principal indicator used by central government and by the media to judge the performance of an individual mainstream secondary school or

academy was the percentage of pupils attaining five or more GCSEs at grades A*-C including English and Maths (5ACEM), which was an "attainment" measure. It was noted that the 5ACEM measure took no account of the ability of the students taking the examinations or of their prior attainment when they entered a school. Schools that fell below 40% 5ACEM were considered to be below the national 'floor standard' for this measurement. It was also noted that this measure also concentrated on just 5 subject areas rather than attainment across a broader range of subjects judged to be important for a rounded education.

Members were advised that in 2016 the principal measure, and only floor standard, would change to a "progress" measure which would span 8 subjects rather than 5, which would be called "Progress 8". The new measure would also recognise the importance of English and Maths above all subjects and these subjects would have double weighting in the calculations. There would also be an "attainment" measure which would be called "Attainment 8" but the Floor Standard would be based on the Progress measure spanning the same eight subjects (Progress 8). From 2016 onwards, mainstream schools would be deemed to be below the floor standard if their Progress 8 score fell below -0.5.

It was also reported that in 2017 a new grading system would be introduced that would use grades 1 to 9 rather than G to A*. The current grade C was expected to correspond to a numerical grade of 4, but grade 9 would be reserved for the highest scoring 3% of students nationally. However, grade 5 would be the 'Gold Standard' threshold and equivalent to a current grade C expectation.

The Committee received a presentation which explained "attainment 8" and "progress 8" in more detail and members were provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers in relation to the information contained within the report, and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- This measure would not show the attainment for those children who did not have good academic ability;
- There was a need to return to teaching children practical skills;
- It was noted that the range of vocational qualifications had been slimmed down, and these would have to go in the third 'bucket', and a maximum of three could be included in the "Progress 8" score;
- It was commented that the new measure was discriminatory towards those that wanted to study vocational subjects;
- There would be a need for schools to respond to this agenda, if they did not, they would be deemed to have failed. This would be the indicator by which schools would be judged in the future;
- This measure would take no account of a child's ability when they started at secondary school;
- In order to deliver Progress 8, there would be a need for teachers who could teach up to 8 subjects, particularly in smaller schools (below 600 pupils was considered to be a small school). There would be a need to make schools bigger, or give them the opportunity to be part of a bigger organisation so they could share teaching staff;

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- It was queried how the change in exams for maths and English would affect schools, as previously pupils had been allowed to retake exams through the year until they achieved a suitable result, but this change would mean that only the first entry counted, and there would be a move away from early entry;
- It was noted that over the past two years, a lot of proposals for primary school extensions had come through this scrutiny committee, and it was queried when the children attending these schools would start filtering through to secondary schools shortly. Members were advised that it would be 5/6 years before these children reached Key Stage 4;
- Due to the influx of children from abroad, it was queried how children who had not taken SATS at Key Stage 2 would be affected by this measure, and members were advised that SATS would be scrapped and replaced with something else. Children would receive a secondary readiness score, and primary schools would be required to advise the secondary school of those children who were not 'secondary ready'. It was suggested that a separate briefing could be provided to the Committee on the changes to the primary curriculum in the future;
- This would not take into account the local skills needs across the county;
- In relation to the local needs issue, children would have to ensure that these subjects were extra to the attainment 8 subjects;
- With the move towards end of course exams, rather than throughout the year, the less academic would be less likely to achieve;
- There was currently a big discussion taking place nationally on whether RE should be included as an EBacc subject, and it was possible it could become a 'bucket 2' subject in due course;
- Children still tended to choose their GCSE subjects for year 10 and 11 at the end of year 9;
- It was acknowledged that children develop at different rates, but if they had not achieved English and maths by the end of year 11, they would be required to retake it until they passed;
- A child must be developed through good teaching and good study habits;
- This measure would measure progress against an average score, by comparing on child with the results of an average child with the same prior attainment;
- There were concerns regarding how children and young people could be better prepared to meet the needs of the local area, mainly in the areas of health and farming. It was noted that farming was not as labour intensive as it used to be but instead required a different set of skills;
- It was queried whether the Committee could write to the Secretary of State for Education to express their thoughts about the measure;
- It was noted that guidance from government indicated that vocational study should be for post-16, and before that the focus should be on academic subjects, particularly English and maths;
- There was very little space in the curriculum for young people to look at what to specialise in.

RESOLVED

1. That the report and the points raised be noted;
2. That this information be taken into account when forming judgements or making recommendations about secondary schools.

17 NEGLECT STRATEGY

Consideration was given to a report which presented the Neglect Strategy which had been developed by the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and its partners.

Members were advised that following on from the publication by Ofsted of 'In the child's time', it was recognised that all Local Safeguarding Boards should have a neglect strategy to monitor, address and co-ordinate awareness of, and the response to, the signs and symptoms of neglect.

It was reported that neglect was the most common reason for a child in the UK to be the subject of a Child Protection Plan. It happened when parents or carers could not, or would not, meet a child's needs. Sometimes this was because they did not have the skills or support needed, and sometimes it was due to other problems (such as mental health issues, drug and alcohol problems, or poverty).

The strategic objectives for Lincolnshire's LSCB in relation to neglect were explained to the Committee and were as follows:

1. Promote a common awareness and understanding in Lincolnshire of what neglect means and the effects upon children;
2. Minimise the incidence of neglect for children and the repeat incidences of neglect for children;
3. Ensure the effectiveness of service provision.

Members were provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained within the report and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- It was found that in cases where children were suffering neglect, the parents often had additional needs, therefore this strategy would be going to the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Adults Board (LSAB) as well;
- There was a lot of research underway nationally in relation to neglect;
- There were concerns that there was a large number of referrals and re-referrals to children's services which cited neglect as a factor. Members were advised that initially the authority had not got its early help strategy right, but this was now changing and officers were working more closely with families through Team Around the Child (TAC). More up to date data should be available soon. It was suggested that the LSCB's Early Help Audit could be brought to a future meeting of the Committee;
- Attendance by partner agencies at case conferences remained a challenge and this was being monitored monthly. The geography of the county remained an issue, and officers were looking at doing things more creatively and looking

at whether other agencies could participate through the use of video technology;

- The way that signs of safety was delivered and embedded in meetings had been restructured;
- Most primary schools would have one or two children who arrive at school not toilet trained;
- There was a much more sophisticated approach to managing neglect as it could be one single incident, but it was usually a number of smaller issues over a period of time. Health visitors were key to spotting these signs as they were now going into households from the early age of the children;
- Members were pleased to hear that health visitors were now going into homes as this was very important, as it allowed them to assess the condition of the home.

RESOLVED

1. That the Neglect Strategy and the comments made be noted;
2. That the LSCB's Early help Audit be brought to a future meeting of the Committee.

18 ANTI BULLYING

Consideration was given to a report which set out the support services provided to children and young people, schools and colleges for Anti-Bullying across Lincolnshire.

Members of the Committee were provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained within the report and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- There were concerns that cyberbullying was seen as the least common form of bullying. However, it was noted that when it did happen it would be seen by more people and so would have a higher perceived impact on the target of the bullying;
- It was noted that bullying never occurred in just one form;
- Members were informed that there was an E-Safety Officer in the county who worked with the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board;
- Members congratulated the officers for the work they had done, and commented they had seen some of it first hand, including work around cyber-bullying;
- There was a need to teach children to use mobile phones responsibly, as they could be a valuable resource in school. It was not thought that the solution was to ban children from taking their mobile phones into school;
- It was commented that it was a really comprehensive report;
- Concerns were also raised regarding playground bullying, as mid-day supervisors were not always around. Members were advised that all staff in a school were invited to attend training including the catering staff, as this was suggested as best practice;

- It was commented that one of the biggest causes of bullying was appearance, so it was important to teach children to not have the appearance of a victim by building up their confidence and self-esteem, for example by how they walk;
- There was a lot of good work going on in schools to tackle bullying;
- Both the target of the bullying and the person displaying the bullying behaviour would be worked with;
- Schools were being skilled up so they could deal with each situation;
- A toolkit for schools in relation to transgender was being created as the age range for identifying as transgender was lowering, and many schools were dealing with this complicated issue for the first time.

RESOLVED

That the contents of the report and work plan be noted.

19 CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL UPDATE

The Committee received a report from the Chairman of the Corporate Parenting Panel which provided an update on the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

It was reported that the Panel had received a verbal update on the Corporate Parenting Strategy where members were advised that nearly all the Looked After Children/Care Leaver representatives had been appointed. The Chairman reported that all representatives had since been appointed, and training was being arranged, hopefully for September 2015.

The Panel had also received an update from the Virtual School where concerns were raised about a number of looked after children who were under five and not attending nursery. Members felt that more work was needed to be done around this to increase attendance and had requested a report back to the Panel. This would now go to the 10 December 2015 meeting due to the size of the September agenda. The Panel also requested that a representative of the Birth to Five Service attend future meetings.

The Annual Report from Legal Services regarding children in care proceedings for 2014/15 was also discussed. As noted in the minutes of the meeting on 11 June 2015, there were 198 care proceedings issued between April 2014 and March 2015. Of these, 184 were for care orders and 14 were for supervision orders. Lincolnshire was now fifth in the country, down from first last year, for meeting the average timescale of 26 weeks for getting a case through the legal system. This was due to the issues outlined in the minutes around extending timescales for conducting assessments and a change to the Designated Family Judge.

The Committee was advised that the next meeting was scheduled for 10 September 2015 and the Panel would be considering the outcomes from the review on the Stability of Fostering Placements, the Leaving Care Service Annual Report from Barnado's and the revised Corporate Parenting Strategy and Engagement Plan.

RESOLVED

That the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel be noted.

20 IMPROVING EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS IN LINCOLNSHIRE'S GROWING BUSINESS SECTORS

Consideration was given to a report which invited the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee to consider a report on Improving Employment and Skills in Lincolnshire's Growing Business sectors and invited views on how all children and young people in Lincolnshire could be better prepared to meet future skills requirements, therefore securing better outcomes on leaving education and throughout their adult lives. The outcomes of the discussions would inform the setting of the strategic priorities for post 16 education and training for 2016/17 which were due to be considered by the Committee in September 2015.

Members of the Committee were provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained within the report and some of the points raised included the following:

- One member commented that she had attended the launch of a 'Get into Health' event on 9 July 2015, which aimed to encourage local young people to consider careers in health and social care;
- There was a need for co-ordination throughout the county in relation to employment and skills;
- It was commented that it seemed that many manual jobs had disappeared and there was more of a focus on education. However, it was noted that these were being replaced with other types of job, but it was important that any skills gaps were reported by employers so that they could be addressed;
- It was queried whether there was anything that could be done by the County Council to ensure that apprenticeships were completed. One member highlighted concerns about whether the apprentices placed with Gelders would be able to complete their programme. The 14-19 Commissioner agreed to look into this with Gelders and would let the Committee know the outcome;
- Farming was an area where, both nationally and locally, it was hoped that more people could be encouraged into its community. It was noted that it was no longer just about manual labour, and there was a whole variety of roles now available within this industry;
- There would be some changes to the way that apprenticeships were funded, and employers would receive a significant financial reward when young people completed their apprenticeship, and it was hoped that this would act as an incentive for employers to offer apprenticeships;
- There was very close working between the Greater Lincolnshire Employment and Skills Board and the Council's Economic Development team;
- Employers would have a view on what skills they wanted at this time, whilst some would look to the future and some would not know;
- The role of SME's (small to medium sized enterprises) was considered important by the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership (GLLEP) as they were a significant source of employment in Lincolnshire;

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- The need for skills which could help with housing growth was highlighted.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

21 OFSTED ACTION PLAN UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report which set out the action plan which had been developed to address the areas for improvement identified in the Ofsted inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers, which took place in 2014.

It was reported that the inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers took place between 22 October and 12 November 2014. The action plan was developed as a result of the areas of service that were identified for improvements, and the actions had been integrated into the Children's Services Improvement Plan which reported on a quarterly basis to the Children's Services Departmental Management Team (DMT). The plan was last reviewed in June and identified progress made towards the completion of each of the action point, and it was noted that plan would be reviewed again in September 2015.

Members of the Committee were guided through the action plan and the following was noted:

- Action 1 – The use of B & B accommodation for homeless 16 and 17 year olds had now ceased;
- Action 2 – this had been completed recently and would be going forward to DMT for sign off;
- Action 3 – a lot work had been undertaken, but there was still a lot to do;
- Action 4 – the first update would be presented to the Corporate Parenting Panel in September;
- Action 5 – the review was ongoing, and had so far been very well received by young people;
- Action 6 – the LSCB had put on additional training ;

It was queried whether the implementation of Mosaic was now on track, and it was reported that the timeline for implementation had been reprofiled, and the system was due to go live in October 2015. Once this system was embedded it would be a great improvement, and those staff who had already had sight of the system welcomed it.

RESOLVED

That the Committee note the progress made within the Action Plan and considered the actions identified.

22 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK
 PROGRAMME 2015

Consideration was given to a report which enabled the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee to consider its own work programme for the coming year.

During consideration of the work programme, the following was noted:

- The Early Help Audit would be brought to a future meeting;
- It was hoped that the first meeting of the Grammar School Transport Task and Finish Group would be held in September 2015.

It was also noted that Councillor R Oxby submitted his apologies for the next meeting which was due to be held on 11 September 2015.

RESOLVED

That the content of the work programme be noted.

The meeting closed at 1.30 pm

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