



**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE  
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
9 SEPTEMBER 2016**

**PRESENT: COUNCILLOR JOHN DUNCOMB HOUGH (CHAIRMAN)**

Councillors B Adams, W J Aron, Mrs J Brockway, S R Dodds, A G Hagues, B W Keimach, C R Oxby, Mrs H N J Powell, Mrs S Ransome, Mrs N J Smith, L Wootten, Mrs S M Wray and M A Whittington

Councillor D Brailsford attended the meeting as an observer

Officers in attendance:-

Debbie Barnes (Executive Director, Children's Services), Stuart Carlton (Assistant Director Children's Lead Early Help), Maggie Freeman (14 - 19 Commissioner), Gary Headland (Chair of the Federation of Lincolnshire Colleges), Tracy Johnson (Senior Scrutiny Officer) and Rachel Wilson (Democratic Services Officer)

**20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / REPLACEMENT MEMBERS**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors T Keywood-Wainwright, Mrs L Rollings, S M Tweedale, and R Wootten.

Apologies for absence were also received from Mr P Thompson (Church Representative), Dr E van der Zee (Parent Governor Representative) and Councillor Mrs P A Bradwell (Executive Councillor for Children's Services).

The Chief Executive reported that, under Local Government (Committee and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, Councillor M A Whittington had been appointed to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee to replace Councillor S M Tweedale for this meeting only.

**21 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTEREST**

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

**22 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15 JULY 2016**

**RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 July 2016 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**23      UPDATE ON SAVINGS PROPOSALS IN THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES**  
**BUDGET 2016/17**

Consideration was given to a report which provided an update to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on the saving proposals in the Children's Services budget for 2016/17 and anticipated cost pressures for 2016/17 and beyond. It was clarified that these proposals had come before this Committee in November 2015, and this report was a reminder of the savings which had been agreed and implemented.

The Committee received a presentation which provided members with more detailed information in relation to the following budget areas:

- Readiness for School
- Learn and Achieve
- Readiness for Adult Life
- Children are Safe and Healthy
- Cost Pressures

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

- It was queried whether the government covered the cost of the 67 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) as it was listed as a zero value in the budget table. Members were advised that young people who came into the country and were assessed as being under 18 and without a guardian were the responsibility of the State. The numbers did vary, but on any given day there would be between 40 -70 UASC in the care of Lincolnshire County Council. The authority did receive a grant from the government, which did cover the costs of supported accommodation for over 16's. Children assessed as under the age of 16 would be placed in foster care. The issues arose with those children under 16 who had complex needs. However, officers currently thought that caring for these children was cost neutral for the authority, but it was not known how this could change in the future if the needs of the cohort were different. Members were assured that officers were committed to continually reviewing this situation.
- Whether children with Special Guardianship Orders (SGO's) transitioned to adult care would depend on their needs, such as if they had mental health issues or a disability. However, if a child had an Education, Health and Care plan in place, they would be transitioned in accordance with their plan. Members were advised that case law in relation to SGO's meant that children which were subject to a SGO tended to be younger and that it would be quite a few years before transition to adult care would be required for those with a SGO.
- It was commented that investing in preventative services for children was the ultimate invest to save option, as well as being morally the right thing to do.
- It was queried whether there was any way of measuring the impact of the introduction of signposting in place of services such as early health or careers. Members were advised that in relation to NEET (Not in Education,

Employment or Training), those groups of young people who were classed as vulnerable were measured so data was collected on NEET via vulnerable group. It was too early to see whether losing the careers guidance service was having an impact but it may encourage schools to increase their offer in relation to careers. Removing careers guidance from schools was a risk, and this was acknowledged, but the council was now making decisions about 'least worst' proposals.

- It was acknowledged that capacity in terms of sector led work was a concern. Lincolnshire was seeing a growth in schools that wanted to be part of multi-academy sites or teaching schools, and they were working really well together, but it was recognised that there was a gap on the east coast. 97% of schools had joined the Lincolnshire Learning Partnership. Schools were undertaking peer reviews and engaging with the local authority on the peer reviews.
- There was a challenge with small rural schools in Lincolnshire, and there was an opportunity for them to work in collaboration. It was no longer desirable for schools in Lincolnshire to stand alone and work in isolation. It had been slow progress but it was reported that now a tipping point had been reached and people were seeing it as something different, there was a need to sustain the momentum.
- It was queried what the effect of budget savings had been on staff, such as the number of compulsory redundancies and the effect of these redundancies on the remaining staff. It was reported that the most significant redundancies were in the Careers Guidance service. It was thought that there were about 70 compulsory redundancies, but they were not all full-time. It was also noted that the costs of these redundancies were met from the corporate redundancy budget, not the Children's Services budget. The Director agreed to send out details of all redundancies after the meeting. Members were advised that morale was positive. Management had worked hard to ensure that the workload which was left behind was manageable for staff, and also there had been a lot of work on staff engagement to ensure that management team were visible.
- There were currently no plans to undertake impact assessments around previous savings.
- In relation to the supported accommodation contract, it was reported that Public Health used to have responsibility for all supported housing in Lincolnshire. The contract was set up so that the provider managed which people they would take. However, the authority believed that it should decide who was more suited to supported accommodation and contracts re-tendered to that effect.
- It was queried whether there was anything which could be done to challenge the courts if the authority felt that the wrong decision had been made. Members were advised that there were avenues which could be pursued if it was felt this was the case, but it was not a common situation.
- Concerns were raised that the impacts of making cuts were not always captured.

## RESOLVED

That the comments made in relation to the current position of the 2016/17 saving proposals for Children's Services and anticipated cost pressures for 2016/17 and beyond be noted.

24 POST 16 AREA BASED REVIEW

Consideration was given to a report which summarised the current situation in relation to post 16 (up to 25 for young people with Education, Health and Care Plans) education and training in Lincolnshire. The report would seek approval from the Executive Councillor for Children's Services for the Council's position in relation to the forthcoming area based review of post 16 education and training institutions in Greater Lincolnshire.

The outcomes from the Committee's working group which was held on 25 July 2016 were reported to the meeting, and it was confirmed that they had been taken into account within the report. These included concerns around the need for a broad curriculum in reach of all pupils and concerns that school sixth forms and other providers, such as Bishop Burton College and University Technical College, were excluded from the review.

The Chair of the Federation of Lincolnshire Colleges was in attendance at the meeting, and advised the Committee that the federation consisted of 10 colleges across Greater Lincolnshire. It was reported that the federation was going into the area review open minded, and had been working collaboratively on a number of bids. A single data pack had been made available to all chief executives and principals during the week, and would be provided to other stakeholders the following week. It was emphasised that there was a need for caution in making conclusions about what the right answer was too early in the process. This was an opportunity to examine the way that further education was delivered across the county. There was a need to get the best possible outcomes for young people in Lincolnshire. However, it was emphasised that this was not about a structural merger.

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

- Concerns were raised regarding how this review would fit into the review being undertaken by the shadow Combined Authority and the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership (GLLEP) and with devolution. It was reported that the scope of devolution was aligned with the review and would be informed by the GLLEP. It was highlighted that the colleges would make their own recommendations and the shadow Combined Authority could also put forward recommendations informed by the GLLEP which may differ to the colleges. However, it was noted that the colleges would make their own decisions and could accept or reject the recommendations.
- Concerns were also raised regarding Bishop Burton College and the loss of farms. It was requested that this issue was raised with the Chief Executive and a formal response provided back to the Committee on the situation.

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- It was highlighted that there was a need for functional skills facilities to remain in colleges for those 16 year olds who did not achieve maths and English at schools, as this was an important part of the college system. It was noted that this area of provision would be explored, but it was acknowledged that investment was needed in lots of areas of the curriculum, including functional skills.
- The importance of life skills was also highlighted, and members were advised that there were study programmes for 16-18 year olds which covered vocational skills, but not necessarily life skills. These programmes covered things such as how to manage in the world of work, but there was some scope to include broader life skills.
- Concerns were raised regarding the need to match the curriculum with the needs of the Lincolnshire economy, and it was commented that colleges were offering too many courses in hairdressing and beauty, which were surplus to requirements.
- Young people had clear ideas about what they wanted to do, and there was a role for Post-16 providers to engage with young people in relation to the skills which were required locally and nationally.
- There were concerns that sixth form colleges were not being included, and it was thought that there was a need for a holistic view, and it would be difficult to see how the best outcomes could be obtained when sixth forms were not being included in the review.
- There was an issue around matching skills with economic growth requirements, but members welcomed this being addressed during the review.
- There were concerns around careers guidance, as it was commented that the advice given by schools was very patchy. It was felt that until children had the opportunity to receive good advice at school they would not be able to make the right decisions.
- It was queried whether the review would address the Ofsted grading of colleges, as the majority had either stayed the same or gone down in their grading. Members were advised that there had been a recalibration across the country and there was now only one college rated as outstanding in the whole country.
- A member commented that they felt reassured that there would be a more holistic approach than previously. There was a responsibility on the authority, and post-16 providers to ensure that young people were on courses that would lead to a job.
- It was highlighted that the wording in Appendix C regarding collaboration around apprenticeships appeared to imply that the arrangements between Boston College, Grantham College and New College Stamford would be the only one. The Committee agreed that the wording should be made clearer to reflect that there may also be other collaborative arrangements around Apprenticeships, and it was requested that the wording be recirculated to the Committee.

## RESOLVED

1. That the Committee supports the recommendation to the Executive Councillor responsible for Children's Services as set out in the report.
2. That the comments made be passed to the Executive Councillor responsible for Children's Services in relation to this item.

25 PARTNERS IN PRACTICE

Consideration was given to a report which invited the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee to consider the proposed partnership agreement between the Department of Education (DfE) and Lincolnshire County Council's Children's Services as part of the Government's Partner in Practice Programme. The proposals were intended to improve practice in Lincolnshire and other Children's Services by transforming the quality of children's social care services and early help arrangements. Members were advised that the DfE had approached high performing local authorities to work with them about what an alternative child protection system would look like. The authority had submitted its Partners in Practice proposal, but at the time of the meeting it had not yet been accepted.

Members were informed that the proposals to transform Children's Social Care were structured around three different work streams with 10 aspirations of what the authority wishes to achieve over the next four years. It was believed that the three work streams would enable Lincolnshire to innovate which would improve the authority's practices and be more child focused, building on its approach for relationship based practice. The three work streams were aligned to the DfE's reform programme, and were as follows:

- Practice and systems
- Governance and accountability
- People and leadership

The Committee was 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 commented that the report was excellent and was welcomed.
- There was agreement that staff relationship with the child was an important issue, and that there should be one person for the child to go to.
- Members were pleased to see more use of 'Signs of Safety, and saw this as a positive move away from a tick box way of working.
- It was commented that the successes of families working together in Lincolnshire showed the strength of the model.
- There would be much more voice of the child in this process.
- It was queried why, if Lincolnshire was already an outstanding local authority in child protection was it being asked to look at alternative delivery models.
- It was confirmed that it was common for children to get attached to their social worker, and a lot of children in the care system had existing attachment

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issues. Anything that would reduce the number of people a child had to deal with would be positive.

- Concerns were raised with regard to Aspiration 6 as it was thought there was a need to know the exact ways that young people would be diverted away from criminal behaviour.
- In terms of the governance work stream, the authority would be looking to explore collaborative working with joint ownership.
- The Youth Offending Service would be moving into Children's Services, and then officers would be able to start working through how services would be further developed and integrated.
- Officers commented that they were pleased with the comments about innovation, and management thought that this approach made sense. It was highlighted that this was a once in a lifetime opportunity to change the way that children's social care was provided.

**RESOLVED**

That the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee supports the 10 aspirations as set out in the proposed partnership agreement between the Department of Education and Lincolnshire County Council's Children's Services as one of the Government's Partners in Practice.

**26      CENTRE FOR PUBLIC SCRUTINY'S GUIDE TO SCRUTINISING  
CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS**

On 9 October 2015 the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee was asked to consider and comment on the CfPS 21 questions guide for Councillors on Safeguarding Children.

It was agreed following this that Officers would be requested to provide the Committee with assurance in respect of the questions set out in the CfPS Guide 2015.

The Committee received a report which set out the work undertaken across Children's Services in response to questions 5, 6 and 7, which were as follows:

- How are local commissioners considering safeguarding issues in their work across a full range of local services?
- How effective are 'early help' strategies in identifying children in need and addressing factors that may lead to concerns about safeguarding?
- What has been learnt from early intervention approaches in the local area? What is effective and what are the resource implications?

**RESOLVED**

That the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee note the contents of the response.

27 PERFORMANCE - QUARTER 1 2016/17

Consideration was given to a report which provided the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee with key performance information for Quarter 1 2016/17 which was relevant to the work of the Committee.

Members were provided with an 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 queried whether any analysis was carried out on complaints to determine whether there were any patterns. It was noted that there was a complaints officer, and the complaints listed in the report were the complaints which were submitted to the local authority.
- Concerns were raised regarding performance of the achievement gap at foundation stage not being narrowed. Members were advised that narrowing the gap was a significant challenge. Some academies were not engaging with the authority, but all were measured by Ofsted on the gap as it was a key Ofsted indicator. It was noted that it was very difficult to remove the gap. However, there were a number of schools who had not yet provided their data.
- Members were advised that in the future the gap would not be measured on 5 A – C's, there would instead be a move toward Progress 8. It was unclear at this stage how the authority would benchmark from last year to this year.
- In relation to Care Leavers in suitable accommodation, it was suggested whether the target should be 100%, as there were concerns about whether the 10% could 'slip'. Members were advised that these young people were managed on an individual basis to ensure they were in the right place. Work was also ongoing on how the authority could pump prime some investment and work on creating more suitable accommodation for care leavers around the county.

It was noted that there was a working group on School Performance if any members were interested in joining.

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

**RESOLVED**

That in accordance with section 100(A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the 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 those questions raised.

RESOLVED

That after the consideration of exempt information, as defined above, the remainder of the meeting be held in public.

RESOLVED

That the comments made in relation to the performance information be noted.

28     LINCOLNSHIRE SAFEGUARDING BOARDS SCRUTINY SUB-GROUP

It was reported that the Scrutiny Sub-Group met on 6 July 2016 but unfortunately the meeting had to be held informally due to being inquorate which was the reason why there were no minutes included with the agenda for this meeting.

The Sub-Group received the outcomes from Serious Case Review C which had now been published. The case involved the death of a 5 month old baby with a suspected degenerative neurological condition. The baby had been the subject of a neglect case, however a post mortem determined that the child had died naturally and the review concluded that the death could not have been prevented.

The Sub Group was updated on the work of the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and was informed that Bishop Grosseteste University had been approached to produce a short play relating to child sexual exploitation which would be performed at schools around the county. It would be performed by drama students and written and produced by the University, with funding from the LSCB. The brief for the play was to feature real stories of child sexual exploitation from around Lincolnshire.

A new Education Sub Group of the Board had been formed whose aim was to better engage with the education sector to build their skills and knowledge, share resources and ensure the key messages of safeguarding practice reached those who spent a lot of time with children in Lincolnshire.

Some of the new policies currently being developed were the Consent and Competency Guidance which allowed for children to visit a GP without their parents' consent and included appointments to secure birth control. Criminalisation of Children in Care was another new policy which promoted a sensible response to bad behaviour from looked after children in care homes. Previously the police were called to all situations, regardless of triviality, but this policy would assist staff to deal with offences themselves.

With regards to the membership of the Sub-Group, officers were in the process of identifying new added members to fill the vacancies. Contact had been made with the Police and Health who were both interested in having representation on the Sub Group and were looking into finding possible representatives. A new district councillor representative had been appointed, which was Cllr Mike Exton from South

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Kesteven District Council. The Parent Governor Representatives had also been approached to see if one of them was able to fill the Parent Governor vacancy.

The next meeting of the Sub Group would be held on 28 September 2016 and the Sub Group would receive updates on the work of the Board and its Sub Groups, Serious Case Reviews, and a report on the Identification and Prevention of Child Sexual Exploitation.

Members expressed disappointment that the Sub Group was not quorate on this occasion as it was due to consider a Serious Case Review. It was clarified that, following legal advice, substitute members were permitted on the Sub Group, but it was still required to be politically balanced.

**RESOLVED**

That the update be noted.

**29 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

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.

Members were reminded that there was to be a budget workshop held on 25 November 2016 from 2.00 – 4.00pm.

An issue was raised by one of the members in relation to a government consultation on a review of the five mandated reviews by Health Visitors for babies. Members were advised that a report on health visiting would be presented to the Committee at its October meeting.

**RESOLVED**

That the content of the work programme be agreed.

The meeting closed at 1.05 pm