



**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE  
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
21 JULY 2017**

**PRESENT: COUNCILLOR R L FOULKES (CHAIRMAN)**

Councillors R J Kendrick (Vice-Chairman), Mrs W Bowkett, S R Dodds, C Matthews, Mrs C L Perraton-Williams, L Wootten and R Wootten.

**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), Tracy Johnson (Senior Scrutiny Officer) and Mary Meredith (Head of Children's Service Manager, Inclusion).

**8 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / REPLACEMENT MEMBERS**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M D Boles, M T Fido, and A P Maughan, Reverend Sue Evans (Church Representative), and Mrs P J Barnett and Dr E van der Zee (Parent Governor Representatives).

**9 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

Mr S Rudman advised the Committee that he was the grandparent of an adopted child in Lincolnshire, and had taken part in the adoption process.

**10 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE  
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 9 JUNE 2017**

**RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee held on 9 June 2017, be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

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

The Chairman advised that Mr Paul Thompson, the former Church of England representative, had resigned from the Committee and would be replaced by Reverend Sue Evans, who was a member of the Diocesan Board of Education. It was hoped that Reverend Sue Evans would be attending the September meeting.

The Executive Councillor for Adult Care, Health and Children's Services advised that an additional £1.3 billion had been allocated to schools nationally. However, at the moment there was no detail as to how this would be distributed. Some concern was raised as to whether Lincolnshire would get the same deal as others; as it was still not certain if the formula would be altered for rural counties. It was highlighted that more lobbying would be done, as the final details of the funding formula had still not been finalised, and it was important that Lincolnshire schools received fair funding.

## 12 INCLUSIVE LINCOLNSHIRE STRATEGY - SIX MONTHLY UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report from Mary Meredith, Children's Service Manager – Inclusion, which provided the Committee with a progress report on the Inclusive Lincolnshire Strategy.

It was reported that 'The Inclusive Lincolnshire Strategy' had been introduced to address the problem of a rising and unsustainable rate of permanent exclusions from Lincolnshire schools. Lincolnshire had consistently been the highest excluder of primary aged children nationally and nearly the highest for secondary as detailed to the Committee in previous reports.

The Committee noted that the strategy introduced the notion of a 'Ladder of Intervention'; this had been launched in January 2015/16. The Committee noted further that in September 2016/17 a step within the Ladder, specialist behaviour support for pupils at risk had gone live through the launch of the Behaviour Outreach Support Service (BOSS). Now, at the end of the full academic year it was possible to evaluate the impact of the Ladder.

A progress update relating to the reduction of the number of permanent exclusions up to term five was shown on page 14 of the report. The Committee was advised that the total provisional exclusion figures up to and including term six were:-

- 2014/15 – 210;
- 2015/16 – 155; and
- 2016/17 – 145

It was highlighted that primary exclusions had been a success story, as there had been a 50% reduction; 24 this year compared to 49 in the previous year. Secondary exclusions however, had not been so successful. There had been a reduction in the year after the strategy had been launched, but the figures this year were 118, compared to 103 in the previous year. The Committee noted that feedback received had been encouraging; however, a key priority for 2017/18 was to build on this position, by targeting support and challenge to the small number of vulnerable

secondary schools (five in total) that accounted for the disproportionate number of secondary exclusions.

The report provided written positive experiences of the BOSS service from children and young people, it was noted that comments received would help to shape the service going forward. It was highlighted that young inspectors were currently working with pupils open to the service, gathering their views and opinions. It was noted that this would provide further independent scrutiny of the service.

It was noted that a key strength of BOSS was its clarity for anyone using the document. It was noted further that the successful multi-agency working ensured that the service delivered a holistic approach. An example of the 'Ladder' approach was detailed on page 17 of the report.

It was highlighted that within BOSS there was a universal offer as well as targeted support for pupils 'at risk', as the whole ethos was to increase schools' capacity to meet their diverse range of need.

The Committee noted the Pupil Reintegration Team (PRT) would be introducing an evaluation tool with effect from September 2017, to capture the view of stakeholders, including pupils about their experiences and level of intervention.

In conclusion, the Committee noted that there had been significant progress made in relation to all of the key indicators identified within the Strategy. It was further noted that the priority for 2017/18 would be for work to be carried out with the sector to ensure that secondary exclusions reduced further.

During discussion, the Committee raised the following points:-

- One member enquired as to what could be done to challenge schools who were high excluders. Officers explained that culture was not something that could be changed overnight, and that a change in a Head teacher position could sometimes be a catalyst for exclusions. The Committee noted that Head teachers were in a challenging position, as their success was dependent on results which linked to OFSTED judgement. It was highlighted that the Council inspection framework could be seen to drive an exclusive culture. It was important however, that OFSTED inspections framework brought attention to behaviour and exclusions. It was highlighted further that there was opportunity to financially impact upon schools that excluded; and some members felt that this approach should be revisited. Officers confirmed that any action needed to have status legally;
- The need to reinforce more nurturing in schools to stop behavioural response;
- The role of the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) in the process. Officers advised that two schools had been referred to the Regional Schools Commissioner and OFSTED, and to date little response had been received, although the improved relationship with RSC was noted;
- That schools governors should be made aware of the consequences of excluding;

- One member highlighted that in some instances where a pupil had been permanently excluded, and alternative arrangements had been put in place the pupil had gone on to do very well. It was highlighted that the problem of the system was that the pupil had to be permanently excluded to access the more vocational courses; and this was something that was being addressed. Officers advised that the 2018 performance table was changing; and technical awards would now gain points for schools.
- Clarification was given that a pupil did not need to be permanently excluded to get on to the Ladder. It was reported that 'Building a Future' and 'First Steps' would be on offer for the coming year; and that this was a partnership arrangement between the Council and Wellspring Academy Trust. A suggestion was made for members of the Committee to visit one of the vocational sites (First Steps at Boston, Bridge House at Gainsborough; and Build a Future at West Ashby) to see the work of vocational learning; and the impact it was having on the young people;
- A question was asked as to what best practice was elsewhere regarding exclusions. Officers explained that the availability of an alternative provision might actually stimulate schools to spot purchase. However, alternative provision would need to have stability of funding. It was noted that at the moment this could not be achieved, but would be available from September 2017. Officers also confirmed colleges did not have a 14 - 16 offer. It was also highlighted that best practice, and the definition of exclusion differed; statistical information provided one opinion, but practice suggested otherwise. Officers confirmed that Lincolnshire was very transparent in its actions for dealing with exclusions;
- The Committee noted that schools had benefitted from using the BOSS service. It was however noted that a Pastoral Support Plan challenged schools to have a plan in place in circumstances when a child was at risk of exclusion;
- It was highlighted that in the case of Looked After Children (LAC) being excluded, the school would have to notify the Executive Director of Children's Services first. Officers confirmed that no LAC had been permanently excluded in Lincolnshire recently; and
- One member enquired as to whether the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) were involved in the early intervention process. Confirmation was given that if CAMHS were needed to be involved, they would be part of the around the table discussion, or if not the pupil would be involved through BOSS. Officers advised that there were a significant number of children with emotionally challenging issues, and to help deal with these issues a new Emotional Wellbeing Service had been established, which was being part funded by the Council, and was due to commence in October 2017.

**RESOLVED**

1. That assurance be received concerning the progress made against the Inclusive Lincolnshire Strategy.

2. That an update on the progress of the Inclusive Lincolnshire Strategy be received by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee in six months' time.

### 13 CORPORATE PARENTING SUB GROUP UPDATE

The Committee received a short update from the Councillor David Brailsford, Chairman of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Group, which advised the Committee of the legal duty of the authority to act as a 'good and effective' corporate parent to children and young people in its care. The Committee noted that corporate parenting was the responsibility of all members of the Council and its partner agencies.

The Committee was advised further that the Sub-Group met in private on a quarterly basis and received a range of reports in relation to fostering and adoption, the Leaving Care Service (provided by Barnardo's), residential homes, the Virtual School and Visiting Members; and the activities of the V4C (the Children in Care Council), who had a representative on the Sub-Group.

The Corporate Parenting Sub-Group also attended events involving Looked After Children, Care Leavers and foster carers. Members also attended meetings of the V4C, Big Conversations events and the FAB Awards.

The Committee was advised that quite a lot of members had recently attended the last FAB Awards, which had been held on 1 July 2017, at which the achievements of Looked After Children and Care Leavers had been celebrated. The awards presented were for Personal Endeavour, Educational Endeavour, Sport, Positive Activities, Art and Music, as well as awards for Supportive Superstars and Long Service Awards for Foster Carers. The Committee noted that the next Big Conversation would be taking place on 25 October 2017; and that all Councillors would shortly be receiving an invitation to attend.

A copy of the minutes from the previous Corporate Parenting Panel held on 16 March 2017 was attached to the report presented for the Committee's information. It was reported that the Sub-Group had subsequently met on 6 July 2017; and that Councillor D Brailsford had been elected Chairman and Councillor Mrs C L Perraton-Williams had been elected as the Vice-Chairman of the Sub-Group. The draft minutes from the afore mentioned meeting would be presented to the next meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee meeting due to be held on 21 September 2017.

During a short discussion, the Committee made comments relating to Health Assessments; and that all Councillors should be encouraged to get involved in the Corporate Parent role.

#### RESOLVED

That the work of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Group be supported and that the minutes from the Corporate Parenting Panel held on 16 March 2017 be received.

**14 LINCOLNSHIRE SAFEGUARDING BOARDS SCRUTINY SUB-GROUP - UPDATE**

The Committee received an update for Councillor S R Dodds (Former Chairman of the Sub-Group), which provided an update on the role of the Sub-Group. Appendix A to the report presented also provided the Committee with a copy of the draft minutes from the last meeting of the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Boards Sub-Group meeting held on 28 March 2017 for its consideration.

The Committee was advised that safeguarding adults and children were key activities for the County Council.

The Lincolnshire Safeguarding Boards Sub-Group had been established to scrutinise the activities of the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board and the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Adults Board. The Committee noted that the Scrutiny Sub-Group met in private on a quarterly basis. The essential role of the Scrutiny Sub-Group was to ensure that the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board and the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Adults Board were both operating effectively.

It was highlighted to the Committee that the meeting due to be held on 5 July 2017 had had to be cancelled. As a result of this the new Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Scrutiny Sub-Group had not yet been appointed, and that this would now take place at the next scheduled meeting, due to be held on 26 September 2017.

**RESOLVED**

That the draft minutes of the meeting of the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Boards Scrutiny Sub-Group, held on 28 March 2017, be received.

**15 PERFORMANCE - QUARTER 4 2016/17**

Consideration was given to a report from Debbie Barnes, Executive Director of Children's Services, which provided the Committee with key performance information for Quarter 4 2016/17, relevant to the work of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.

Attached to the report were the following Appendices:-

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

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

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**21 JULY 2017**

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

- Page 39 - Juvenile first time offenders – It was noted that the figure for Lincolnshire was 266 actual young people for the period October 2015 – September 2016, this figure had been higher than the target figure of 203, but was a reduction on previous numbers. The Committee was advised that the Council had launched a new diversionary project in Lincolnshire in conjunction with Lincolnshire Police. Through joint co-operation between both services, young people who offended for the first time and accepted that they had committed the offence, would be diverted through local panels that would try to prevent young people from getting a criminal record. It was hoped that the restorative justice process would prevent young people obtaining a criminal record that would affect their future, which in turn would help reduce the number of first time entrants and reduce re-offending as the impact of the young person engaging in restorative work instead of just accepting a caution was positive;
- Page 49 – Looked After Children – It was reported that there were 684 children looked after in Lincolnshire at the end of March 2017, which had been an increase on the previous quarter. It was highlighted that more work needed to be done to understand the cause of the increase. It was highlighted further that the rate per 10,000 was still lower than similar authorities, and the England average;
- Page 51 – Children who are subject to a child protection plan – It was reported that Quarter 4 had seen an increase in the number of children subject to a child protection plan. It was noted that the target had remained the same as the previous year, which reflected the work around Early Help, which was the intervention and support put in place to help children and their families. The increase was considered to reflect seasonal variations;
- Page 60 – Achievement gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers at Key Stage 4 - It was highlighted that although the target had not been achieved, it was performing better than this time last year, which had reduced the gap between the Council's disadvantaged pupils and their peers at Key Stage 4. The Committee was advised that work was being done with academies to share best practice. It was noted that the Council only had an influencing role in respect of this matter;
- Page 62 – Pupils aged 16 – 18 participating in learning – The Committee noted that difficulties had been experienced in obtaining data from independent learning providers. It was noted further that previously this information would have been supplied by the careers service, but as this service has been de-commissioned there was no remedial action that could be taken. Officers advised that the service at present had no capacity to improve the indicator; and
- Page 64 – Participating in learning age 16 – The Committee was advised that the indicator measured young people who went into full time education and training, Apprenticeships, Employment combined with training. As with the previous indicator, the service had experienced issues obtaining data as a result of the careers service being de-commissioned.

During discussion, the Committee raised the following issues:-

- Page 49 - Factors that have influenced the rise in number of Looked After Children. Officers advised that Case Law factors, changing demographics of the County, changing family dynamics, had had an influence on the numbers, particularly with the issue of homelessness for 2016/17. For example, once a local authority had had an input in to a case i.e., placed with a relative, this must now be regulated under the law which meant that the relative was treated as a foster carer. It was highlighted that this had had a huge impact on budgets;
- Page 60 – Ways to incentivise the sector led approach to children's social care. Officers advised that this was being looked at as Lincolnshire was a Partners in Practice Authority. As part of this, a Care2learn project was being implemented. Once the pilot had concluded, it would be evaluated, and steps would be taken to look at scaling the programme up for looked after children;
- A question was asked as to why the Department for Education data was being used for this indicator, instead of live data (exclusions data). The Executive Director of Children's Services agreed to look into this matter; and
- Page 39 - A question was asked as to whether the juvenile offenders were known to the Council. Officers confirmed that a lot were known to the local authority; it was hoped that the Restorative Panel would prevent young offenders obtaining a criminal record and would help break the pattern of re-offending, with the help of Team Around the Child and Early Help. The Committee was advised that if the victim was in agreement then a restorative face to face meeting in some circumstances could be found to be beneficial. Officers advised that the results of the pilot would be reported back to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee. One member highlighted the need for preventative work as well as restorative work. A further concern was raised with regard to the seriousness of the crime. Officers reassured the Committee that the Police were instrumental in the process of deciding who should be referred to the Panel.

During consideration of Appendix B – Customer Satisfaction Information, a concern was raised pertaining to the number of complaints being referred to the Ombudsman during Quarter 2 of 16/17; and if in the future any cases had been found to be ruled against the authority, that the Scrutiny Committee should have the opportunity to consider these cases. Officers advised that the peak in Quarter 2 was as a result of Home to School Transport challenges, all of which had been mainly dismissed by the Ombudsman.

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

**RESOLVED**

That in accordance with Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for consideration of Appendix D to the report on the grounds that if they were present there could

be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.

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

RESOLVED

That the Performance for Quarter 4 2016/17 be received by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee; and that officers note the comments raised by the Committee.

16 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given 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.

A copy of the Forward Plan of Decisions relating to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee was attached at Appendix B for the Committee to consider.

The Senior Scrutiny Officer advised that there was no amendment to the work programme presented.

RESOLVED

That the work programme as detailed in Appendix A to the report presented be received, subject to a progress report on the Inclusive Lincolnshire Strategy being received by the Committee in six months' time.

The meeting closed at 11.55 am

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