



**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
26 JULY 2013**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR J D HOUGH (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors B Adams (Vice-Chairman), W J Aron, J P Churchill, S R Dodds, A G Hagues, J R Hicks, R J Hunter-Clarke, B W Keimach, P J O'Connor, C R Oxby, Mrs S Ransome, Mrs N J Smith, S M Tweedale, L Wootten and R Wootten

Added Members: Mrs E Olivier-Townrow, Mr S C Rudman, Mr P Thompson, Mrs G Wright and Dr E van der Zee

Replacement Members: Councillor T M Trollope-Bellew

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

Officers in attendance:-

Cornelia Andrecut (Head of Service Locality), Michelle Andrews (Interim Head of Property and Technology Management), Debbie Barnes (Executive Director Children's Services), Andy Breckon, (Interim Director of CfBT Education Services), Andrea Brown (Democratic Services Manager), Stuart Carlton (Assistant Director Children's Services), Matt Clayton (School Organisation Planning Manager), Maggie Freeman (Head of Service 14-19), Tracy Johnson (Scrutiny Officer), Phil Taylor (Lincolnshire Youth Housing Coordinator) and Meredith Teasdale (Assistant Director Children's Services)

13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies were received from Councillors Mrs C A Talbot and Mrs S M Wray.

Mr Miller (Added Member) also submitted apologies for absence.

Councillor T M Trollope-Bellew attending as a Replacement Member in place of Councillor Mrs C A Talbot.

14 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTEREST

In respect of Agenda Item 8 – Related Proposals to Amend the Age Range and Expand the Capacity at Grantham The Isaac Newton Primary School (Final Decision), Councillor B Adams advised the Committee that he was a Trustee and Governor of another school in Grantham which had links to The Isaac Newton Primary School. Councillor Adams confirmed that this was for information only.

15 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 14 JUNE 2013

Councillor L Wootten asked the Committee to note that the reason herself and Councillor R Wootten left the last meeting, as shown on page 6 of the minutes, was to fulfil a civic engagement on behalf of Lincolnshire County Council.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee, held on 14 June 2013 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

16 CHILDREN'S CENTRES PROGRESS AND SUCCESSES

Cornelia Andrecut, Head of Service Locality, introduced the report which provided an update in relation to Lincolnshire Children's Centres, demonstrating outcomes for Lincolnshire families and identifying areas requiring development.

During discussion, the following points were noted:-

- Some concern was noted in relation to the presentation of the report and the content which did not explain clearly what the statutory duties were in relation to the Children's Centres thereby making it difficult for Members to successfully compare the requirements against performance. It was agreed that the context of the report was written in such a way that those working in that area would easily understand the content but not for those who don't.
- It was noted that the report presented was a progress report from a monitoring report from previous scrutiny arrangements which is why the report had been presented in that format. This was accepted by the Committee who requested that future reports be more understandable.
- Despite the high priority to encourage and support new mothers in breast feeding, it was hoped that as much support was being provided to mothers who were physically unable to breastfeed. It was confirmed that all mothers were supported within the Children's Centres.
- There remained a small percentage of children who had not accessed early years sessions. Following a scrutiny review into "Narrowing the Gap" it had been suggested to offer 2-year olds access to 15 hours of early years education per week. The target was to provide 40% of economically disadvantaged 2 year olds with 15 hours of early education by September 2014 and LCC were scheduled to meet that target.
- Ethnic minorities remained a hard to reach group but specific activities were in place to try and increase attendance from those groups. Children's Centres also have parent engagement at management board to ensure the Centres are fully aware of the issues and challenges faced by certain communities.
- Marketing strategies were being developed to focus on those who weren't currently registered and how to encourage them to attend. More outreach work was being undertaken, although obstacles have been faced in information sharing between services. That situation had been rectified and

the information was now available so the marketing was being redeveloped to target these families. It was acknowledged that marketing of these services needed to move in line with modern society and therefore social networking, apps, etc, were being considered.

- The differing levels of need across the county were acknowledged and it was agreed that Children's Centres needed to have systems in place to respond to changing need.
- Support for fathers was also available and, where need had been identified, fathers groups had been developed and were running successfully. There was an issue with transition to new contracts but this was resolving.
- Members were encouraged to visit Children's Centres and were advised that CRB/DBS checks would not be necessary if accompanied by a member of staff.

RESOLVED

1. That the report be noted;
2. That further work around Children's Centres be undertaken and Members offered an opportunity to visit.

17 YOUTH HOUSING STRATEGY

Phil Taylor, Lincolnshire Youth Housing Coordinator, introduced the report which provided the Committee with the strategic vision for the delivery of youth housing services in Lincolnshire over the next five years.

During discussion the following points were noted:-

- The report and ongoing work was a joint effort and opportunity between the County Council and all District Councils.
- It was suggested that the data recording needed to be improved so that the figures of young people who remain in accommodation once housed could be captured. It was acknowledged that it may be difficult to accurately reflect this data as there is occasionally a high degree of movement of young people due to their chaotic lifestyles. The strategy was looking at this issue overall.
- Parental eviction was explained further as it covers a wide spectrum of issues, from persistent disobedience/disrespect to more serious behavioural issues. The workstreams aimed to return a child home, unless it was unsafe for them to do so, but with mediation and support. However, if return home with support was not possible, the pathway would propose mediation, look to place in supported lodgings (with another family) and finally provide supported accommodation with wraparound support. Ideally, the best outcome would be to get them back into a family situation or independent tenancy wherever possible and safe to do so.

Councillor Mrs P A Bradwell joined the meeting at 11.10am.

- The procurement plan was currently being developed in order to improve the pathway.

- Some districts were reporting figures once but others were reporting repeat visits for the same issue which caused the figures to be inconsistent.
- Although a breakdown by district was provided, in relation to parental evictions, it was asked if the information was further broken down by gender. Officers agreed to try and gather this information.
- The report noted what actions would be completed by December 2013 and Members felt that this may be slightly ambitious. Officers were asked to reconsider these deadlines.

RESOLVED

1. That the report be noted;
2. That figures in relation to parental eviction, broken down into districts and gender, be provided to Members after the meeting.

18 PROPOSAL TO REVOKE THE DECISION TAKEN IN MAY 2012 TO EXPAND SPALDING PRIMARY SCHOOL

Meredith Teasdale, Assistant Director for Children's Services, introduced the report initially before handing over to Michelle Andrews, Interim Head of Property and Technology Management. The report invited the Committee to consider the proposal to revoke the decision taken previously to expand Spalding Primary School.

During discussion the following points were noted:-

- Planning permission for the original scheme had been refused due to issues with access to the school, the position in which the buildings were going to be situated and potential congestion in nearby streets. In light of planning refusal, the whole process was relooked at and a new scheme developed.
- It was acknowledged that the school wanted to prioritise the needs of their own school so they were supported when they decided to withdraw from running the school as a split site school.
- An issue was raised regarding bulge year groups and officers confirmed that they were having regular meetings with the school to consider how to provide the interim support. The governors and leadership team of the school were working with the Local Authority and a seven year plan was being developed to support them through this issue and the improvement works.
- Members requested that the Executive Councillor ensured that this seven year plan was in place with the school to support the two bulge years of additional pupils.

RESOLVED

1. That the Committee support the recommendation to the Executive Councillor for Adult Care, Health Services and Children's Services as set out in Appendix 1 of agenda item 6.

2. That the comments of the Committee in relation to a seven year plan be relayed to the Executive Councillor for Adult Care, Health Services and Children's Services for their consideration.

Councillor Mrs P A Bradwell left the meeting at 11.40am and did not return.

19 PROPOSAL FOR A NEW PRIMARY ACADEMY IN SPALDING
 (SUBMISSION TO SECRETARY OF STATE OF RESULTS AND
 EVALUATION OF PROCESS TO IDENTIFY AN OPERATOR)

Michelle Andrew, Interim Head of Property and Technology Management, introduced the report which invited the Committee to consider a report on the proposal for a new primary Academy in Spalding.

During discussion the following points were noted:-

- Four strong providers had submitted applications, each of which were measured and scored against specific criteria. Although all four were strong candidates, two were being put forward as the preferred operator did not yet have agreement from the DfE to be an approved sponsor. The presentation and interview demonstrated that the relationship between the executive Headteacher and the teams within two of the schools proved to be excellent and had taken another school from 'requiring improvements' through to 'outstanding' in a relatively short period of time.
- The timeline for approval was after the GCSE results when the DfE would decide if the schools could be a DfE 'approved sponsor' or not. The Local Authority have to consider these risks when moving through processes for new schools as to disregard these bidders for that reason alone would restrict the Local Authority's choice.
- The panel who interviewed the candidates had felt it important to find out what their understanding was of the local area. As a panellist, Mrs Olivier-Townrow confirmed that they had done that during interview.
- The Committee were content with the proposals and confirmed that they had no comments for consideration by the Executive Councillor.

RESOLVED

1. That the Committee support the recommendation to the Executive Councillor for Adult Care, Health Services and Children's Services as set out in Appendix 1 of agenda item 7.

20 RELATED PROPOSALS TO AMEND THE AGE RANGE AND EXPAND
 THE CAPACITY AT GRANTHAM THE ISAAC NEWTON PRIMARY
 SCHOOL (FINAL DECISION)

Michelle Andrews, Interim Head of Property and Technology Management, introduced the report which invited the Committee to consider related proposals to

amend the age range and expand the capacity at Grantham The Isaac Newton Primary School.

The proposal looked to confirm the age range that the school had been temporarily operating under for the last 18 months. From September 2013, the school wanted to adopt the standard age range of 4-11. The Local Authority and school also wanted to increase the number of 4-11 pupils on site from 45 to 60.

During consideration, the following points were noted:-

- Schools were able to try different ways of operating for a short period of time before deciding if it would be suitable for their particular school, as in this case. The DfE allows schools the opportunity to do this.
- Despite the loss of nursery provision at this particular school, it was confirmed that work was ongoing with the sufficiency team within 'Birth to Five' to ensure sufficient nursery provision remained in the area. Some providers have struggled to fill places due to over provision and so it was felt that this would assist other nursery providers as a result.
- Although not in his particular ward, Councillor R Wooten had previously worked with the Headteacher since he took up post and asked that it be formally noted that he has proved an excellent asset to the school and credit should be given to him.
- The project was in the design stage at present and it was expected to be submitted to planning later in the year. It was stressed that the majority of work required at the school was internal remodelling so this was very different to the other proposals put forward.
- Although the consultation had gone out to over 100 people including all parents of children in the school, only five responses had been received.
- The Committee were content with the proposals and confirmed that they had no comments for consideration by the Executive Councillor.

RESOLVED

1. That the Committee support the recommendation to the Executive Councillor for Adult Care, Health Services and Children's Services as set out in Appendix 1 of agenda item 8.

21 IMPROVING ACCESS TO POST-16 LEARNING PROVISION IN LINCOLNSHIRE ACTION PLAN (SECOND MONITORING UPDATE)

Andy Breckon, Interim Director of CfBT Education Services, introduced the report before handing over to Maggie Freeman, Head of Service 14-19, which invited the Committee to consider the actions/progress of the action plan resulting from the Access to Post 16 Learning Provision review undertaken in 2011.

Councillor S R Dodds left the meeting at 12.15pm and did not return.

During discussion the following points were noted:-

- Schools were encouraged to purchase independent careers advice by someone external to the school and the Local Authority would encourage them to do so.
- An ongoing piece of work was being undertaken to further build relationships with schools in regard to careers advice. Schools were under great pressure due to their sixth form numbers and part of the challenge was to work with them to encourage them to buy-in careers advice.
- The Committee took the opportunity to formally thank all those involved in this process as the actions taken had resulted in tremendous progress over the last 18 months.
- Concern was noted in relation to the apprenticeship system and the number of available apprenticeships against the number of applications. It was acknowledged that this was a challenging area and work continued with employers to encourage them to offer more places. Strategic analysis was also being undertaken with a view to providing a report in September 2013.

Councillor Mrs J P Churchill and Mr S C Rudman left the meeting at this point and did not return.

- Members highlighted concerns about school transport and requested that a report be brought to a future meeting outlining the current policy.

RESOLVED

1. That the report be noted;
2. That a report on the current school transport policy be added to the Work Programme for a future meeting.

22 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2013/14

Tracy Johnson, Scrutiny Officer, presented the Committee's work programme for 2013/14 and advised that this included, at Appendix A, the priorities raised by Members at the first meeting.

At the request of the Executive Councillor, Councillor Mrs P A Bradwell, the Committee were invited to put two people forward to participate in a review regarding Tobacco Control as part of a cross-committee working group. The review was expected to involve two to three meetings from September onwards.

Councillors B Adams and J R Hicks volunteered to be the representatives of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.

The Executive Councillor had also suggested a Task & Finish Group to look at frontline social workers and the robustness of safeguarding practices. This information was for the Committee's information only at this stage and would be discussed further prior to the next meeting as to the best way forward.

Further to discussions, the following items were agreed to be added to the work programme:-

- Youth Housing Strategy
- School Transport Policy – Post-16 Learning Provision

RESOLVED

That the contents of the work programme be noted and the additional items, as agreed at this meeting, be added.

The Chairman announced that this was the last meeting for Meredith Teasdale, Assistant Director of Children's Services. He thanked her for her continued support to the Committee and wished her well in her new role with Cambridgeshire County Council.

The meeting closed at 12.45 pm