



**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
17 JANUARY 2020**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR R J KENDRICK (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors A P Maughan (Vice-Chairman), M D Boles, Mrs W Bowkett, C Matthews, S R Parkin, M A Whittington, L Wootten and R Wootten

Added Members

Church Representatives: Reverend P A Johnson

Councillor Mrs P A Bradwell OBE (Executive Councillor: Adult Care, Health and Children's Services) was also in attendance.

Also in attendance:-

Jill Chandar-Nair (Inclusion and Attendance Manager), Matthew Clayton (Admissions and Education Provision Manager), Cheryl Evans (Democratic Services Officer), Ann Hoffmann (Executive Headteacher, St Francis and St Christopher's School), Tracy Johnson (Senior Scrutiny Officer), Kevin Kendall (Assistant Director - Corporate Property), Eileen McMorrow (Senior Project Officer Specialist Schools Project), Emily Nicholls (School Admissions Manager), Mark Popplewell (Head of Finance (Children's Services)), Heather Sandy (Interim Director - Education) and Justin Ward (Programme Manager - Corporate Property).

43 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Brailsford (Executive Support Councillor for Children's Services) and R L Foulkes and Added Members: Mrs P J Barnett, Miss A E I Sayer and Mr S C Rudman.

44 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTEREST

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

**45 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 22 NOVEMBER 2019**

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 22 November 2019 be agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

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

The Chairman announced that the term of office for Mrs Patricia Barnett, one of the two parent governor representatives on the Committee, was due to expire on 4 March 2020, prior to the Committee's next scheduled meeting. Unfortunately, Mrs Barnett had been unwell and had not attended meetings for a while. The Chairman stated that he would be writing on behalf of the Committee to Mrs Barnett thanking her for her service on the Committee over the past four years.

The Executive Councillor for Adult Care, Health and Children's Services stated that a consultation had begun on a proposed merger of New College Stamford and Peterborough Regional College. The Council would be responding with a view to stressing the need for a college presence in Stamford to continue. It was agreed that the Chairman of the Committee and the Executive Support Councillor for Children's Services would work with the Assistant Director for Growth on this matter. The Committee would receive a briefing paper on the current further education provision in Lincolnshire, including transport arrangements.

47 COUNCIL BUDGET 2020/21

The Committee considered a report, which set out the budget proposals for 2020-21 for children's services, which were organised into four areas: children's commissioning and health; children's early help services; children's safeguarding; and education and special educational needs and disability services. For each of these four areas, savings and cost pressures were detailed.

The report also set out details of the schools budget, funded by the dedicated schools grant. Unlike many local authorities, which were in deficit for their designated schools grant, Lincolnshire was in surplus, but this needed to be managed in the future.

The report provided details of the Council's ten year capital programme, which for children's services, included an allocation of basic provision school needs grant; and allocation for two small children's homes.

The following points were clarified by the Committee through questioning:

- There would be no impact on service delivery from the changes to the Children's Services budget.
- The approach across the Council this year was to identify any savings by removing flexibilities from budgets, that could be given up to help with balancing the Council's budget to avoid making cuts to services and staffing.
- The Home to School/College Transport budget would be directly impacted by any major increases in fuel prices. Assurance could not be provided that there would be no cost pressure arising from fuel price rises. The budget had been reviewed and cost increases were considered and built within the 2020-21 requirements. This budget was monitored on a monthly basis, as it was

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volatile and demand-led. If a cost pressure arose, it would be reported through the budget monitoring process, and managed corporately.

- The budget for the Building Communities of Specialist Provision Strategy consisted mainly of government grant funding. The government's Special Provision Fund allocations to transform SEND capital infrastructure was relatively small compared to what was actually required. The finances of this programme of works (£50.637m) were regularly reviewed as surveys and requirements of the schemes' progress, including the completion of capital appraisals for Executive approval and exploring alternative funding streams that come available. It was agreed that a working group be established to consider the programme of capital scheme appraisals and undertake visits to some of the special schools to gain an understanding of the current situation and what was planned for them in the capital scheme appraisals.
- All schools would be receiving an increase in per pupil funding under the schools national funding formula for 2020/21. There was a government review on how to make small schools more sustainable which may lead to greater certainty for small schools. It was suggested that the Committee considers the government review of school funding for small schools once it had been published.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee's support for the children's services budget proposals for 2020-21 be recorded.
- (2) That the comments of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on the children's services budget proposals for 2020-21 be forwarded to the Executive.
- (3) That a working group be established to consider the programme of capital scheme appraisals for special schools, comprising Councillors Mrs W Bowkett, C Matthews, S R Parkin, L Wootten, R Wootten and any other nominations from the Committee's membership received by the Senior Scrutiny Officer.

48 SCHOOLS FUNDING UPDATE 2020/21 - MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS

A report by the Head of Finance – Children's Services set out the Council's proposal to continue following the national funding formula in 2020-21, by adopting a no gains ceiling cap; new mobility formula factor; positive minimum funding guarantee ranging between +0.5% and +1.84% (subject to affordability); new PFI formula factor; and rates adjustment in-year for 2020-21 only. The Council's current proposals were detailed at Appendix A to the Executive Councillor report.

The vast majority of schools who had responded to the consultation had supported the Council's proposals to continue replicating the government's national funding formula for 2020-21, and for schools to attract at least their full allocations under the national funding formula.

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The following points were confirmed following questions from the Committee:

- With the removal of the 'Gains Ceiling Cap' and the application of the positive minimum funding guarantee, all schools would see increases in pupil-based funding, but some schools significantly more so. This was due to historical funding and schools starting from different baselines, and gains ceiling caps applied in prior years due to government affordability.
- The revisions to the schools national funding formula in 2020-21 would allow for a greater consistency in funding between academies and maintained schools since all schools would be funded on at least the national funding formula, resulting in a fairer system of school funding.
- Rurality was still an issue that was not factored into the national funding formula, despite the additional costs associated with it. The government had however committed to consider how the national funding formula better supports small rural schools from 2021-22 onwards.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee's support for the recommendation to the Executive Councillor for Adult Care, Health and Children's Services, as detailed in the report, be recorded.
- (2) That the comments of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, as set out above, be submitted to the Executive Councillor for Adult Care, Health and Children's Services.

49 PROPOSAL TO EXPAND CAPACITY AT THE LINCOLN ST CHRISTOPHER'S SCHOOL FROM 200 TO 333 (FINAL DECISION)

A report by the Admissions and Education Provision Manager presented a proposal to expand the capacity at the Lincoln St Christopher's School from 200 to 333 places over two sites with provision for both primary and secondary age children.

Lincolnshire County Council had a statutory duty to ensure sufficient school places for all pupils at statutory school age, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

A four-week period of consultation had taken place between 5 September and 3 October 2019, following which a decision had been taken on 22 October 2019 to publish a statutory notice of a four-week representation period up to 5 December 2019 for any written objections or comments.

The Committee heard from Ann Hoffmann, Executive Headteacher for St Francis and St Christopher's School, who highlighted the support for the proposals from staff and parents. The Executive Headteacher also described the current constraining environment of the existing site. It was suggested that the working group, as established under Minute 47, undertake a visit to the current St Christopher's School site.

The following points were confirmed by the Committee's consideration:

- The Committee expressed its enthusiasm over the proposals for the two sites, as outlined in the report.
- With regards to the carbon impact of the proposal, it was anticipated that staff would not be moving between the two sites a great deal, as staff tended to focus on either primary or secondary level. There should be reduced traffic at the current St Christopher's School site as in the future the traffic would be split between the two sites, and there would be improved parking and drop off/pick up places available as well. In addition, the new access to the St Christopher's School site would be away from the main road. Pupils would also have reduced travelling times to school as a result of more local places being made available. The carbon impact could be considered as part of the School's travel plan.
- Disruption to the pupils from the building works would be kept to a minimum as the primary site would be completed first allowing the primary pupils to move across when complete, which would then create additional capacity at the secondary site to minimise disruption to the secondary pupils. Work was being undertaken to minimise the impact on the children and to involve them where appropriate.
- A capital appraisal for the scheme would be prepared once the expansion had been agreed. An explanatory note on the decision-making process for decisions on capital appraisals would be provided to the Committee.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee's support for the recommendations to the Executive, as detailed in the report, be recorded.
- (2) That the comments of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, as set out above, be submitted to the Executive.

(NOTE: At this stage in proceedings, the Committee adjourned from 12 noon – 12.05pm. Councillor M D Boles left the meeting and did not return.)

50 BOSTON JOHN FIELDING SPECIAL SCHOOL CAPITAL APPRAISAL

Consideration was given to a report by the Assistant Director – Corporate Property on the capital appraisal for the Boston John Fielding Special School.

The Committee was advised that the Building Communities of Specialist Provision had been approved by the Executive on 6 November 2018. The Strategy had proposed the expansion and relocation of the Boston John Fielding School to provide sufficient and local specialist education to children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in the Boston area. The relocated and expanded school would be sited adjacent to St Nicholas Primary School on Kitwood Road in the Skirbeck area of Boston. The new school would provide a modern facility to meet all needs and have capacity for 140 pupils.

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The design for the new school had been granted planning permission on 4 November 2019 and it was proposed that construction would commence in February 2020.

The proposal was for the design and construction to be procured via the SCAPE National Framework with Wates Construction operating as the main contractor. This framework was fully compliant with all relevant procurement regulations.

During consideration of the report, the following points were noted:

- A major benefit of using the SCAPE National Framework over the usual tendering process was that it enabled earlier involvement of the contractor with the school. Each project was individually assessed on whether it would be subject to tender or would use the Framework, and in this case the Framework had been assessed as the better option, to allow early involvement due to the complexity of the project.
- The £13.2m cost was built up from individually tendered work packages by Wates Construction. Each package would receive three tenders which provided confidence that value for money for the scheme would be achieved.
- The design was efficient and future proof, and provided what the children and the school required.
- The new build was particularly complex as it involved a special school which required modifications such as for wheelchair access; an academy trust; and a complex build on a current school site which was on a flood plain. The budget included £1.6m for 'abnormal' items such as flood risk mitigation and a hydrotherapy pool.
- There was a £713,500 risk budget for the scheme which was already built into the £13.2m budget.
- This would be the only new build funded through the overall budget for the Building Communities of Specialist Provision Strategy.
- The scheme would not be carbon neutral due to the costs of constructing a carbon neutral building, but would aim to minimise the carbon footprint. The Council was working towards a science based approach to measuring the carbon impact of future projects.
- A breakdown of the full costs for the new build scheme was available. As this was not detailed within the report to the Leader of the Council it was suggested that this be presented to him, alongside the Committee's comments, prior to him taking the decision.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee's support for the recommendation to the Leader of the Council (Executive Councillor: Resources and Communications), as detailed in the report, be recorded.
- (2) That the comments of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, as set out above, be submitted to the Leader of the Council (Executive Councillor: Resources and Communications).

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- (3) That additional information and assurance, which was presented verbally at the Committee meeting, regarding the costs and value for money of the new build scheme be presented to the Leader of the Council (Executive Councillor: Resources and Communications) alongside the scrutiny comments, prior to him taking the decision.

51 SCHOOL ADMISSIONS POLICIES AND CO-ORDINATED SCHEMES FOR 2021 INTAKE

Consideration was given to a report by the School Admissions Manager, which set out the proposed school admission policies and co-ordinated schemes criteria for 2021 entry to school, to take effect from 1 September 2021 for in-year admissions.

The Committee was advised that the Council, under the School Admissions Code (2014), was required to formulate and publish a co-ordinated scheme in respect of admissions for all publicly funded schools within its area. This details how applications would be processed to provide clarity for parents, schools and other admission authorities.

The Council, as the Admission Authority for all community and voluntary controlled primary schools within Lincolnshire, and for Spalding High School (including the separate sixth form), was also required to determine the admission policies for these schools (including the separate sixth form admission arrangements at Spalding High School).

During consideration of the report, the following points were noted:

- The reduction in PAN from 50 to 40 for Gonerby Hill Foot School could be supported, as the majority of the housing expansion in Grantham was outside the Gonerby area and analysis had shown that there were sufficient school places across Grantham to cope with the additional housing.
- Contributions were requested as required from developers to expand schools for the additional demand from housing developments. The impact on secondary schools could be modelled 7 – 10 years in advance based on primary school numbers which allowed the Local Authority to plan appropriately. Assurances on developer contributions were a key issue in planning applications.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee's support for the recommendations to the Executive Councillor for Adult Care, Health and Children's Services, as detailed in the report, be recorded.
- (2) That the comments of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, as set out above, be submitted to the Executive Councillor for Adult Care, Health and Children's Services.

52 CHILDREN MISSING OUT ON EDUCATION ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19

A report by the Inclusion and Attendance Manager was considered, which presented the Children Missing Out on Education Annual Report 2018/19. The Annual Report was detailed at Appendix A to the report.

The Council had a duty under Section 436A of the Education Act 1996 to have processes in place to identify children who were not receiving a suitable full time education. The report provided an update on the processes in place to capture this information and explained any trends where possible.

The definition *Children missing out on education* was used in the report to encompass children who were out of any form of education, for example, not on a school roll and those not receiving the full time education that they were entitled to, either through irregular attendance at school or by not receiving a suitable education elsewhere.

The covering report highlighted a number of activities and trends for the academic year 2018-19, which included:

- The number of children being removed from school to be electively home educated had continued to grow but at a slower rate than the previous year.
- The process for reporting children missing education and following up notifications had continued to improve with the introduction of the new data management system, Synergy.
- The use of fixed penalty notice by schools as a tool for addressing irregular attendance continued to increase with more than 3,000 notices being issued in 2018-19.
- The school persistent absence rate in Lincolnshire had increased in-line with the national data.
- The majority of schools were now using the reduced timetable reporting process and following the new guidance introduced in June 2019.

The following points were made during discussion of the report:

- A concern was raised that the fixed penalty notices were no longer deemed a deterrent by parents and it was suggested that parents could factor the penalty charge into the total cost for holidays.
- Each local authority had its own Missing Education Team and there was collaborative working across all the teams.
- It was confirmed that the Council carried out checks to ensure home schooled children received the right level of education.
- There was a dedicated education support service for Roma and traveller communities.

RESOLVED

That the Children Missing Out on Education Annual Report 2018/19 be supported.

53 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to a report which enabled the Committee to comment on the content of its work programme.

Details of the Committee's planned items were shown on pages 189 – 192 of the report.

RESOLVED

That the content of the Committee's Work Programme be agreed.

The meeting closed at 1.10 pm.

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