



CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 17 JULY 2020

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR R J KENDRICK (CHAIRMAN)

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

Added Members

Church Representative: Reverend P A Johnson.

Parent Governor Representatives: Mrs M R Machin BSc CEng MIET.

Councillors: D Brailsford (Executive Support Councillor for Children's Services) was also in attendance.

Officers in attendance:-

Matthew Clayton (Interim Head of Education Support), Katrina Cope (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Sheridan Dodsworth (Head of SEND), Charlotte Gray (Acting Head of Service Children's Strategic Commissioning), Tracy Johnson (Senior Scrutiny Officer), Jo Kavanagh (Assistant Director of Early Help), Teri Marshall (Education Transport Manager), Eileen McMorrow (Senior Project Officer – Specialist Schools), Dave Pennington (Head of Property Development), Mark Rainey (Commissioning Manager – Commercial), Anita Ruffle (Head of Transport Services), Heather Sandy (Executive Director of Children's Services), Sally Savage (Assistant Director of Children's Commissioning), Martin Smith (Interim Assistant Director of Education) and Janice Spencer OBE (Assistant Director of Children's Services Safeguarding).

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M T Fido and Miss A E I Sayer (Parent Governor Representative).

An apology for absence was also received from Councillor Mrs P A Bradwell OBE, (Executive Councillor Adult Care, Health and Children's Services).

2 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTEREST

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

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3 MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 6 MARCH 2020

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 6 March 2020 be agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

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

The Chairman advised the Committee that this was the last meeting for Sally Savage, Assistant Director of Children's Commissioning. The Committee noted that Sally was due to retire in September 2020. The Chairman on behalf of the Committee extended thanks to Sally for all her support and contributions to the Committee over the past six years, and wished her well in her retirement.

Thanks were also extended from Heather Sandy, Executive Director of Children's Services to Sally for her support to Children's Services, which had been integral to the service's success; and for the postponing of her retirement to help the service through the pandemic.

5 EXPANSION OF WILLOUGHBY ACADEMY, BOURNE

The Chairman advised the Committee that this item was for pre-decision scrutiny, prior to a decision being taken by the Leader of the Council between 6 and 7 August 2020.

The Chairman invited Dave Pennington, Head of Property Development to present the report to the Committee. The Committee noted that Sheridan Dodsworth, Head of Special Educational Needs and Disability and Eileen McMorro, Senior Project Officer – Special Schools Project, were also in attendance at the meeting to help with any questions.

The Head of Special Educational Needs and Disability reminded the Committee that the Building Communities of Specialist Provision Strategy had been considered by the Committee at its October 2018 meeting, following which the Executive had approved the strategy at its 6 November 2018 meeting. It was noted that the strategy proposed the expansion of 12 schools, of which Willoughby Academy, Bourne, was part of to provide sufficient and localised specialised education to children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

The Head of Property Development guided the Committee through the Executive Councillor report detailed at Appendix 1, making particular reference to the use of well-established construction frameworks to procure construction work; the scope of works; the proposed expansion of capacity from 84 to 148 pupils to ensure that there was sufficient capacity and enhanced resources and facilities required to meet all

types of needs and disabilities; the Project Budget; and Value for Money. The Committee was advised that by using technical expertise via the partnership with Kier had ensured that all costs were consistent with industry averages. It was noted that Corporate Property referred to the Building Cost Information Service (BCIS). It was reported that the project at Bourne was a mixture of new building and remodelling of the existing property. Visual information concerning the site was shared with the Committee at the meeting. Details of the cost per square metre for the new build and remodelling and comparison data were shown at paragraphs 5.4 and 5.6 of the report. The report highlighted that the new build part of the project was £873 per m², which was lower than the BCIS comparison; and fell within the normal range for the type of build. The Committee also noted that the cost of remodelling was £1,117 per m² lower than the BCIS comparative data. The Committee noted further that both elements of work demonstrated good value for money.

During discussion, the Committee asked a number of questions to which the following points were confirmed:

- Building design – It was reported that building had been designed to meet all needs for 148 pupils by providing flexibility in the use of the classrooms. The design of the building was future proof in terms of the number of pupils and the complexity of needs coming through, and allowed for the use of large specialist equipment when required;
- Implications of Covid-19 – The Committee noted that the impact of Covid-19 on the capital expenditure for the overall Special Schools programme was subject to a review and a report would be brought to scrutiny in the future for consideration. It was expected that there would be challenge on the overall budget for this programme;
- Funding for the Project – It was reported that funding for this project would come from the Basic Need Allocation, the Department for Education SEND Capital Grant, and the Capital Maintenance Grant. Any cost pressures would also be met from these grants;
- Value for Money – It was agreed that future capital appraisal reports would contain more information on the Building Cost Information Service (BCIS) value for money comparisons and what the national benchmarks were, in order to provide more confidence that the costings were providing value for money and in line with national benchmarking figures;
- Monitoring – The Committee was advised that the capital programme for the Special Schools would be monitored by the capital monitoring group and also by an officer group for education;
- Provision of a medical inspection room – It was highlighted that the medical inspection room was an innovation for this project and by working with partners in Health, it would provide wraparound health services in school for a number of pupils;
- Future proofing - It was suggested that consideration should be given to the design of the school to ensure it was future proof against another pandemic and could cope with another outbreak. It was confirmed that all schools had to have a plan in place for lockdowns if required; and

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- It was suggested that a roof garden on the new block's flat roof, like the sensory garden at Haven Cottage in Boston, would be beneficial to the pupils.

RESOLVED

1. That the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee unanimously agreed to support the recommendations to the Leader of the Council as detailed in Appendix 1, on page 15 of the report pack.
2. That the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee agreed that the points listed above should be forwarded on to the Leader of the Council in relation to this item.

6 PROPOSAL TO DISCONTINUE THE ASH VILLA SOUTH RAUCEBY SCHOOL (FINAL DECISION)

The Chairman advised the Committee that this item was for pre-decision scrutiny, prior to a decision being taken by the Executive Councillor for Adult Care, Health and Children's Services on 31 July 2020.

The Chairman invited Matthew Clayton, Interim Head of Education Support to present the report to the Committee. The Committee was advised that Sally Savage, Assistant Director of Children's Commissioning and Martin Smith, Interim Assistant Director of Education were also in attendance for this item.

The Committee noted that Ash Villa South Rauceby was a social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) school, which provided high quality education to young people admitted to the integrated Ash Villa hospital unit. The Committee was advised that the hospital unit had been temporarily closed since October 2019, as a result of the Trust not being able to recruit the consultant medical staff required. It was highlighted that Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (LPFT) had confirmed that the Ash Villa hospital unit would not be reopening on the current site in the current building. It was highlighted that without the care unit at Ash Villa, there would be no pupils for the Ash Villa South Rauceby School, and therefore the school was no longer able to operate.

It was noted that following the consultation period, a decision had been taken on 21 April 2020 to publish a Statutory Notice on 6 May 2020. This then initiated a four week Representation Period up to 3 June 2020, to allow further written objections and comments to be submitted. It was noted further that the process was now entering the final stage, when the local authority, as decision maker, had to take the final decision regarding the proposal within two months from the end of the Representation Period (by 3 August 2020).

The Committee was advised that nationally it had been recognised that most young people with severe mental health problems did better when they received care in their local communities with intensive support being provided in their own homes, alongside attending their own school. The Committee was advised further that NHS England was supporting such a pilot in Lincolnshire, which had commenced in April

2019 and was due to finish in October 2020. The Committee noted that the children and young people previously admitted to Ash Villa hospital unit were now being treated in their own homes.

It was reported that the majority of pupils who accessed Ash Villa School were from outside Lincolnshire. The Committee noted that the proposal complied with the wishes of the governing body.

The Executive Councillor report detailed at Appendix 1 to the report provided the Committee with reasons for the proposed recommendations. Appendix A provided the Committee with details of all valid written responses received during the consultation and the Representation Period. Appendix B provided a copy of the Statutory Notice – Proposal to Discontinue The Ash Villa South Rauceby School, which had been published on the 6 May 2020. And, Appendix C provided the Committee with details of the Complete Proposal to Discontinue The Ash Villa South Rauceby School.

In conclusion, the Committee noted that the local authority believed that the proposal was in the best financial interests; as keeping the school open with no pupils would be an inefficient use of resources and it was considered that it would not be in the best interests of the welfare of staff employed at the school. Reference was also made to the 'Reasons for Recommendations' as detailed on page 33 of the report pack.

During discussion, the Committee raised questions, to which the following points were confirmed:

- Disappointment was expressed with the local NHS and its ability to recruit the required consultant medical staff to operate safely, which had resulted in the hospital unit being temporarily closed since October 2019;
- The impact on Lincolnshire schools from the closure of the Ash Villa South Rauceby School would be minimal as very few pupils were from Lincolnshire;
- The Pilot – The Committee was advised that a pilot for a new model of care, the interim intensive home treatment team, was being conducted by NHS England where the NHS was now offering support at home and had recruited extra staff to provide support and provision in the homes of children and young people, which could include several visits per day if required. The pilot had so far been successful and young people had been able to stay at home and had their needs met in their home environment instead of going into Ash Villa. Some of the children and young people had been in Ash Villa previously so were able to compare between the two options, and this highlighted that the needs of children and young people were still being met. It was too early to know the outcomes from the pilot, and the continuation of the pilot was subject to the agreement of NHS England. It was requested that a report on the pilot being conducted by NHS England be brought to scrutiny once it had been completed in October 2020;
- Support for Staff – It was reported that a redeployment policy was in place for the staff, and it was hoped that staff could be redeployed to other facilities or schools so that their specialist skills were not lost; and

- Funding for the School - The Committee noted that the school had a budget which would need using up by the end of the current school year. Any surplus would go back into the funding block for schools. The costs of closing down the school would not take the school over its allocated budget.

RESOLVED

1. That the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee unanimously agreed to support the recommendations to the Executive Councillor for Adult Care, Health and Children's Services as detailed in Appendix 1, on page 32 of the report pack.
2. That the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee agreed that the points listed above should be forwarded on to the Executive Councillor for Adult Care, Health and Children's Services in relation to this item.

Note: Councillor C Matthews and Rev Philip Johnson left the meeting.

7 SUSTAINABLE MODES OF TRAVEL TO SCHOOL (SMOTS) STRATEGY

The Chairman advised the Committee that this item was for pre-decision scrutiny, prior to a decision being taken by the Executive Councillor for Adult Care, Health and Children's Services on 31 July 2020.

The Chairman invited Mark Rainey, Commissioning Manager - Commercial to present the report. The Chairman advised the Committee that Charlotte Gray, Acting Head of Service – Children's Strategic Commissioning and Teri Marshall, Education Transport Manager, were also in attendance for this item.

The Committee was advised that local authorities had a duty to promote the use of sustainable modes of travel on journeys to and from schools in their area. To assist meeting this duty, the Council had to prepare a document which detailed their strategy to promote the use of sustainable modes of travel to meet the school travel needs in their area. Appendix A to the Executive Councillor report (Appendix 1) provided the Committee with a copy of the draft Sustainable Modes of Travel to School Strategy for 2020-2023.

The Committee noted that the draft strategy built on the successes of the previous strategy and acted as a statement of the local authority's vision, objectives and work programme for improving the sustainable travel infrastructure and for promoting sustainable school travel. It was noted further that the draft strategy aimed to provide health benefits for children and their families through active journeys; and environmental improvements through reduced congestion and improvements in air quality.

It was reported that the strategy had three key overarching objectives, which were:

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- Objective 1 - Children's Services, the Transport Services Group, Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership and Highways to work collaboratively to improve transport infrastructure;
- Objective 2 - Children's Services, Transport Services and Public Health to work together to promote healthy lifestyles for children and young people; and
- Objective 3 – To meet the requirements of the Education & Inspections Act 2006 in the provision of home to school transport.

The Committee was advised that there were six deliverables in the Action Plan to help achieve the three overarching objectives; these were detailed on page 62 of the report pack.

The Committee noted that there was an acknowledgment of the interdependencies of achieving the objectives set, and the development of cross-directorate working to facilitate the objectives.

During a short discussion, the Committee raised the following questions, and the following points were confirmed:

- Positive Outcomes – The Committee was advised that improved health and a reduction in the carbon footprint would be two positive outcomes from the SMOTS Strategy. The Decarbonisation Plan had resulted in significant funding being made available to local authorities around transport in general and the sustainability transport group would be trying to access some of this funding. The Council had already been awarded £450,000 of capital monies to contribute to improvements of specified unsuitable routes as part of an Invest-to-Save project;
- Funding – The Committee was advised that the Government's announcement of funding for capital developments could be significant and some of this funding could be focussed towards these unsuitable routes. It was hoped that a couple of unsuitable routes could be addressed each year by working with Highways;
- Encourage cycling – It was noted that it would be queried whether some of the funding could be used to fund more cycle training for children such as Bikeability and Cycle Proficiency to increase their confidence on the roads;
- The need to reduce the number of parents taking their children to school - It was highlighted that there were several measures that could be put in place to reduce the number of parents dropping children off at school. These included school travel zones and park and stride sites. However, if a road was closed off to school traffic then school buses would not be able to access the school either. Each school was looked at on an individual basis to identify the appropriate measures that could be put in place. Better results were usually obtained when a school promoted sustainable travel to its pupils and parents;
- The SMOTS Strategy would cover all Lincolnshire students regardless of whether they went to school or college in Lincolnshire or out of county;
- Encouraging cycling – It was highlighted that as 76% of residents lived with 30 minutes cycling distance of school, it was suggested whether consideration should be given to providing pupils with a bike and installing more bike stores

in schools to help reduce the costs of home to school transport. It was clarified that a large proportion of this figure would probably not be entitled to home to school transport; and

- It was requested that a report be brought back in a year's time with an update on any funding received and how it was spent, the new routes available, and those that would be focussed on next.

RESOLVED

1. That the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee unanimously agreed to support the recommendations to the Executive Councillor for Adult Care, Health and Children's Services as detailed in Appendix 1, on page 57 of the report pack.
2. That the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee agreed that the points listed above should be forwarded on to the Executive Councillor for Adult Care, Health and Children's Services in relation to this item.

8 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 to ensure that scrutiny activity was focused where it could be of greatest benefit.

The Committee was advised that there had been no amendments to the work programme and that planned items for the next three meetings of the Committee were set out on pages 94 to 96 of the report pack.

The Committee noted that a report on Elective Home Education had been added to the agenda for the meeting on 20 November 2020, which would then enable data to be included from the first term of school up to the end of October to see what impact Covid-19 had had on the figures.

It was noted further that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on the 4 September 2020 and that it was anticipated that the meeting would also be held virtually. The Committee was advised that based on current advice; there was a possibility that future meetings would also be held virtually.

RESOLVED

That the content of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee Work Programme as presented be agreed.

Note: Councillor M D Boles left the meeting.

9 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED

That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following two items of business on the grounds that they are considered to contain exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.

Note: Councillor Mrs W Bowkett left the meeting. Rev Philip Johnson re-joined the meeting.

10 VARIATION TO ONE SCHOOL ONE PROVIDER (OSOP) CONTRACTS

The Committee gave consideration to an exempt report concerning Variation to One School One Provider (OSOP) Contracts.

RESOLVED

That the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee unanimously supported the recommendations as detailed in the exempt report.

11 DELAY OF TRANSPORT PROCUREMENTS IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

The Committee gave consideration to an exempt report regarding the Delay of Transport Procurements in Response to COVID-19.

RESOLVED

That the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee unanimously supported the recommendations as detailed in the exempt report.

The meeting closed at 12.41 p.m.

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