



**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE
14 JANUARY 2022**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR R J KENDRICK (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors S A J Blackburn, T A Carter, R J Cleaver, W H Gray, A M Hall, C Matthews, N Sear, J Tyrrell and M A Whittington

Added Members

Mrs M R Machin - Parent Governor Representative

Councillors: Mrs P A Bradwell OBE and S P Roe attended the meeting as observers.

Officers in attendance:-

Robert Close (Democratic Services Officer), Tracy Johnson (Senior Scrutiny Officer), Jo Kavanagh (Assistant Director of Early Help) and Heather Sandy (Executive Director of Children's Services)

Officers joining the meeting via Microsoft Teams:-

Linda Dennett (Interim Assistant Director – Children’s Health and Children’s Commissioning), Andy Fox (Consultant – Public Health), Charlotte Gray (Head of Service - Children's Strategic Commissioning), Nicky Myers (Interim Head of Service - Early Years), John O'Connor (Head of Education Support), Dave Pennington (Head of Property Development), Mark Popplewell (Head of Finance - Children's Services), Martin Smith (Assistant Director - Education), Janice Spencer OBE (Assistant Director of Children's Safeguarding), Matt Spoor (Head of Service - Children's Education), Matthew Stapleton (Senior Project Manager - Corporate Property) and Derek Ward (Director of Public Health)

47 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs J E Killey.

Councillor A M Hall was appointed to occupy the Committee’s vacant seat for this meeting only.

48 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTEREST

No declarations of Members' interest were made at this stage of the proceedings.

**49 MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD
19 NOVEMBER 2021**

RESOLVED

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
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That the minutes of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 19 November 2021 be agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

50 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES, COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PROCUREMENT AND CHIEF OFFICERS

Councillor Mrs P A Bradwell OBE informed the Committee that the Council had received £1.5m capital funding from Department for Education (DfE) for two children's homes in Lincoln and Louth. Combined with the Council's own £1.5m corporate funding arrangements, this would allow for a third home in Bourne.

51 COUNCIL BUDGET 2022/23

The Committee considered a report which invited them to consider and comment on the 2022/23 budget implications for the Council's Children's Services activities. The Chairman invited the Executive Director – Children's Services to present the report. Members were advised that, for 2022/23, the budget was balanced, however in 2023/24, 2024/25, and 2025/26 there were budget shortfalls of £9.335m, £6.480m, and £6.909m respectively. The Medium-Term Financial Plan included a number of savings and efficiencies which arose from various projects within the Transformation Programme. The Financial Volatility reserve stood at £44.483m and was considered at an acceptable rate. Members were given a breakdown of Children's Education and Children's Social Care Budgets. Children's Education service activities were proposing to make savings of £0.106m in 2022/23, of which smarter working savings contributed £0.105m. The Council responded strongly to a DfE consultation, exploring the removal of the funding for Local Authorities School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant for school improvement activities supporting maintained schools, estimated at £0.585m. The Home to Schools and College Transport delivery and budget responsibility was proposed to be transferred to the Place Directorate from April 2022. It was reported that the Council had budgeted for a 2% pay award. Children's Social Care Services were proposing to make savings of £0.329m in 2022/23, £0.189m would be saved from smarter working arrangements. Children in Care (CiC) saw a cost pressure of £3.013m, through increased CiC numbers reflecting the impact of the pandemic. To address this, earmarked funding from the Council's reserves was proposed. Additional cost pressures included a £0.386m increase in costs across the composition of placement types supporting this vulnerable group, a two per cent increase to internal foster carers' weekly allowances from April 2022 and a further proposed cost pressure of £0.273m in relation to growth in the CiC population increasing by 0.5 per 10,000. The combined life costs of the Building Communities of Specialist Provision Strategy capital programme were £86.794m across five years from 2019. The new school funding requirement had reduced by £9.259m over the period to 2033/34 to £33.442m due to lower birth rates. Lincolnshire's indicative Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) allocation for 2022/23 was £675.176m and was used to support all schools in Lincolnshire.

Members of the Committee were given the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present, their responses are included below:

- The Home to School Transport budget had been moved to the Place Directorate as the commissioning of home to school transport was undertaken by Place due to the connections with the public transport network. As a result, this budget would now be reported to the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee. A new transport management system had recently been implemented to support the delivery of operations but also to allow better tracking of the budget and the impact of the cost of each contract which would enable the

budget to be better predicted. Children's Services would continue to have oversight of the budget and delivery of home to school transport to ensure some consistency of expertise in this complex area. A cost pressure of around £6.5m had been identified for the Home to School Transport budget. Through transformation work, overall costs were planned to reduce by about £1.2m, leaving a net cost pressure of approximately £5.3m. The current transformation work was aimed at bringing these cost pressures down and to try to stabilise and galvanise the market to increase competition. The Committee requested a report back in six months' time to consider how the transition has worked and the transformational changes which have been made in relation to Home to School Transport.

- The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) delegated funding to schools and services to the sector were funded from the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant which was under increasing pressure and was a significant financial risk for the Council. SEND spending levels was a national concern. The Children's Education budget was for funding the SEND team, school improvement, safeguarding and other education support services.
- The lower average cost per child in care in Lincolnshire was due to the internal fostering service and the large number of foster carers working for the Council which made it more cost effective and better for the individual. Several other councils were more reliant on independent foster carers or the residential market which were more costly.

The Committee congratulated officers on an excellent report despite the difficult financial challenges facing Children's Services and the Council.

The Committee was disappointed to learn of the removal of the funding for Local Authorities School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant for school improvement activities supporting maintained schools, which would be managed by the Council from April 2022 while a review was undertaken. It was recognised that this could have a detrimental impact on small schools in Lincolnshire. The Committee requested a report back to a future meeting outlining some options and recommendations for responding to the removal of this funding.

RESOLVED

1. That the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee agreed to unanimously support the budget proposals for Children's Services for 2022/23.
2. That the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee agreed that the comments listed above be forwarded on to the Executive in relation to this item.

52 RE-COMMISSIONING OF AUTISM AND LEARNING DIFFICULTIES (ALD) SERVICE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The Committee considered a report which set out the business case for the recommissioning of the Autism and Learning Difficulties (ALD) Service from 1 September 2022, prior to a decision being taken by the Executive on 8 February 2022. The Chairman invited the Head of Service - Children's Strategic Commissioning to present the report. Members were advised that the ALD service was a term time only service commissioned on behalf of Lincolnshire schools and academies to provide support for autistic Children and Young People (CYP). Support included training, workshops and targeted outreach support to empower and up-skill school staff with the knowledge, tools, and confidence to create inclusive autism-friendly environments and encourage mainstream education. The Service commenced 1 September 2015 and was currently valued at £617,500 annually. While the Council

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had no explicit duty to provide an ALD Service, it supported a number of the Council's statutory duties. Despite the rising number of CYP with SEND, Lincolnshire saw a decrease in suspensions and exclusions. The ALD Service was rated Good in terms of performance and had received positive feedback from service users who have accessed it. Future modelling would comprise of a greater emphasis on the training and workshop offer, with core, and non-core, training and workshops being available to both carers and professionals to improve understand and support capability. Funding recommendations for future ALD services would not see a reduction in ALD outreach workers despite partners' staffing model discretion.

Members of the Committee were given the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present, their responses are included below:

- The continuation of the service was supported as it had shown benefits in helping to lower exclusion rates and enabling children with autism and learning difficulties to remain in mainstream education. Early intervention was important to give children the best chance to progress in school.
- There were regular and robust meetings with the schools providing the service to monitor and challenge the performance information and data to ensure that the requests for support were matched with the provision offered and that the services were having an impact.
- The service was first commissioned in 2015 and there have been lessons learned throughout the agreement term. There had been periods of underspends which had been either reinvested to develop the service or brought back within the authority to be utilised in a different way. As the budget had not been fully utilised previously, officers were confident that the same budget would be sufficient going forward. If there was a huge increase in demand in future, then officers would seek a further variation or additional funding. It was suggested that it might be useful to keep the Committee informed of the performance and the levels of demand for the service.
- Consideration had been given to how to refine the service moving forward which had shown a trend for quite a large reliance on the outreach element which provided direct work with children and young people. However, a greater focus on training would be needed going forward as this provided greater sustainability and benefitted all children by ensuring the workforce was equipped to really support children in mainstream education.
- Lincolnshire used to be the second highest excluding authority in the country but had now moved to the bottom quartile for exclusions. The percentage difference was small but represented a significant number of children. Lincolnshire was now at the forefront with managing exclusions through a partnership arrangement with schools. There was a whole suite of services around this need which were currently being reviewed. It was requested that a report be brought back to the Committee regarding this review and setting out how these services complement each other, and that some headteachers be invited to attend to talk about their experiences with accessing these services.
- In relation to benchmarking against other local authorities on spend per child and the delivery of the services, this was difficult to undertake as other local authorities provided different services to Lincolnshire, which was demonstrated by the examples set out in the Commissioning Plan. Lincolnshire had a range of services covering different needs with pathways to support children to move between them where possible. The Executive Director of Children's Services agreed to look into whether any financial benchmarking for this specific area of spend was available.
- The pathway around the diagnosis of autism was not working well and led to families experiencing long waiting times. In addition, when benchmarked against other areas, the rate of assessment and the number of diagnoses of autism in children were higher than

expected. Some children may have received an autism diagnosis due to presenting in a similar way to those who have experienced trauma and potentially had other emotional wellbeing concerns and not necessarily autism. There was now a joint pathway whereby community paediatrics and clinical psychologists would triage the referrals to make sure families were not on waiting lists for an autism diagnosis when it was more appropriate to be referred to another service. This was a pilot being funded by Lincolnshire CCG and over the last year the waiting times had reduced significantly, and the pathway was NICE compliant. The Council was working closely with the CCG to have this joint pathway embedded within practice. The data on the pilot could be shared with members of the Committee.

- The service was funded through the Dedicated Schools Grant and the Council worked with the Lincolnshire Schools' Forum to identify what services schools wanted funding through the high needs block. Commissioning the service for all Lincolnshire schools provided much better value for money and resulted in a more joined up system.
- The graduated approach provided a fluid increase in support when a child's needs increased and then a de-escalation when appropriate, so that children were helped within universal services wherever possible. The ALD service targeted really specific cohorts of children but would not necessarily meet all of that cohorts needs, so there were additional services that provided support such as Healthy Minds Lincolnshire and the Behaviour Outreach Support Service. There was a range of services being delivered in relation to early intervention which had seen an incremental climb in demand.

RESOLVED

1. That the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee unanimously agreed to support the recommendations to the Executive.
2. That the comments listed above be passed on to the Executive in relation to this item.

53 RE-COMMISSIONING OF A BEHAVIOUR OUTREACH SUPPORT SERVICE (BOSS) FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The Committee considered a report which set out the business case of the Behaviour Outreach Support Service (BOSS) from 1 September 2022, prior to a decision being taken by the Executive on 8 February 2022. The Chairman invited the Head of Service - Children's Strategic Commissioning to present the report. Members were advised that BOSS was currently delivered by Family Action via a contract for services following a tender process. The contract, valued at £1.292m, commenced 5 September 2016 and was due to cease 31 August 2022, and was funded through the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). The Council's Pupil Reintegration Team (PRT) help manage referrals to BOSS with a robust screening process and low numbers of CYP were excluded whilst BOSS was supporting. While the Council had no explicit duty to provide a BOSS Service, it supported a number of the Council's statutory duties. Lincolnshire was now performing better than the vast majority of its statistical neighbours and better than England and East Midlands averages for permanent exclusion and suspension rates. Modelling of the service would continue to deliver training and workshops in person, online and virtually as appropriate, wider non-core training and workshops, a stronger outreach support focus on further reducing permanent exclusions and encouraging education settings to ensure more CYP remain in their mainstream setting.

Members of the Committee were given the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present, their responses are included below:-

- There was a connection between BOSS and alternative provision. Some pupils may be referred for an intervention place at an alternative provision setting such as the Springwell Academy Trust for a period of time while work was undertaken with the child's mainstream school and the alternative provision to enable that child to return back to the mainstream school. BOSS would support this. If a pupil was permanently excluded, then work would be undertaken to try to set up a managed move to another mainstream school, but if that was not possible, then an alternative provision would be somewhere where pupils permanently excluded would go to. However, the aim was always to try to make alternative provision a temporary arrangement and to have pupils back in mainstream schools as far as possible.
- With regards to the gender balance in alternative provision settings, exact figures were not available but as with BOSS there was a higher prevalence of males than females. In BOSS, 77% of referrals were for male children and young people in 2020/21. This correlated with the national position. However, the ratios in terms of staffing and class sizes in alternative provision were much smaller than in mainstream settings to ensure that they were not overwhelming and were able to support pupils and all of their needs, regardless of their gender.
- In terms of success rates for BOSS, only 2% of pupils were permanently excluded while receiving support from BOSS in 2020/21 and 73% continued in mainstream education with additional support in place.
- There had been no complaints made in relation to BOSS. There had been a lot of positive feedback around the service from children and young people and also from schools.
- The Pupil Reintegration Team worked with families when a permanent exclusion had occurred, and BOSS would support the child and school with transition when reintegration back to mainstream education was possible.
- BOSS was a targeted service so the vast majority of children would not come into contact with this service as their needs would be met by their parents and by school. For most children, the way schools support children helped them to understand where their behaviour can be improved, and this was effective. Evidence showed that high numbers of children referred to BOSS have experienced home environmental factors which may impact on the children's behaviour, such as a bereavement or divorce. Schools could usually manage this but when a school required additional support, then the child would be referred to BOSS to help de-escalate those needs and provide early intervention before any statutory intervention would be required. However, the Council did not have the resources to offer BOSS direct intervention to everyone so there was a focus on training and upskilling the professionals to help more children and young people. A lot of councils did not offer a BOSS service as it was not a statutory service.
- In relation to the 13.5% of children referred to BOSS with mental health concerns, BOSS would support their emotional wellbeing concerns as well as schools and there were other services available where more targeted support was needed, for example Healthy Minds Lincolnshire which was a non-statutory early intervention service that enabled a child to receive support earlier rather than waiting until a referral to CAMHS was required. Healthy Minds Lincolnshire also provided training to professionals in schools which was part funded through the Public Health grant.
- The Public Health prevalence data in the report was based on public health profiles in relation to the size of the area's population and various different demographics. The figures were estimates of what percentage of children could be expected to be seen with certain characteristics.
- The Council invested well above the national average in early intervention and early help which meant there was a wide range of support services available to families which could

help to address the causal factors of behavioural problems. Children and young people could also be in receipt of more than one service at a time, such as the Autism and Learning Difficulties Service and BOSS if they were at risk of exclusion. It was agreed that a diagram setting out all the different services available to families and how they were connected should be provided to the Committee to enable members to have a clearer understanding of these services.

RESOLVED

1. That the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee unanimously agreed to support the recommendations to the Executive.
2. That the comments listed above be passed on to the Executive in relation to this item.

54 DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH ANNUAL REPORT 2021

The Committee received a report from the Director of Public Health which focused, this year, on the health of CYP in Lincolnshire, and the impact of Covid-19 on this population. The Chairman invited the Director of Public Health to present the report. Members were advised that the issues and approaches related to CYP's health differed significantly from that of adult's health and it was important to remember that over 20 per cent of the population in Lincolnshire was 19 or younger. There was a significant distinction of the burden of disease identified in 0–5-year-olds compared to 15–19-year-olds, this data was used to arrange the most appropriate care and support to CYP. Non fluoridated water areas, particularly found in the east of the County, were seen to be having a noticeable detrimental effect to the dental health of CYP. It was identified that the Delta variant of the Covid-19 Coronavirus was the dominant variant in schools over December 2021. However, since CYP had returned to school, Omicron has become the dominant stream and was accelerating. Some age bands saw a drop in positive test data; however, this may have been a result of incomplete testing reports. Covid-19 restrictions were expected to have an impact on CYP's mental health and social aptitude due to the limited face to face peer contact available.

Members of the Committee were given the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present, their responses are included below:

- The benefits of fluoridated water were clear and obvious, as its inclusion in water supply significantly reduced the risk of decayed or missing teeth. Toothbrushing and regular use of fluoridated toothpaste were also of great importance. The availability of fluoridation in the west of the county appeared to favour more affluent areas. The, yet unadopted, Health and Social Care Act proposed that the decision as to which areas receive fluoridated water would be taken by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care. It was suggested that a dedicated report offering an overview of the process for water fluoridation could be brought to a future meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.
- The Council's health visitor team were fully aware of the issues facing CYP in relation to years lost to disability. In addition targeted CYP's nurses continued to support CYP as they progressed into school to ensure that treatment continued to be managed. All support offered was done so in partnership with General Practitioners (GPs). In cases of years of life lost, clinically led support was offered through hospitals.
- The issues which were focussed on when issuing public health messaging were matters that could be effectively influenced such as physical activity and proper nutrition. Throughout the

Covid-19 pandemic, children dental health education messaging wasn't as frequent as previous years, however an oral health promotion service called Lincolnshire Smiles had been commissioned which was targeted at areas of need, such as early years settings, encouraging supervised toothbrushing. A change of Ofsted guidance suggested the introduction of a pathway of learning informed by the demographics of the communities served. As a result of this, officers contacted schools advising them of their demographics, including offering information surrounding tooth decay rates for CYP.

- Messages advocating for a healthy lifestyle through pregnancy, such as avoidance of alcohol and cigarettes, was published through One You Lincolnshire's communications messages. Particular emphasis was put on the impact of smoking as the leading cause of inequalities in the whole of life expectancy as well as birth complications. Work was being done with the NHS to prioritise access for pregnant women to a general population smoking cessation program.
- Access to dentistry for CYP was a fundamental step to avoid missing and filled teeth, and the limited availability of dentists was acknowledged. It was advised that responsibility for dentistry was moving over to the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and would be part of the Integrated Care System (ICS) responsibility.
- There wasn't a statutory provision to attend school virtually, however schools often took the view that young carers were vulnerable children. The opportunity for children to come into school, focus on their own learning and be with their friends was greatly appreciated. In addition, for CYP who didn't want to go to school because of emotional reasons, a service within the Pupil Reintegration Team would explore options to support CYP to attend school in person, such as facilitating telephone conversations over lunch breaks.

RESOLVED

That the Director of Public Health's Annual Report be noted.

55 ATTENDANCE IN SCHOOLS, ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION AND CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21

The Committee received a report which presented the annual data for 2020/21 and commentary on Attendance in Schools, Elective Home Education and Children Missing Education. The Chairman invited the Head of Education Support to present the report. Members were advised that Lincolnshire schools were, on average, higher than national for attendance across the year for all CYP, including vulnerable children. An expected increase of CYP being electively home educated correlated with the opening and closing of school premises during the pandemic. Large numbers of parents who chose to electively home educate their children had since returned their CYP into the state school system. Throughout 2020/21, there were periods of statutory school attendance which resulted in enforcement procedures for non-attendance where appropriate. However, there was no desire to fine or prosecute parents of children who were anxious because of the Covid-19 risk who subsequently didn't attend during the pandemic period. Support was offered to meeting children's holistic needs during the period.

Members of the Committee were given the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present, their responses are included below:

- The managing attendance package that was provided to schools was an ever-evolving support bundle that changed year on year. Themes were picked as years progressed to

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identify and address specific issues. Moreover, workshops were provided which offered case studies and situational advice.

RESOLVED

That the Attendance in Schools, Elective Home Education and Children Missing Education Annual Report be noted.

56 SCHOOLS' STANDARDS AND RECOVERY

RESOLVED

Due to the time sensitive nature of the final item on the agenda, the Committee unanimously agreed to defer the Schools' Standards and Recovery report until the next scheduled meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.

57 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered a report from the Senior Scrutiny Officer which invited members 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.

It was advised that the Schools' Standards and Recovery report would be programmed into the 4 March 2022 agenda. In addition, a pre decision scrutiny report on the Single Section 75 Agreement for Children and Young People's Mental Health Services would be included in the 4 March agenda.

A report on Water Fluoridation in Lincolnshire would be brought to a future meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED

That the work programme be agreed as amended.

58 CONSIDERATION OF EXEMPT INFORMATION

RESOLVED

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

59 LINCOLNSHIRE SECURE CHILDREN'S HOME

Consideration was given to an exempt report from the Senior Project Manager - Corporate Property, which invited the Committee to consider and comment on a report in relation to Lincolnshire Secure Children's Home, prior to a decision being taken by the Executive Councillor for Children's Services, Community Safety and Procurement and the Executive Councillor for People Management, Legal and Corporate Property between 3 – 10 February 2022.

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RESOLVED

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

The meeting closed at 1.12 pm