

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
13 JUNE 2014**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR J D HOUGH (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors B Adams (Vice-Chairman), W J Aron, Mrs J Brockway, J P Churchill, S R Dodds, A G Hagues, J R Hicks, B W Keimach, Ms T Keywood-Wainwright, C R Oxby, Mrs L A Rollings, Mrs N J Smith, L Wootten, R Wootten and Mrs S M Wray

Added Members

Church Representatives: Mr S C Rudman and Mrs G Wright

Parent Representatives: Mrs E Olivier-Townrow

Councillor D Brailsford (Executive Support Councillor for Children's Services) attended the meeting as an observer

Officers in attendance:-

Michelle Andrews (Head of Property and Technology Management), Debbie Barnes (Executive Director of Children's Services), Keith Batty (Assistant Director of CfBT Education Services), Stuart Carlton (Assistant Director of Children's Services), Sheridan Dodsworth (Head of Service SEND), Tracy Johnson (Scrutiny Officer), Sally Savage (Assistant Director of Children's Services) and Rachel Wilson (Democratic Services Officer)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs S Ransome and S M Tweedale.

Apologies were also received from Mr C V Miller (Parent Representative Added Member) and Mr P Thompson (Church Representative Added Member)

2 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest at this point in the meeting.

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3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 7 MARCH 2014

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 2014 be agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to it being noted that Councillor D Brailsford (Executive Support Councillor for Children's Services), Mr S Rudman (Church Representative Added Member), Mr P Thompson (Church Representative Added Member), Mrs G Wright (Church Representative Added Member) and Mrs E Olivier-Townrow (Parent Governor Added Member) were in attendance.

4 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 25 APRIL 2014

The Chairman advised that the minutes of the previous meeting had not been finalised and circulated in time for this meeting and would be deferred to the next meeting.

5 FRONTLINE SOCIAL WORKERS AND SAFEGUARDING SCRUTINY
REVIEW - DRAFT FINAL REPORT

Consideration was given to a report which invited the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee to consider the draft final report arising from the scrutiny review into Frontline Social Workers and Safeguarding.

Tracy Johnson, the Scrutiny Officer for the Review, gave a brief presentation which provided Members of the Committee with further details in relation to the following areas;

- Objectives of the Review;
- Methodology of the Review;
- Key findings and conclusions;
- Recommendations;

Members were provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained within the report and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- Members were supportive of all the recommendations which were being put forward in the final report;
- It was explained that if the draft final report was given approval by the Scrutiny Committee, it would be considered by the Executive on 1 July 2014, and delegated to the Executive Councillor Adult Care and Health Services, Children's Services for a response. The Executive Councillor would have two months to formulate their response and it would then go to the October meeting of the Committee with an action plan, and the Committee would monitor the action plan on a 6 monthly basis. Implementation would commence as soon as the action plan was received by the Committee;

- The Task and Finish Group was congratulated for a very thorough report;
- It was queried whether the caseloads of each locality team were investigated during the review as the number of children in care was increasing. Members were advised that senior officers were aware of the increase in cases, and the County Council had made the decision to increase the number of social workers it employed. Therefore the Task and Finish Group had not made any recommendation in terms of caseloads;
- It was clarified that the second paragraph on page 37 of the final report referred to the national situation in relation to pressure felt by child protection workers to reclassify section 47 child protection cases to a less category of 'child in need'. It was suggested that the wording should be amended in the report to highlight that it referred to a national survey. Members were also advised that the senior management team had worked very hard to reach out to social workers to let them know that if they were under this pressure they should let management know this;
- Page 19, last paragraph, of the final report – there was a query regarding Police holding onto evidence. It was noted that this would only be done in order to strengthen the case against the perpetrators and secure a conviction. However, there were systems and processes in place to ensure that the courts and social workers could have this dialogue with the police;
- Page 5, paragraph 5 of the final report – the percentage of children subject to some form of early intervention referred to any form of contact, not just with social workers, such as at children's centres. The wording of the paragraph would be clarified to reflect this;
- Members were advised that a more modern IT system for social workers should be in place from April 2015. Although it was noted that it was unlikely that there would be a single system which could be logged into by all partners, the new system would improve the way that social workers worked;
- Members commented that they were looking forward to seeing the recommendations implemented and the impact that they would have on frontline procedures;
- It was noted that if any of the recommendations were rejected by the Executive Councillor, they would need to provide a reason;
- Members who took part in the Task and Finish Group commented that the amount of access they had to officers both within the county council and from outside organisations was appreciated. It was thought that Lincolnshire had very resilient social workers who worked exceptionally hard. It was also noted that the relationship between frontline social workers and senior managers was good, and that there was a two way challenge. This was a good basis for moving forward;
- Members were very impressed with the way that child protection was carried out in the authority, and there was a lot of good work underway. It was emphasised that the recommendations which were put forward were to support that work, and were not critical of work already being done;
- It was clarified that there was not a difference in the way that social workers were recruited, whether they were directly employed by the authority, or they were from an agency. They would all have the same checks carried out in

relation to their qualifications. They all needed to be registered with the HCPC (Health and Care Professions Council);

- Members were advised that independent social workers in the past were used by the courts, but this practice had now reduced dramatically;
- It was clarified that in relation to the 3700 open cases, one case related to one child. If there were cases for multiple children from the same family, each child would have its own case. Members were advised that the authority had a child level data approach, for example, if there were five children in a family, they could have five different sets of needs, or five different sets of parents and so there would be a separate case for each child;
- Neglect was a big area of concern as there were some cases where the decision to intervene early could be made quickly, but others where the home situation was assessed as 'just good enough' and then the situation would change – sometimes for the better and sometimes for the worse. It was noted that there was no legal basis to be able to remove a child too early;
- A working group had been set up which focused on signs of safety and embedding the signs of safety methodology into a multi-agency partnership approach;
- In terms of obesity, it was known that there were a number of issues across the country in terms of whether obesity in children could be classed as neglect. The authority had not intervened in a child's life because they were obese. Members were advised that there were a number of interventions for families where the children were over-weight;
- It was thought that the authority was good at dealing with cases of physical and sexual abuse, and they were dealt with quickly. However, neglect cases were much harder to deal with;
- Members commented that they were reassured by the work which had been done during this review, and by how transparent the authority had been. It was felt that members would be able to reassure many parents that good work was being done;
- The Scrutiny Officer was thanked for all her work in putting together the information collected and arranging the visits;
- It was felt that an understanding of child development needed to be more widely embedded;
- Officers commented that they were pleased by some of the things which had been said in response to the review, particularly in relation to the work of social workers. It was queried whether the Scrutiny Committee would be willing to write something for the social workers which reflected some of the comments made. It was agreed that a letter of thanks and commendation would be sent to all social workers from the Chairman on behalf of the Committee;
- The focus of the task and finish group had had a positive impact on morale, as it made the staff feel that councillors cared about the work that they did. It was positive to get some good feedback;

RESOLVED

1. To approve the final report, with the amendments detailed above, into Frontline Social Workers and Safeguarding;
2. That the final report be submitted to the Executive for its consideration and response.

6 PROPOSAL TO EXPAND THE CAPACITY AT SCAMPTON POLLYPLATT PRIMARY SCHOOL (FINAL DECISION)

A report was received which invited the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee to consider a report on the proposal to expand the capacity at Scampton Pollyplatt Primary School (final decision) which was due to be considered by the Executive Councillor for Adult Care and Health Services, Children's Services on 27 June 2014.

Members were advised that the report concerned the permanent expansion of the capacity at Scampton Pollyplatt Primary School in order to accommodate the increasing number of primary age children in Scampton. The proposed implementation date was 1 September 2015. If approved, an additional purpose built classroom would be provided to ensure that the appropriate infrastructure and facilities were in place for the number of pupils on roll. It was noted that the proposal was to increase the published number of children from 20 children per year group to 30 children per year group.

It was reported that a number of objections had been received during the first element of the consultation, but these had been resolved, and no further objections were received in the second phase of the consultation.

The Committee was provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained within the report and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- The demand for places at the school was very local and from the Scampton area rather than the surrounding villages. Officers were also aware of the additional pressure from the presence of the RAF at Scampton. It was believed that this proposal would manage this demand;
- Concerns were raised regarding the potential for an increase in workload for each class. Members were informed that although the proposal was to increase the size of each year group from 20 to 30 children this would necessarily mean an increase in class sizes and additional teaching resources would be put in place;
- The expected cost of the expansion was likely to be around £230k, and it was noted that there was a standard price per square metre for this type of project;
- In terms of consultation, officers consulted with a range of interested parties including the local councillor, and sometimes a response was received. It was noted that the consultation carried out by the authority was wider than just the statutory consultees;
- Members commented that they were pleased that the needs of the local community were able to be met;

- The new classroom would be placed so that it benefitted the whole school. The work would also include some additional remodelling of other areas of the existing school, to ensure that the building would meet the needs of the school;
- Members were in favour of constant improvements to schools, and it was essential that more modern elements could be added. It was important that the county council continued to modernise its facilities. It was also commented that more space within a school would always be useful;
- It was confirmed that the new classroom would replace the existing temporary structure;
- Concerns were raised regarding whether the school would be able to survive if the RAF decided to pull out of Scampton in the future. Members were advised that discussions had taken place with RAF Scampton, and it was believed that if that did happen, there would still be sufficient demand for school places as the RAF was likely to continue to house families in the village;
- In order to manage any fluctuations in pupil numbers in the future, it was planned that some of the smaller classrooms would be used as resource space;
- Members raised concerns regarding the implementation and importance of school travel plans, and it was felt that schools should be encouraged to put these into practice, and also needed to be taken into account when building new schools. Members were advised that officers were making much stronger links with the planning and highways departments and also had early engagement with highways schemes to determine what the pressures may be and what safety schemes may be required. It was also noted that a scrutiny review of the County Council's speed management policy had recently been completed, and school travel plans and use of safety features, such as school safety zones, around schools had been discussed and recommendations put forward;
- It was noted that it was not always feasible for children to walk to school;
- Members welcomed the involvement with highways and planning on school developments.

RESOLVED

1. That the Committee support the recommendation to the Executive Councillor set out in the report;
2. That the following comment be passed to the Executive Councillor:
 - The Committee welcomed the early involvement of the Highways and Planning Departments in the discussions regarding the impact of school expansions on school travel and parking to see where safety schemes may be required.

7 PROPOSAL TO EXPAND THE CAPACITY AT CRANWELL PRIMARY SCHOOL (FINAL DECISION)

A report was received which invited the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee to consider a report on the proposal to expand the capacity at Cranwell Primary School (Final Decision) which was due to be considered by the Executive Councillor Adult Care and Health Services, Children's Services on 27 June 2014.

It was reported that it was proposed to increase the number of children per year group from 45 to 60. Members were also advised that £600k of funding had been secured through an external bid to undertake this expansion. During the consultation process 7 responses had been received, all of which were fully supportive of the proposal.

Members of the Committee were provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained within the report, and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- The mobile classrooms which were on the site were very old and would be replaced;
- Discussions were taking place with the RAF regarding the possibility of the school obtaining additional land to use as playing fields;
- Members felt that it was important that any new school buildings incorporated as many energy saving measures as possible. Officers advised that the aspiration was for a zero carbon impact, and were looking where, within reason, the buildings could have a positive impact on the environment and were working with the sustainability team. The school could look at obtaining Salix funding to put in their own energy saving features;
- It was suggested that for future schemes, it would be helpful if a map could be included with the report to show the location on the school site of the new building.

RESOLVED

1. That the Committee support the recommendation to the Executive Councillor set out in the report;
2. That no additional comments be passed to the Executive Councillor.

8 TRANSITION ARRANGEMENTS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Consideration was given to a report which provided the Committee with an update on the arrangements which were in place to ensure that all young people with SEN had an annual Transitional Review from Year 9 onwards and that an appropriate Transition Plan was drawn up.

It was reported that in October 2013 the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) found Lincolnshire County Council to be at fault for failing to ensure the effective transition arrangements for a young man who had Special Educational Needs (SEN).

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The Children and Families Act would be implemented from 1 September 2014, and this legislation would remove both Statements of SEN and Learning Difficulty Assessment (LDA) and would introduce a single Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan for young people who require additional support above that which could be provided through the 'Local Offer'. All EHC Plans were required to be based on outcomes for young people, and this would introduce a far greater emphasis on forward planning and setting targets which would assist young people in fulfilling their aspirations. The SEND service was currently being re-structured to ensure it would meet the requirements of the legislative reforms. As a result officers would be much more closely linked to the individual plans for children and young people and would have a far greater involvement in transition planning than under existing SEN arrangements.

Members of the Committee were provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained within the report, and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- It was requested that an update be brought to the Committee once the new legislation was in place;
- Under the new arrangements a case worker would be identified for each child, and would meet with the families;
- An extensive package of training was being put together for the new service;
- This would be a person centred plan approach, and work would also be going on with schools, and would be based around outcomes for the child. The plans would be driven by the child and their family;
- This would be a 0-25 years service, but some parts would be within Adult Services;
- This service would be provided by the local authority, regardless of whether the child attended a maintained school or an academy;
- Each of the recommendations within the Ombudsman's report had been dealt with quickly;
- All schools had a responsibility to provide an independent careers service;
- It was believed that there were approximately 250 young people with SEN who would be leaving school before September 2014 when the new legislation came into force. However, they had already been prioritised and targeted. There were approximately 500 young people who needed to be prioritised for the following September (2015);
- Members welcomed the changes which would come through in September;
- All cost analyses for the new service had been carried out, and most of the staff from the old service would be successful in gaining a position in the new service. Additional funding was being provided from government to help in this transition process;
- The protocol for the new service would be available before 1 September 2014;
- There had been extensive consultation, including with parents, on the new model.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

9 LINCOLNSHIRE SAFEGUARDING BOARDS SCRUTINY SUB-GROUP -
UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report which enabled the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee to have an overview of the activities of the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Boards Scrutiny Sub-Group.

Councillor R Oxby, Chairman of the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Boards Scrutiny Sub-Group provided an update for the Committee of the meeting held on 30 April 2014, and the following was highlighted:

- There was no Adults business on the agenda for this meeting as the Independent Chair of the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Adults Board and officers from Adult Care were attending another meeting in Birmingham;
- An update was received from the Independent Chair of the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board (LCSB) on the work of the LCSB and its sub-groups;
- An update on the outcome of the recent serious case review on Family V was always received. It highlighted that the child's death was neither predictable nor preventable;
- An update was also received from the LCSB's Child Sexual Exploitation Officer who highlighted the work being undertaken in Lincolnshire to tackle this issue. It was noted that there was no evidence of any Lincolnshire based groups sexually exploiting children, however, children in Lincolnshire had been targeted by groups outside of Lincolnshire;
- The LCSB training programme was considered by the Sub-Group who were impressed with the number of courses offered to partner agencies;
- The next meeting of the Scrutiny Sub-Group was scheduled for 16 July 2014 and would consider the work being undertaken in Children's Services and Adult Social Care on autism and the first 4 questions from the Ofsted Framework.

RESOLVED

That the draft minutes of the meeting of the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Boards Scrutiny Sub-Group, held on 30 April 2014, be noted.

10 REVIEW OF THE METHOD OF APPOINTING LOCAL AUTHORITY
GOVERNORS ON MAINTAINED SCHOOLS

Consideration was given to a report which invited the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee to consider a report on the review of the method of appointing Local Authority Governors to maintained schools which was due to be considered by the Executive Councillor for Adult Care and Health Services, Children's Services on 27 June 2014.

It was reported that the method of appointing Local Authority Governors was being reviewed owing to the School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2012 that come into effect on 1 September 2014. The 2012 Regulations stated that Local

Authority Governors were nominated by the Local Authority but appointed by the Governing Body. The Local Authority could nominate any eligible person as a Local Authority Governor but it would be for the Governing Body to decide whether the nominee had the skills to contribute to the effective governance and success of the school, and also to decide if they met any other eligibility criteria the Governing Body had set.

Members of the Committee were provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained within the report, and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- As a reduction of parent governors in schools was being seen, there was the potential for the level of challenge to be reduced over time;
- Members were not opposed to an increase in dialogue between the school and local authority in terms of the governing body;
- A lot of work was carried out by the Governors Support Service;
- The role of governors was to challenge and support the work of the school;
- It was suggested that the flow chart at appendix 1A of the report be amended, as it was believed that what was shown was incorrect as the governing body should not be able to submit nominations for Local Authority Governors.

RESOLVED

1. That the Committee supports the recommendation to the Executive Councillor as set out in the report;
2. That the following comment be passed to the Executive Councillor:
 - The flow chart in Appendix 1A was incorrect as it showed that the Governing Body could also submit nominations for a Local Authority Governor. However, according to the School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2012, a Local Authority Governor could only be nominated by the Local Authority. The Committee requested that the flow chart be amended to reflect the Regulations correctly.

11 PERFORMANCE - QUARTER 4 2013/14

Consideration was given to a report which provided the Committee with key performance information for Quarter 4 2013/14 that was relevant to the work of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.

Members were provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained within the report and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- CS012 – % privately fostered children visited within required timescales – this was still showing as below target, even though there had been a marginal improvement since the previous quarter. It was noted that the way that some of these targets were reported would be changing, but Lincolnshire was still one of the best authorities in the country in relation to this target;

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- NI065 – Children becoming the subject of a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time – concerns were raised regarding this indicator being behind target, members were informed that a piece of work had been requested to be carried out on re-referral rates;
- NI114 – Rate of permanent exclusions from school – it was recognised that the actual number of exclusions was small, but it was still higher than the national figure;
- The authority was seeing an increasing number of exclusions from primary schools. Following an external consultation, a number of recommendations were made, and some secondary schools suggested the setting up of exclusions panels. However, it was noted that some young people just needed some time away to go into a teaching and assessment centre rather than being permanently excluded;
- There was a whole work programme being built around exclusions, and there were concerns that the SEND reforms could increase the number of exclusions. It was suggested that this situation should be monitored closely;
- CS136 - % of pupils achieving 5 or more A*- G grade GCSEs (or equivalent) including English and Maths – there was a need to monitor the performance of this indicator closely in the future, due to the changes in examination entry policy in the past two years;
- NI102ii – Achievement gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers (KS4) – officers were very aware of this issue, and in the next academic year would work with schools to address the issue in a more holistic way;
- CS117 - % 16-19 teenage mothers in EET – concerns were raised regarding the strategy for supporting young parents. Members were informed that all early help arrangements should be managed or commissioned through a single strategy in the future;
- There was a need for a very coherent strategy for the level of provision for children in primary school that were excluded;
- It was noted that in terms of children who were excluded, the authority did not need to place them outside of the county. Officers were still trying to determine whether the capacity at the Fortuna School was sufficient. It was noted that a report in relation to exclusions would be brought back to the meeting in October 2014;

(It was noted that Councillor N J Smith left the meeting at this point and did not return)

- CS178 – Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training – concerns were raised that this figure had increased to 3.74% which was slightly under target. However, members were informed that the authority continued to have legacy issues in relation to 18 year olds. There could be some fluctuations at this time of the year and it was expected that it would correct itself by the next quarter. If the figures continued to rise there may be a need to look at this in more detail;
- CS108 - % LAC (>20 days) with a PEP and PAF C24 – LAC absent from school – Members were informed that IT had not yet completed the necessary work in relation to the ePEP system, but work was ongoing. In relation to

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absences officers wanted to start work to identify non-attendance issues before a pattern was established;

- It was hoped that from September 2014 a new virtual headteacher would be in place;
- In relation to narrowing the gap, a programme board had been set up and it was queried whether it would be possible for any councillor participation with this? officers agreed to look into this
- Members were informed that the 'gap' had narrowed considerably at foundation stage, slightly at Key Stage 2, but more work was needed at Key Stage 4.

RESOLVED

That the performance information presented be noted.

12 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2014

Consideration was given to a report which enabled the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee to consider its own work programme for the coming year.

It was noted that the July meeting was likely to be a long meeting, as there were eight items on the agenda, five of which were pre-decision scrutiny.

RESOLVED

1. That the content of the work programme be noted;
2. That the content of the Children's Services Forward Plan be noted.

The meeting closed at 1.00 pm