



**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
6 MARCH 2015**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR J D HOUGH (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors B Adams (Vice-Chairman), W J Aron, Mrs J Brockway, S R Dodds, A G Hagues, B W Keimach, C R Oxby, Mrs H N J Powell, Mrs L A Rollings, Mrs N J Smith, S M Tweedale, L Wootten, R Wootten, Mrs S M Wray, R G Fairman and Mrs M J Overton MBE

Added Members

Church Representatives: Mr P Thompson and Mrs G Wright

Parent Governor Representatives: Mrs E Olivier-Townrow

Councillors: D Brailsford and P M Dilks attended the meeting as observers

Officers in attendance:-

Debbie Barnes (Executive Director of Children's Services), Keith Batty (Director of Programme, CfBT Education Services), Simon Evans (Health Scrutiny Officer), John O'Connor (Service Manager Education Support), Sally Savage (Chief Commissioning Officer) and Rachel Wilson (Democratic Services Officer)

71 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J P Churchill, T Keywood-Wainwright and Mrs S Ransome.

The Chief Executive reported that having received notice under Regulation 13 of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, he had appointed Councillors Mrs M J Overton MBE and R G Fairman as replacement members on the Committee in place of Councillors T Keywood - Wainwright and Mrs S Ransome, for this meeting only.

It was also noted that notice had been received that Councillor C L Strange had been appointed as a replacement member for Councillor J P Churchill until 15 May 2015. However, an apology for absence was subsequently received from Councillor C L Strange.

Apologies for absence were also received from Mr S Rudman and Mr C V Miller.

The Committee was informed that this would be Mrs G Wright's last meeting as she had resigned from her position as an Added Member on the Children and Young

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People Scrutiny Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee. The Committee wished to record its thanks to Mrs Wright for the contribution she had made to the work of the Committee.

72 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTEREST

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

73 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 JANUARY 2015

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2015 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record

74 STAMFORD ENDOWED SCHOOLS SCHOLARSHIP TAPERING -
INTERIM (8TH YEAR) REVIEW

Consideration was given to a report which provided an interim review of the Stamford Endowed Schools Scholarship Tapering Scheme. The Committee was advised that in 2006, the Executive agreed to taper the number of Lincolnshire County Council Scholarships to the Stamford Endowed Schools so that from 2012, there would be no new scholarships. It was also confirmed that the political process had required a four yearly review of educational provision for secondary school pupils in the Stamford area to consider impact. This report was presented to take account of the 2014 results which were published at the end of January 2015.

The principal objective of the review was to ascertain the extent to which suitable education was provided for academically able students in the Stamford area as the number of Lincolnshire County Council scholarships to the Stamford Endowed Schools was reduced.

It was announced in June 2014 by the Department for Education that The Cambridge Meridian Academies Trust (CMAT) had agreed to take over the running of Stamford Queen Eleanor School as Stamford Welland Academy. Anthony Partington, Principal of Stamford Welland Academy and Mark Woods, Executive Principal of Cambridge Meridian Academies Trust were in attendance and provided the Committee with a presentation which outlined the changes which had taken place at the school since it became Stamford Welland Academy. The presentation provided further detail in relation to the following areas:

- The case for change;
- Who are we;
- Transition process;
- The first few months:
- Core purpose;
- House Offices – First Point of contact – The Hub;
- Curriculum;

- Session 6 and PLEDGES;
- Ofsted;
- The future.

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

- Staff had worked hard to put together both academic and after school provision to provide the 'complete parallel curriculum' at Stamford Welland Academy;
- Members were supportive of the Academy and pleased that all students would be catered for;
- Strong leadership was considered important;
- Most of the children attending the Stamford Endowed School as part of the scholarship scheme were from Stamford and were not entitled to home to school transport assistance. A councillor commented that a criteria for being accepted was that pupils must live within 3 miles of the school;
- Members were pleased that parents in Stamford would still have a choice of which school to send their child to;
- It was noted that vocational courses in schools were still important;
- Members were advised that the Stamford Welland Academy aim was to provide a broad and balanced curriculum and would maintain the vocational element;
- The Stamford Welland Academy still had a number of students who were at the grade C/D borderline and below. There was a wish to extend the courses in technology areas, such as engineering, and the school would be looking into working with engineering firms in relation to apprenticeships;
- Most of the pupil premium received was spent on staffing for students to have additional support or additional lessons;
- Some students were accessing extra maths lessons, especially Year 11 students. There was a lot of energy focused on Year 11 as well as Year 7;
- Members were informed that the Stamford Welland Academy also had a lot of Services children, and so were providing transport facilities so that they could access after school activities;
- Members were pleased to hear that the Stamford Welland Academy was planning to expand on the practical side of education such as the Arts, as it was important that students had access to practical subjects;
- The Stamford Welland Academy had a history of being very strong in technology areas, particularly design and fashion. Stamford was developing a reputation for media and creative industries;
- In terms of extra-curricular activities, it was positive that those children who were not as academically gifted as others were encouraged to become involved in the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme;
- Members were encouraged by the enthusiasm of the senior staff at CMAT to provide the best education experience, but urged them to continue to encourage students to become involved in the arts as it was felt that this could help with building confidence as well as developing the person as a whole. Members were informed that a House system had been implemented and the

Arts subjects were spread across the different Houses, as it was believed that arts and sports underpinned the academic side of learning;

- CMAT did not currently include any primary schools in Stamford, but it worked closely with a number of local primary schools, including the sharing of teachers, and allowing primary schools to use the School's minibus when it was not in use;
- Staff at Stamford Welland Academy were working to ensure that community knew that the most gifted students could be catered for, and was a school for those that were aspirational;
- There were currently 124 pupils on roll at Stamford Endowed School under the scholarship scheme, at a cost of £923,000 for 2014/15. It was highlighted that reduction of the scheme would not make that saving as the pupils would still need to be educated elsewhere. Taking this into account, as well as the local authority costs, the costs difference was not as great as considered;
- It was noted that this scholarship scheme was funded by the Dedicated Schools Budget. It was agreed by the Lincolnshire Schools' Forum that the existing contracts would be honoured. However, these costs would reduce to £657,000 in 2015/16 and £300,000 in 2016/17;
- The latest Ofsted report for Casterton Business and Enterprise College, an alternative secondary provision for Stamford, was that it required improvement. The inspection was carried out in November 2014 and the report was published in December 2014;
- CMAT had made use of the Children's University in its other locations;
- In terms of uniform policy, the Stamford Welland Academy would gradually change to a new uniform which would comprise a blazer, tie, shirt and skirt or trousers;
- It was commented that it was not believed that 'one size fits all' in terms of education, and members were given confidence regarding the school as the senior management team were aware of the differing needs of children;
- Following on from the recent launch of the All-Age Autism Strategy, assurance was sought by Members that the needs of children with autism would be adequately met by the Stamford Welland Academy. Members were advised that the Nene Park Academy in Peterborough, which was part of CMAT, had enhanced provision for autism with specialist staff that supported autistic students. Training was also provided for all staff in relation to autism;
- Members were unhappy that more detailed information in relation to numbers of pupils that transferred from Stamford Primary Schools to Casterton was not available at the meeting, but officers could provide that information to Members after the meeting if necessary.

RESOLVED

1. That the Cambridge Meridian Academies Trust and Casterton Business and Enterprise College as the principal providers of state funded secondary education to the Stamford community be noted;
2. That the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee confirm that it considered that the Stamford community had access to appropriate

secondary education in accordance with Lincolnshire County Council's duties under the Education Act, 1966.

75 REVIEW OF THE ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK FOR THE
INDEPENDENT CHAIR OF THE LINCOLNSHIRE LSCB

The Committee received a report which provided details in relation to the review of the accountability framework for the Independent Chair of the Lincolnshire LSCB which was undertaken in October 2014 by Paul Burnett, an experienced LSCB chair and former Director of Children's Services in two local authorities. It was noted that the review took place during the Ofsted inspection, but was not connected to this process. The purpose was to scrutinise the local authority's accountability framework for the independent chair of the LSCB and ensure that it was compliant with statutory guidance set out in Working Together 2013 and Section 14A of the Children Act 2004. The review also considered the inter-relationships between the LSCB and other key forums across the partnership geography of Lincolnshire.

Paul Burnett presented the report to the Committee and explained in more detail some of the strengths and areas for improvement that he found during the review. Firstly, he thanked the Executive Director of Children's Services and the authority for the time they had given to him as well as their transparency and honesty throughout the process. In explaining his findings, some of the main points highlighted to the Committee included:

- The strengths significantly outweighed the areas for improvement;
- Some of the methods and processes encountered were now being implemented by the LSCB's in Leicestershire, Rutland and Nottingham;
- One of the strengths noted was the strong interpersonal relationships which were in place between the Chair of the LSCB and the authority, which were challenging both professionally and politically, and it was found that issues were openly discussed which led to good quality outcomes;
- There was very strong evidence that the LSCB's priorities and needs were informing other partnerships, and could have an impact on the public protection agenda;
- There were some small development areas noted including the need for closer communication when setting performance goals with the Chief Executive, and it was also suggested that a log should be kept of the challenges made to the Board;
- It was noted that when people worked well together they did not always record everything, such as the challenges to the Board, and an audit trail of evidence was important in order to show that due process was being followed;
- Another area for improvement was the relationship with the Health and Wellbeing Board, which needed to be more challenging and robust. The LSCB should be holding the Health and Wellbeing Board to account in terms of ensuring safeguarding was included in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, and the Health and Wellbeing Board should be challenging the LSCB in its delivery of strategic health plans;
- Overall it was found that there were very strong arrangements in place, which was supported by the outcome of the recent Ofsted inspection, and that the

authority was going beyond its statutory requirements in terms of safeguarding.

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:

- A councillor commented that he was a member of the Health and Wellbeing Board and the recommendations in relation to the Health and Wellbeing Board had been noted and would be reported back;
- Members were pleased to hear that Lincolnshire was leading the way in some areas;
- Members were advised that there were a number of pressures within safeguarding and frontline social workers were seeing an increase in their workloads, however, this was a trend which was being seen nationally as well, but it was not on the same scale in Lincolnshire as it was nationally. It was noted that demography was also impacting on the increased referral rates;
- It was noted that there was a link between safeguarding children and drink, drugs and domestic violence;
- Caseloads had increased due to the complexities of family's needs, which meant that social workers were often involved with the same family longer than previously. The aim was to keep caseloads at an average of 16-18 families;
- The additional £400,000 which had been allocated to children's safeguarding would be used to recruit more frontline social workers;
- Concerns were raised regarding the Health and Wellbeing Board and its overall link with the rest of the Council;
- One member commented that they had attended a LGA forum on safeguarding where Lincolnshire's safeguarding Toolkit had been referred to, and it was good to know that the authority was ahead of other areas;
- Concerns were also raised regarding the targets which were set for the Independent Chair of the LSCB. Members were reassured that the targets were negotiated with the Chair, but that it was important that the Chief Executive did have clear targets and performance indicators for the Chair;
- It was important that the Chair had a clear performance framework in which to work, and the review demonstrated that Lincolnshire County Council was doing this effectively;
- It was commented that the scrutiny review which had been carried out on frontline social care in 2014 was very good and gave members a lot of confidence in the safeguarding arrangements;
- In terms of member involvement in the review, there had been a focus on the strategic leads, but it had come through in interviews that there was good training of members in safeguarding. It was also a strength that there was a dedicated safeguarding scrutiny sub-group. Evidence had also been seen that individual members of the council were able to seek information and guidance from the authority, and that there was openness and transparency within the system;

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- Wider community engagement was one of the major challenges in safeguarding, but the Ofsted report had complimented the LSCB on its ability to get its message out.

RESOLVED

1. That the report and comments made be noted;
2. That the identified strengths and areas for development be noted;
3. That the Executive and the LSCB be asked to draw up an action plan to address the areas for development identified in the review.

76 LINCOLNSHIRE SAFEGUARDING BOARDS SCRUTINY SUB-GROUP
UPDATE

The Committee considered a report which provided an overview of the activities of the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Boards Scrutiny Sub-Group, in particular the Sub-Groups consideration of child safeguarding matters. It was reported that the Sub-Group would be looking for a Vice-Chairman following the AGM of the County Council as the present Vice-Chairman had stepped down due to other work commitments.

The Chairman of the Sub-Group, Councillor R Oxby updated the Committee on the work of the Committee and highlighted some of the main issues which had arisen, including that there were two serious case reviews in progress and that the Ofsted Inspection outcome had meant that Lincolnshire's LSCB was in the top 20% of Boards across the country.

Nationally there were two recent incidents related to safeguarding, including the recent events reported in Oxford, and the murder of a 16 year old girl by her step brother in recent weeks. Reports on both these incidents would be considered by the Sub-group in due course.

Members were provided with the opportunity to ask questions in relation to the information provided, and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- It was queried whether there was a case for the government to be approached with a view to reviewing the position relating to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) prosecutions. Officers agreed to explore this;
- Domestic abuse was the number one issue for frontline teams in East Lindsey, and was a serious local issue, and it was requested that the Scrutiny Sub Group explore further what was being done to tackle this issue.

RESOLVED

That the draft minutes of the meeting of the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Boards Scrutiny Sub-Group, held on 7 January 2015 be noted.

77 SCHOOL PERFORMANCE 2014 (INCLUDING CLOSING THE GAP DATA)

Consideration was given to a report which summarised the 2013-14 performance of Lincolnshire schools for the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, following the release of validated performance data released by the Local Authority (LA) Performance Team on 29 January 2015.

The Committee was informed that the report provided information on the academic performance of pupils in Lincolnshire schools compared with national, East Midlands and Lincolnshire's statistical neighbour data averages, from Early Years until the end of Key Stage (KS) 5.

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:

- The complexities of the mitigating factors were understood, and were apparent nationally;
- Concerns were raised regarding narrowing the gap at Key Stages 1 & 2, and it was suggested that if the gap was narrowed at Key Stage 1, it was more likely to stay narrow;
- It was considered important that Lincolnshire's data should always be compared to national data;
- It was suggested that it would have been beneficial to have references to teaching and learning included within the Closing the Gap Action Plan;
- It was commented that a lot of time was spent looking at averages in terms of performance, was there a need to focus more on the performance of those schools outside of the average?
- Members commented that the recent 'Closing the Gap' conference which was held at the Epic Centre was inspirational, and that some of the energy and enthusiasm needed to be captured by the schools;
- There was a need for the School Improvement Working Group to engage with teachers in order to understand what was involved in their workloads.

It was suggested that this matter be referred to the School Improvement Working Group to look at in more detail and then report back to this Committee with some recommendations.

RESOLVED

1. That the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee note the content of the report;
2. That the matter be referred to the School Improvement Working Group for further consideration, and recommendations be brought back to this Committee at a later date.

**78 PROPOSAL TO EXPAND CAPACITY AT LINCOLN BISHOP KING
CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL (FINAL DECISION)**

Consideration was given to a report which invited the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee to consider a report on the proposal to expand the capacity at Lincoln Bishop King Church of England Primary School (Final Decision) which was due to be considered by the Executive Councillor for Adult Care and Health Services, Children's Services on 20 March 2015. The Head Teacher, Mrs Kate Rouse, and Chair of Governors Mrs Samantha Smith were in attendance to explain why there was a need for the expansion of capacity to go ahead, and to answer questions and queries from the Committee. Some of the points highlighted to the Committee included the following:

- There were currently 367 pupils enrolled at the school;
- It was still a maintained school and took children predominantly from the Sincil Bank area of Lincoln;
- There had been 'Good' or better achievement across the school, this financial year in all year groups;
- Following increased involvement of parents, attendance was now in line with national expectations and often exceeded 96%;
- Ofsted had rated Pupils Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development as strong;
- Three bilingual support staff had been appointed which covered 6 of the main languages spoken at the school;
- There was a focus to improve key skills in Reading, Writing and Maths across the school;
- The best attainment in 2013/14 was made by Early Years and Key Stage 1, all of which have single aged classes;
- There were an increasing number of Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO's) in Park Ward which led to a high turnover of residents and the School provided consistency and stability for children;
- The Leadership and Management Team was now stable, and recruitment had been carried out to ensure that the right people were in the right jobs;
- When this proposal had been subject to consultation, there was general support for it, and only one objection was received which related to parking;

Councillor N I Jackson was in attendance at the meeting as the Local Member and informed the Committee that this was the only primary school in the area which was able to expand, as it had the land available. The school also had very strong community links as it was also close to the Children's Centre and the Head Teacher would attend discussion meetings at the Children's Centre. It was commented that the benefits of expanding this school were significant, and it did have the ability to reach the required standards.

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:

- Members supported the statements made by Councillor Jackson in relation to the School, and added that the school worked very well;

- There were concerns regarding the amount of time that the Headteacher spent being involved in social work, and how this would continue to be managed if the number of pupils increased. Members were advised that there were currently 48 families involved with Children's Services at some level and a full time member of staff had been involved who now managed this work load. It was noted that the Head Teacher only got involved if it progressed to a child protection issue. Other various additional responsibilities had been delegated to other members of staff, and all staff had received safeguarding training;
- The Diocese of Lincoln fully supported the expansion of the School. It was commented that the school served a challenging area but it had been seen first hand that the Head Teacher was an inspirational leader and the staff worked hard to give the children the best opportunities. The Diocese had confidence in the school and the Senior Leadership Team to continue to make improvements;
- A concern was raised regarding the need for the building work to not distract from the work that the Head Teacher was currently doing. It was noted that last time building work was undertaken at the school it did become a distraction, but that was due to the project becoming more complex than originally thought. It was not expected that the same problems would arise again;
- The space in relation to car parking was thought to be adequate, however, the surfacing was not.

RESOLVED

That the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee support the recommendation to the Executive Councillor as set out in the report.

**79 PROPOSAL TO EXPAND CAPACITY AT SPALDING MONKHOUSE
PRIMARY SCHOOL (FINAL DECISION)**

Consideration was given to a report which invited the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee to consider a report on the proposal to expand the capacity at Spalding Monkhouse Primary School (Final decision) which was due to be considered by the Executive Councillor for Adult Care and Health Services, Children's Services on 20 March 2015.

The Committee was advised that this was a school which was over offering places, as it was the first preference for a lot of families, and it was also a popular second choice as well. It was also noted that there was a rising birth rate in the area, and the school had been rated as 'good' by ofsted. This proposal had been through the statutory process, and 12 comments had been received during the consultation, and there had been overwhelming support for the proposal, with no objections received. In relation to available parking, it was reported that there was an area of land close to the school which it may be possible to use more formally as a drop off point for parents, but this would need further examination.

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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:

- In relation to the consultation which took place, there was a wide range of stakeholders who were invited to comment and made aware of the consultation itself. Officers also worked very closely with the schools themselves and offered drop in sessions for parents and residents to discuss the proposals;
- It was suggested that there tended to be more responses to a consultation if people were not supportive of the proposals;
- The local neighbourhood would be leaflet dropped when planning permission was sought.

RESOLVED

1. That the Committee supported the recommendation to the Executive Councillor as set out in the report;
2. That the Executive Councillor be advised that the Committee strongly supported the negotiations underway with the owner of adjacent piece of land to formalise the use of the area as a drop off/waiting area..

80 PERFORMANCE - QUARTER 3 2014/15

The Committee received a report which provided key performance information for Quarter 3 2014/15 which was relevant to the work of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.

Members were guided through the report and 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:

- In relation to stability of Placements for Looked After Children (LAC) it was noted that if a child was in foster care and then moved back home, this would still be classed as a move. Members were advised that the Executive Director had requested a more detailed report to understand the wider issues of stability of placements;
- It was queried whether there was anything that could be done to reduce the timescales between fostering and adoption? It was noted that the national Adoption Reforms had reduced the time frames, and the authority was working to get this down, in some cases to 18 weeks;
- It was noted that there were some legacy cases which would skew the data, and it was important to understand what the data was saying;
- In relation to the vacancy rate of social workers, it was noted that performance of this indicator had become considerably worse when an additional £400,000 was allocated to recruit additional social workers. This was due to it creating an increase in the number of available vacancies. However, it was acknowledged that the authority continued to use agency staff more than it would like, and there were a number of agency staff who had been working for the authority for a number of years, but they preferred to continue as agency staff;

- Concerns were raised regarding the number of complaints which had been made in relation to schools, and members were advised that people would often complain to the Council as they did not know where else they could go to complain;
- The issue of vacancy numbers for social workers was one raised by the Task and Finish Group review which was carried out in 2014. It was requested that a report in relation to the vacancy numbers came back to the next meeting;
- There were three criteria which classified a family as a 'Troubled Family' and it was agreed that the Executive Director would provide a briefing via e-mail to Members;
- In relation to complaints, 'other' would be selected if the issue highlighted did not fit any of the other categories;
- It was noted that the increase in the number of young people classed as NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) was due to the work undertaken to reduce the number of 18 year olds whose education and employment status was unknown. It was expected that performance in relation to the number of NEET's would look better by the next quarter;
- A more detailed update on Youth and Community Development was requested.

RESOLVED

That the comments made in relation to the performance data presented be noted.

81 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2015

The Committee received a report which enabled it to consider its own work programme for the coming year.

It was noted that an update on Youth and Community Development would be included on a future agenda.

RESOLVED

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

The meeting closed at 1.25 pm