

Lancashire County Council

Education Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 15 July, 2014 at 10.00 am in Cabinet Room 'C' - County Hall, Preston

Present:

County Councillor Cynthia Dereli (Chair)

County Councillors

P Buckley	B Murray
C Crompton	S Perkins
B Dawson	M Perks
M Devaney	D Stansfield
Dr M Hassan	B Yates
C Henig	

Co-opted members

Miss Teresa Jones, Representing RC Schools
Mr John Withington, Representing Parent Governors
(Primary)

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from co-opted members Janet Hamid, Fred Kershaw and Ken Wales.

County Councillors Mike Devaney, David Stansfield and Barrie Yates attended in place of County Councillors Keith Iddon, Anne Cheetham and Susie Charles respectively for this meeting.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of interest in relation to matters appearing on the agenda.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2014

The minutes of the meeting held 17 June 2014 were presented and agreed as an accurate record.

The Chair referred also to the minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2014, which had previously been agreed. She drew attention to the item relating to

Lancashire School Term and Holiday Arrangements following which it had been resolved that:

- i. "Schools across the County be consulted on the school term and holiday pattern and a report brought back to the October meeting of the Committee
- ii. A report on the work of the School Attendance Service be brought to a future meeting of the Committee."

The Chair clarified that the intention had not been to consult with all schools, but to take soundings from some schools and other interested parties. The Committee agreed that the minutes be amended to reflect this.

Resolved: That,

- i. The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2014 be confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.
- ii. The minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2014 be amended to reflect the intention to take soundings from some schools and other interested parties on the school term and holiday pattern and a report be brought back to the October meeting of this Committee.

4. Lancashire Learning Excellence

The Chair welcomed officers from the Directorate for Children and Young People:

- Bob Stott, Director for Universal and Early Support Services;
- Stan Johnson, Head of Development and Innovation; and
- Jeanette Whitham – Head of Schools HR Team.

The report provided an update on the school facing traded services which were delivered by the county council to education providers within Lancashire and beyond the county. Lancashire had a long history of delivering high quality services to support schools and other educational providers in delivering to children and young people.

It was explained that the 2011 Education White Paper "The importance of teaching" stressed that local authorities should develop a new relationship with their schools around delivering services. Lancashire undertook a major review with all school partners across the Autumn of 2011 and Spring 2012 focussing on the types of traded services which were valued and which schools wanted the county council to deliver. That consultation led to a refinement in the services that were offered through Lancashire Learning Excellence and the way in which services were presented through the schools portal.

The report focused on traded services delivered under the Lancashire learning Excellence "umbrella" as well as those delivered by the Schools Human Resources Service.

Traded services were a key aspect of the support given to schools within the county to improve outcomes for children and young people.

Mr Stott briefly took the Committee through the report, which set out details of Governance arrangements, delivery of services outside Lancashire and statistics which illustrated traded activity in 2013/14 including outcomes.

Jeanette Whitham explained that the Schools Human Resources Team was a centrally funded service, delivered free to maintained schools and was available to academies and schools outside the county council boundary on a traded basis.

Members raised a number of comments and questions the main points of which are summarised below:

- It was confirmed that, as with other services within the county council, traded services were looking to make efficiencies in an inflationary market; increased income would be regarded as a saving; traded services were run similar to a business and costs / processes were constantly being challenged.
- It was acknowledged that there was potential for demand for traded services to increase; the Committee was assured that there was capacity to deliver increased demand through secondments from schools.
- One member emphasised that Voluntary Aided schools would struggle without the excellent service provided by the county council in challenging circumstances.
- The county council was confident that schools would continue to use human resources services based on the competitive advantage they were able to offer.
- It was confirmed that fees were graded according to the size of school, but there was a minimum figure chargeable which could make the service more expensive per pupil for particularly small schools.

The Chair thanked officers for the report and presentation and congratulated them on providing a service which was clearly making a positive difference.

Resolved: That a further update report be brought back to the Education Scrutiny Committee at an appropriate point in 2015.

5. Lancashire Youth Council Consultation Report

The Chair welcomed officers from the Directorate for Children and Young People:

- Bob Stott, Director for Universal and Early Support Services;
 - Kirsty Houghton, Development Worker for Youth Engagement;
- and also

- Hal Meakin, (young person) Member of the Youth Council for Lancashire County Council.

The report explained that, in September 2013, the Chair of the Education Scrutiny Committee had asked members of Lancashire Youth Council to carry out a consultation that would enable them to identify any barriers to education that young people faced.

It summarised the findings from a consultation carried out by the Youth Council, which indicated that young people were facing a number of issues that were seen by them as barriers to learning, many of which were already being addressed both within the education establishment and by external partners and organisations.

Education Scrutiny Committee was being asked to consider and comment on the findings of the consultation and in particular on the three recommendations identified by the Youth Council, set out in the report.

By way of introduction, the Committee received a brief overview of the structure and role of Youth Councils both nationally and locally. Members suggested that a bite size briefing to present this in more detail be arranged for the benefit of all members. Bob Stott undertook to take it forward with the Member Development Manager.

Hal Meakin briefly explained how the Lancashire Youth Council had developed the questionnaire and he summarised the findings from the responses received. He then explained that, based on those findings, the Youth Council had recommended that further work be done to identify specific needs that young people may have to overcome barriers to learning as set out in the report and below:

- 1) Further awareness raising should be undertaken to ensure that young people, schools and colleges are familiar with the work of the Youth Council campaign on Emotional Health and Well-being and the work of Pulse (Children and Young People's Health and Wellbeing Board) on 'Life's up's and Downs'. These campaigns and initiatives are working to raise awareness of the issues affecting young people, offer support and advice and remove the stigma surrounding mental health issues.
- 2) Further consultation should be undertaken with a larger sample group, perhaps focusing on specific groups of young people such as particular age groups/gender groups. Additionally further work could be done with the groups of young people who were already consulted with to look at what may already be available or could be provided to support these young people and their education establishments in overcoming the barriers they face.
- 3) Lancashire Youth Council felt that it may also be beneficial to share the consultation findings with LASSH (Lancashire Association of Secondary

School Heads) and the Lancashire College Principal's groups so that they can be made aware of the issues and help that young people felt they needed throughout their education. They could also be reminded about initiatives such as the Bullying and SRE Charter and be encouraged to promote services which young people can access for support.

Members acknowledged that mental health issues were well recognised as a barrier to learning and that factors such as the rapid growth of social media had led to the emergence of many complex issues with potentially serious outcomes for young people. During the course of the discussion, members supported the Chair's suggestion that a task group would be helpful to investigate the issues in more detail and support the work of the Youth Council. It would be important to carefully scope the task group and consider the timescales to ensure that it did not become unwieldy.

Resolved: That,

- i. The Youth Council, Kirsty Houghton, Development Worker for Youth Engagement, and John Gordon, Head of Integrated and Targeted Support for Young People, be thanked for their important work;
- ii. County council officers be asked to consider the three recommendations of the Youth Council, as set out in the report now presented, and report back to the Education Scrutiny Committee on action taken;
- iii. A task group be established to investigate issues around emotional health and wellbeing of young people as a barrier to learning, and support the work of the Youth Council in this connection.

6. Report of the Pupil Premium and Attainment Task Group

At its meeting on 16 July 2013, the Education Scrutiny Committee had considered a report on the Educational Attainment of Pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM). The Committee resolved to establish a task group to explore the issues and begin to identify possible actions.

County Councillor Dereli chaired the task group and now presented it to the Committee. In doing so she thanked all who had contributed to the work of the task group and said how impressed the task group had been with the head teachers they had met during their investigations.

The recommendations of the task group were supported by the Education Scrutiny Committee.

The Chair accepted a suggestion that the task group report be regarded as a 'living document' and Bob Stott, Director for Universal and Early Support Services, undertook to raise with Jonathan Hewitt, Head of Quality and

Continuous Improvement, how further examples of good practice could be included.

Resolved: That,

- i. An initial response from the cabinet member for Children and Young People be provided to the Committee at its next meeting in October;
- ii. A checklist or guidance for schools' leadership and governors as set out at recommendation 7 be provided to the Committee at its meeting in March 2015; and
- iii. A full response from the Children and Young People be provided to the Committee at its meeting in March 2015.

7. Work Plan and Task Group Update

Appendix A to the report now presented set out a draft work plan for the Education Scrutiny Committee, including current Task Group reviews. It would be updated to take account of decisions taken at this meeting:

- **Lancashire Learning Excellence** – a further report be provided to the Committee in 2015.
- **Lancashire Youth Council Consultation Report** – a response to the Youth Council's recommendations be provided to the Committee in 2015.
- **Pupil Premium and Attainment Task Group** – Cabinet Member response to be provided to the Committee (especially recommendation 7) in March 2015

Resolved: That the report, as updated above, be noted.

8. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business for discussion at the meeting.

9. Date of the Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Tuesday 21 October 2014, at 10:00am, County Hall, Preston.

I M Fisher
County Secretary and Solicitor

County Hall
Preston

