

Lancashire County Council

Education Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 27th March, 2018 at 10.30 am in Cabinet Room 'C' - The Duke of Lancaster Room, County Hall, Preston

Present:

County Councillor Christian Wakeford (Chair)

County Councillors

M Dad	J Molineux
L Beavers	E Nash
A Cheetham	J Potter
S Clarke	J Rear
B Dawson	D T Smith
J Eaton	D Stansfield
A Kay	P Steen

Co-opted members

Mr Ian Beck, Representing RC Schools
Mrs Janet Hamid, Representing Parent Governors
(Secondary)
Mr John Withington, Representing Parent Governors
(Primary)

County Councillors Lorraine Beavers, Bernard Dawson and Jimmy Eaton replaced County Councillors Nikki Hennessy, Sobia Malik and Andrew Gardiner respectively.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from County Councillor Cosima Towneley.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

None were disclosed.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2017

Resolved: The minutes from the meeting held on the 28 November 2017 be confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

4. Suitability and Sufficiency Audit

The Chair welcomed David Graham, Head of Service for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), to the meeting. The report presented provided an opportunity to review the Short plan and the work completed on the Sufficiency and Suitability of Special Schools and Short Stay Schools in Lancashire.

The Department of Education (DfE) had conditionally allocated the county council funding to increase school places for people aged 0-25 with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan.

It was pointed out that the school population was rising. The number of children and young people with either a statement or Education, Health and Care Plan had also increased. The figure for Lancashire was significantly higher than the national average in terms of numbers and referrals. There was pressure on supporting school's funding for high needs. Two primary areas of need to focus on were children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and children with Social, Emotional and Mental Health.

It was reported that populations within the special schools was high and more capacity was needed. In order to improve the capacity, capital funding needed to be improved to increase the numbers that could be taken and look at alternative buildings that could be used.

Members were informed that the increase in numbers of children requiring special needs in Lancashire reflected the national increase which could have been contributed to as a result of the awareness raising of children with mental health issues. These issues were looking to be addressed not only in SEND schools but also mainstream schools.

It was confirmed that the SEND team had completed the Suitability Audit, which had meant sending surveyors into all the specialist schools and short stay schools. The next phase was to consult with families and schools in order to understand what they wanted regarding the overall programme the Authority was required to do.

The committee was informed that the majority of specialist placements were within Lancashire. There were very few commissioned placements outside of the county apart from visual impaired, hearing impaired and looked after placements.

Regarding proposals to meet needs, members were informed that in north Lancashire there was currently not a specialist school for children with Social Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) issues. Proposals were being formulated address this current provision gap.

The SEND team was working with Property Management and Facilities Management and was utilising buildings that had become vacant near to or adjacent to specialist schools. In terms of staffing, within the specialist teacher

service, the team was looking at where it had people with the specialist training that was required.

The practice and policy of the SEND team was that it always looked at the nearest suitable school for children with SEN issues then it was the preference of the parents.

Resolved: That the report presented be noted.

5. Permanent Exclusions from Lancashire Schools

The Chair welcomed Audrey Swann, Head of Education for Looked After Children and Vulnerable Groups, to the meeting.

The report provided an overview on the current situation around permanent exclusions in Lancashire.

It was reported that there was a rising trend in permanent exclusions nationally. In Lancashire the number of permanent exclusions in secondary schools had continued to grow across the county, while the number of permanent exclusions from primary schools across Lancashire reduced in the academic year 2016-17 by 35%. The most likely children and young people to be excluded were those with Special Needs, disadvantaged pupils, Children Looked After and Children in Need, the most vulnerable groups.

The Primary Advice and Support Service was launched in June 2016. The impact of this had been a reduction in primary exclusions by 30%. Regarding secondary schools, work had been carried out to gather views of alternative providers and main stream schools in each area on the current provision, identifying strengths and gaps in provision.

Members were informed that some children had gone through their statutory assessment and now had an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). It was highlighted that if a child was in danger of permanent exclusion, then the school would contact the SEND team. A meeting would be held to identify options to keep the child at the school.

Resolved: That the report presented be noted.

6. Personal Education Plans for Children Looked After

The report presented provided an overview of the current position around Personal Education Plans for Lancashire children looked after.

The committee was informed that the number of looked after children (CLA) in Lancashire who had an up to date Personal Education Plan (PEP), including those in their early years and post 16, had increased. A review of the PEP

template had made it more fit for purpose and the quality of the PEPs had improved. All CLA required a PEP and in the statutory guidance that was from nursery up to 18 years. The plan had to be in place within 20 days of the child coming into care. It needed to be reviewed once each term as a minimum and it was the joint responsibility of Children's Social Care and the school or education provider.

It was felt that reviewing every PEP put a lot of strain on the CLA department and the committee questioned if this would be sustainable in the long term. It was hoped that in the future sampling of PEPs would be easier but there would have to be some sort of criteria in place for this to happen.

Resolved: That the report presented be noted.

7. Education Scrutiny Committee Work Plan 2017/18

The work plan for the Education Scrutiny Committee for the 2017/18 municipal year was presented to the Committee. The topics included were identified at the work planning workshop held on 21 June 2017.

Members were reminded of the upcoming joint meeting of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee and the Education Scrutiny Committee on 11 April 2018 to discuss the outcome of the SEND Joint Local Area Review.

Resolved: That the report presented be noted.

8. Urgent Business

There were no items of Urgent Business.

9. Date of the Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Education Scrutiny Committee is due to be held on Monday 25 June at 10.30am, Cabinet Room C, County Hall, Preston.

L Sales
Director of Corporate Services

County Hall
Preston