

Lancashire County Council

Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement

Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday, 4th October, 2018 at 2.00 pm in Committee Room 'B' (The Diamond Jubilee Room) - County Hall, Preston

Present:

County Councillor Geoff Driver CBE (Chair)

County Councillors

M Green

H Khan

B Yates

Mrs S Charles

C Crompton

G Gooch

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor Albert Atkinson and Amanda Hatton.

County Councillor Barrie Yates replaced County Councillor Atkinson.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

No pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests were disclosed.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 27 June 2018

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2018 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

Matters Arising

Following a query from County Councillor Geoff Driver, it was agreed that an update on the meeting between the Schools Improvement Team and the Teaching Schools Alliance would be brought to the next meeting on 5 December 2018.

4. Corporate Risk & Opportunity Register Quarter 2

A report was presented by Paul Bond, Head of Legal and Democratic Services, providing an updated Quarter 2 Corporate Risk and Opportunity Register for the Cabinet Committee to consider and comment upon.

The Cabinet Committee noted that the Register would be presented to the next Audit, Risk and Governance Committee on 29 October 2018.

Highlights included:

CR1.1 – shortlisting had taken place and interviews for the permanent Chief Executive position would be held week beginning 8 October and interviews for the Executive Director – Education and Children's Services would take place week beginning 15 October.

CR1.2 – Service Challenge reviews were progressing in line with the agreed timetable and were due to be completed later in October. These would be referred to Corporate Management Team, then Cabinet in December.

CR7 – The Audit, Risk and Governance Committee would be receiving a report on delivering major projects/schemes on time and within budget at their next meeting on 29 October 2018. The assessment process issues were being addressed by Management Team.

CR8 – The Lancashire Parent/Carer Forum had now been established.

CR9 – A lot of progress had been made on the discharge of patients in a safe and timely manner from hospital into either their own home or enablement/short term care. County Councillor Gooch reported that delayed transfer of care from hospital figures had reduced by 40% when compared to the previous year. It was hoped that this risk would be able to come off the Register for the next quarter.

CR12 – This was a new entry on the Register 'Unlawful disclosure of personal or commercial data caused by a deliberate or accidental or technical breach, resulting in a risk to the rights and freedoms of the data subject or the intellectual property of the county council'. Reported incidents could be categorised as follows:

Theft/loss (mobiles/laptops)

Human error (information sent to the wrong address)

Misconduct (accessing information an employee is not entitled to access)

It was reported that there were very few misconduct incidents although there had been an increase in reportable incidents as a whole across the country. Various controls had been put in place to comply with the new General Data Protection Regulations including a mandatory E-learning course for staff. Work was also being done to promote awareness and BTLS were looking at introducing a more secure software system. The Cabinet Committee noted that numbers of reports to the Information Commissioners Office fluctuated but were very low (single figures).

Resolved: That the Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement note the updated Corporate Risk and Opportunity Register.

5. Quarterly Corporate Performance Monitoring Report Quarter 1 2018/19

A report was presented by Donna Talbot, Head of Service, Business Intelligence, providing an overview of performance activity across the council for Quarter 1 of 2018/19.

Education and Children's Services

It was reported that the number of looked after children had continued to increase both in Lancashire and regionally with over 2,000 looked after children in Lancashire. This was a real concern and various ways of reducing this figure were currently being looked at including looking at those children on Care Orders and the possible revocation of these, and ways in which we could prevent children coming into care, through a successful Life Chances Fund bid. There were rising numbers of children looked after in Preston and Burnley so these were the priority areas. In response to a query from County Councillor Driver, Sally Allen, Head of Safeguarding, Inspection and Audit, agreed to find out why numbers had risen in these areas.

There had also been a rise in the number of referrals from the Police: County Councillor Driver queried whether this should be raised through the Children's Services Improvement Board.

The Cabinet Committee noted that retention rates for newly qualified social workers had continued to improve.

The adoption service had been rated Good in the recent Ofsted re-inspection. The average time between a child entering care and being placed with their adoptive family had continued to improve. Sally Allen confirmed that, when looking to place children, the county council also looked at prospective adopters who had registered with independent adoption agencies. Lancashire was also successful at finding permanent homes for hard to place children.

It was reported that permanent exclusions in all schools were increasing and that rates in Lancashire were higher than regional and national comparators; John Readman was currently looking into this issue.

Adult Services and Public Health

The Cabinet Committee noted there were still concerns about the level of permanent residential admissions for older people and that various options were being considered to reduce this figure. It was reported that Chorley Council was currently developing Primrose Gardens Extra Care Scheme, consisting of apartments for 55s and over, enabling them to live independently whilst providing onsite staff, planned care for those with an eligible care need and shared communal areas including a café and hairdressing salon. A similar project in Burnley was currently being looked into.

Troubled Families Unit

There was a discussion about the government term 'Troubled Families Unit'. The Cabinet recommended that, for Lancashire, the programme should instead be called the Supporting Families Unit.

Ofsted Post Inspection Update

Sally Allen, Head of Safeguarding, Inspection and Audit, reported that the Inspectors had recognised the significant improvements made since their last inspection, and that the overall effectiveness judgement was Requires Improvement. The county council had been described as a committed and responsible Corporate Parent and strong partnerships had been referred to throughout the report, together with positive participation and engagement from children and young people.

One of the areas for improvement was that further work was required to improve the educational attainment of children looked after at Key Stage 4. The report also identified that, whilst there was a high number of care leavers age 16 and 17 in education, employment or training, these numbers reduced through the ages of 19 to 21. County Councillor Driver stated that we needed to know why this was happening.

The Adoption Service was judged to be a strength and the report stated that leadership and governance was increasingly effective, and that strategic plans were now better aligned and partnerships with key agencies were working more effectively.

The report noted that further work with partners was required to improve our response to children and families affected by domestic abuse. The Committee were informed that a Domestic Abuse Task Group had also been established.

The Cabinet Committee noted that care leavers had a positive and confident view of the local authority as a corporate parent, and appreciated the higher profile they now had.

It was reported that a new Children's Services Improvement Plan was scheduled to be considered by Cabinet in November which would address the 11 recommendations of the inspection.

A link to the full inspection report was provided for the information of the Cabinet Committee.

County Councillor Driver wished to place on record his thanks to all staff involved with the inspection for all their hard work.

Resolved: That the Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement note the reported performance for quarter 1 of 2018/19 and the Children's Services inspection update information provided.

6. Statutory Social Care Annual Report for 2017/18 - Complaints and Customer Feedback

A report was presented by Angela Esslinger, Complaints and Appeals Manager, providing complaints and customer feedback on statutory social care complaints for children and young people and adults for 2017/18.

It was reported that 540 adult social care complaints had been received in 2017/18, which was an increase of 13% from the previous year. However, there was nearly twice as many compliments, with a total of 1009 being received in 2017/18. In addition, the Stage 0 complaints, which were those which had been resolved early in the process, had almost doubled compared to last year and complaints to the Local Government Ombudsman had seen a slight increase this year.

Details of the Joint Complaints Protocol involving Unitary Authorities, Clinical Commissioning Groups and Health Trusts in Lancashire were provided to the Cabinet Committee.

It was reported that 265 statutory complaints had been received in relation to children's social care, which was an overall increase by just over 20% from the previous year. No Stage 3 Review Panels had been held in 2017/18. The increase in Stage 0 complaints had risen from 60 in 2016/17 to 150 in 2017/18. There had been a decrease in Local Government Ombudsman children's social care complaints of 50% (from 47 in 2016/17 to 23 in 2017/18).

In relation to non-statutory children's social care complaints, these dropped by just over 6%, from 93 in 2016/17 to 87 in 2017/18 and social work practice was the most common complaint category – the same as for statutory complaints.

The Committee noted there had been a welcome rise in compliments for children's social care; a total of 148 compliments were received in 2017/18 compared to 58 in 2016/17, due to the incorporation of compliments from other children and young people's services.

It was reported that complaints represented just under 2 per cent of all active adult social care and children's social care cases throughout Lancashire in 2017/18.

Details of identified learning for all complaints were set out in the report.

The Committee were informed that a compliment had been received from the Local Government Ombudsman in relation to the way a specific joint complaint across health and social care had been handled.

Resolved: That the Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement note the statutory social care complaints annual report for children and young people and adults for 2017/18, acknowledging the associated learning.

7. Urgent Business

There were no items of Urgent Business.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement would be held on Wednesday 5th December 2018 at 2.00pm in Committee Room B – The Diamond Jubilee Room, County Hall, Preston.

L Sales
Director of Corporate Services

County Hall
Preston