

Lancashire County Council

Children's Services Scrutiny Committee

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday, 5th December, 2018 at 2.00 pm
in Committee Room 'C' - The Duke of Lancaster Room, County Hall, Preston**

Present:

County Councillor Andrea Kay (Chair)

County Councillors

N Hennessy	J Mein
I Brown	J Rear
A Gardiner	M Salter
P V Greenall	D T Smith
Ms S Malik	M Tomlinson

Co-opted members

Councillor Stella Brunskill, Children's Partnership
Board - Hyndburn, Ribble Valley, Rossendale

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Gail Goodman and Councillor Gail Goodman.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

None were disclosed.

3. Minutes from the meeting held on 10 October 2018

Resolved: That the minutes from the meeting held on the 10 October 2018 be confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

4. Progress Update - Lancashire Parent Carer Forum

The Chair welcomed Samantha Jones, Chair of the Lancashire Parent Carer Forum (LPCF) and Clare Carsley from the LPCF to the meeting, along with David Graham, Head of SEND and Gareth Jenkins, SEND Partnership Communications and Engagement Lead.

A verbal update was provided to the committee on the progress to date around the formation of the Lancashire Parent Carer Forum (LPCF).

It was reported that the LPCF had links with key stakeholders i.e. the local authority and councillors. The LPCF had active involvement with the local authority and was being listened to and consulted with.

It was highlighted that there were email addresses available on the webpages for the Send Partnership and the LPCF which enabled parents to easily contact any of the three regional hubs based in the North, South and East of the county.

Members were informed that the LPCF currently had limited interaction with schools and the Youth Justice Board and was now looking at ways to strengthen links. It was highlighted that the LPCF was part of the SEND Partnership Board which included head teachers and representatives from across the county as part of its membership. There were also strong links with the Head Teachers Association that could be utilised. The committee felt that it would be a good idea for the LPCF to be invited to the Lancashire Association of Special School Head Teachers meetings.

There was also plans for the LPCF to meet with the three regionally based District Clinical Officers (DCOs) about how they were reaching out to parents.

It was reported that there was considerable interest from councillors and the LPCF was looking to involve councillors more and work with them as partners to understand their community's needs.

Regarding the future, the committee enquired what the LPCF's biggest challenge was and what county councillors could do to help. Members were advised that the LPCF has new members with fresh ideas, who were willing to work with councillors. The biggest aim of the LPCF was to reach out to parents who were in need of help.

It was noted that the LPCF was not a campaign group. There was training available for members along with a confidentiality agreement and a terms of reference in place.

Resolved: That;

- i. The update be noted.
- ii. Information be circulated to school clusters on the work of the LPCF.
- iii. Information be circulated to all councillors on the work of the LPCF.

5. Lancashire's Children's Services Development Plan

The Chair welcomed Sally Allen, Acting Director of Children's Social Care, to the meeting. The report presented to the committee the draft 'Better for Children: Lancashire's Children's Services Development Plan' due to be approved at Cabinet on 3 December 2018. It set out the actions required to address the 11 recommendations from the recent Children's Services Ofsted inspection report, further improving the quality of practice and outcomes for children.

Regarding improvement of the quality of assessments, the committee felt that rather than the plan stating, 'Deliver training on good assessments' it would be better to say, 'Deliver training on assessments as per best practice'. So instead of using 'good assessments' replace with 'best practice assessments'. This would be fed back to the Children's Services Team.

As best practice was constantly developing the committee enquired if the Children's Services Team was looking at what other authorities were doing. The committee was informed that the Children's Services Team was part of a regional network and it recognised the need to look around the region to see what best practice was. It was important to look at the national picture as well.

It was highlighted that the 2015 inspection identified concerns around the children's services audit. A new audit framework was established after the inspection and staff were trained up to undertake audits and as a result, the children's services audit came out as a strength in the 2018 inspection.

There were concerns raised over the robustness of timescales for targets. Members felt the timescales were ambitious and wanted reassurance they could be met. They were informed that some of the targets were underway and the Children's Services Team had not waited for the Development Plan to be finalised to start the work required.

Regarding staff morale the committee was informed that there had been a staff survey carried out and in terms of feedback children's services had come out well but the challenge ahead could not be underestimated.

In terms of complaints, especially around personal education plans, members asked where they fitted into the development plan. Personal education plans were part of the continued improvement around practice. This came under the corporate parenting part of the plan. There was no specific section of the plan which focused on complaints but the Children's Services Team was looking at the audit trail as part of this, which included looking at feedback from children and families.

The question of what the Children's Services Committee could do to support this work was raised. It was highlighted that priority areas included the Social Workers Academy.

Resolved: That;

- i. The information provided in the report be noted.
- ii. Suggestions from the committee on the draft plan be fed back.

6. Children and Family Wellbeing Service: Responses to Consultation and Final Proposals

The Chair welcomed Debbie Duffell, Head of Children and Family Wellbeing Service; Judith Gault, Senior Manager Children and Wellbeing Service; and Mel Ormesher, Head of Asset Management, to the meeting.

The report presented stated that at the Full Council meeting on 8 February 2018, proposals were approved to reduce the number of settings from which the Children and Family Wellbeing Service (CFW) delivered its service offer subject to consultation. The outcome of the consultation was presented to Cabinet and received final approval on 8 November 2018. As a result of this Cabinet had made decisions in terms of the number of buildings that would be retained as a service delivery for the authority and the number of buildings that the service delivery would be withdrawn from.

The committee was informed that the service did not have the staffing resources to cover the number of buildings it had. The CFW service was currently being monitored under the Children's Centre Framework to see if was reaching out to the local communities.

It was highlighted that the biggest challenge facing the CFW service was to make sure it made the most effective use of the resources it had to be able to deliver the right support to families. It was important to reduce the demand on the CFW's statutory services by delivering effective early help.

The CFW service was hoping to have its review completed by early February 2019 with the aim to go back to Cabinet in March 2019 with the final recommendations.

Resolved: That;

- i. The report presented be noted.
- ii. An update from the Children and Family Wellbeing Service be provided to the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee in 6 months.

7. Report of the Supporting Pupils at Special Schools with Medical Conditions Task and Finish Group

County Councillor Ian Brown updated the committee with the report of the Supporting Pupils at Special Schools with Medical Conditions Task and Finish Group.

Resolved: That;

- i. The recommendations of the Task and Finish Group be supported.
- ii. The relevant Cabinet Members and officers from the NHS and the county council be invited to attend the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee

meeting scheduled for 27 February 2019, to present their responses to the Task and Finish Group's recommendations.

8. Children's Services Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2018/19

The work plan for the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee for the 2018/19 municipal year was presented. The topics included were identified at the work planning workshop held on 10 July 2018.

There was a request for an update on the Children's Services Development Plan to come to a future meeting of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee.

Resolved: That the report presented be noted.

9. Urgent Business

There were no items of Urgent Business.

10. Date of the Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee will take place on Wednesday 16 January 2019 at 2:00pm in Cabinet Room 'C' (The Duke of Lancaster Room) at the County Hall, Preston.

L Sales
Director of Corporate Services

County Hall
Preston