

Lancashire County Council

Children's Services Scrutiny Committee

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday, 9th October, 2019 at 10.30 am
in Cabinet Room 'C' - The Duke of Lancaster Room, County Hall, Preston**

Present:

County Councillor Andrea Kay (Chair)

County Councillors

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| N Hennessy | J Mein |
| I Brown | D T Smith |
| J Eaton | M Tomlinson |
| J Gibson | |

Co-opted members

County Councillors Jimmy Eaton and Julie Gibson replaced County Councillors Malcolm Barron and Lorraine Beavers respectively.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from County Councillor Paul V Greenall and Councillor Louise Edge, Children's Partnership Board Hyndburn, Ribble Valley, Rossendale.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

None were disclosed.

3. Minutes from the meeting held on 3 July 2019

Resolved: That the minutes from the meeting held on the 3 July 2019 be confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

4. Participation Strategic Framework

The Chair welcomed Dave Carr, Head of Policy, Information and Commissioning; Gavin Redhead, Strategy Lead for Participation; and Oliver Moores, Youth Council representative, to the meeting.

The report presented provided an opportunity for members of Children's Services Scrutiny Committee to review the draft Participation of Children and Young People Strategic Framework 2020 – 2023. It also shared a current example of a

participation project that had been co-produced with members of Lancashire Youth Council.

In early 2019 the Strategy Lead for Participation reviewed current participation practice and policy across Lancashire and a number of areas where improvements could be made were identified.

The framework for participation would ensure that there was clear evidence of improved outcomes as a result of family participation and would evidence where changes had been made as result.

Members enquired how all the services and agencies would link so as to work well together. Through the Strategic Framework it was hoped that external services would open up their participation channels to make sure children were influencing these services.

The committee was advised that connecting with schools was a challenge due to the number of schools in Lancashire. It was felt the best approach was to connect them to locality youth councils and they could then bring their voice to Lancashire Youth Council.

The committee raised the question of how Lancashire County Council was going to embed the framework into other agencies i.e. CCGs and local councils, etc. and how would these agencies be supported in the participation process. Members were informed that there were many partnership arrangements in place and a whole range of boards and government structures that could be utilised to support this framework. Regarding support, the county council would be able to highlight good practice but could not be the sole resource for participation. At the moment 35 participation champions had been identified in various services and agencies. Members requested a list of these participation champions for their district councils. They also requested an update in the future on how this work was progressing.

Ollie Moores, Lancashire Youth Council (LYC) representative, was welcomed to give a presentation on the LYC's research into knife crime. This presentation provided members with a good example of how participation with children and young people can be undertaken. When asked if he enjoyed the research process, Ollie pointed out that the best was yet to come when LYC received the data back to see what could be done with this data to make a difference to our communities.

The committee thanked Ollie for a great presentation (see attached).

Resolved: That;

- i. The principles and priorities of the draft Strategic Framework be considered.
- ii. The proposed monitoring and governance arrangements be noted.
- iii. The Lancashire Youth Council research project be noted.

- iv. Details of the network of participation champions when identified be circulated to all councillors to assist with supporting a 'culture of participation'.
- v. A progress report be provided to a future meeting of the committee.
- vi. Information on the questionnaire to schools be circulated to committee members to support generating responses.

5. Inspection of Youth Offending Services in Lancashire

The Chair welcomed Barbara Bath, Head of Fostering, Adoption, Residential and YOT, to the meeting.

The report presented provided the committee with an update following Lancashire's Youth Offending Team (YOT) inspection in April/May 2019 by HM Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) as a full joint inspection. The inspection covered three domains, Organisational Delivery, Court Disposals and Out-of-Court Disposals. The overall rating was 'Good' with six recommendations made by the inspectorate.

Members were informed that a post Inspection action plan was developed in response to the six recommendations. The plan had been shared with the Lancashire Youth Justice Management Board and key partners were supporting the progress on relevant actions.

Regarding the YOT's current performance it was measured nationally against three indicators, first time offenders, reoffenders and youths in custody. It was reported that it was vital to have participation in engagement with young people and all young people who received a service from the YOT were asked to complete a self-assessment questionnaire on the progress they had made and how the service helped them.

There was an analysis of the feedback from these questionnaires every six months. Feedback was generally positive and that the service had provided them with opportunities and alternatives. Parents were also asked to feedback.

In terms of the Action Plan and the 'buddy' system for individual practitioners and managers to be offered one to one support with a 'buddy', the committee enquired how far this had progressed. Members were advised that the YOT had already started to identify a buddying process for practitioners and managers and this process was now being embedded. The committee was informed that there had been staff vacancies that had impacted on caseloads. However there had now been appointments made to these vacancies and staff would be appointed buddies on commencement of employment.

It was noted that the National Youth Justice Board had this year launched new national standards that all youth offending teams had to work to and this put greater emphasis on Lancashire's Youth Offending Management Board to have more strategic governance overview.

The committee enquired about education and job prospects for young people in the service. It was noted that after the YOT's restructure in 2018, a Specialist Education and Employment Training Officer post was created. Also the YOT was able to accredit young people with an AQA. The AQA was an education charity that provided qualifications that enabled young people to progress to the next stage in their lives.

The question of how the participation strategy would fit into the YOT was raised. Members were informed that the YOT had been given permission for two apprenticeship posts to lead in participation.

It was pointed out to the committee the number of first time offenders was reducing nationally and locally. This was down to diversions from putting young people through the criminal justice system. Since the restructure the YOT now had a prevention service and a diversion service and it was hoped this would reduce the number of young people that went through the courts.

Resolved: That;

- i. The report be noted.
- ii. A briefing note be provided to committee members in March 2020 on the post inspection action plan progress.

6. Children's Services Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2019/20

The new work programme for the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee for the 2019/20 municipal year was presented.

The topics included were identified at the work planning workshop held on 22 July 2019.

Regarding the November 2019 meeting, topic of Permanence would now be an agenda item along with Child Poverty. In terms of the Child Poverty item, the committee was asked to select key focus areas to be included as part of the item. The following areas were selected:

- Holiday hunger
- Food banks
- Poverty fuelling knife crime
- Housing and housing conditions
- How it effects education and the difference the pupil premium makes
- Armed forces funding
- Data on child poverty at district and Lancashire level

Given the number of topics listed, it was suggested by the Chair that child poverty topics were broken down and included in every meeting of the committee.

Resolved: That;

- i. The report presented be noted.
- ii. The topic of Permanence be included on the agenda for the November 2019 meeting of the committee
- iii. The key focus areas listed be included as part of the child poverty item.

7. Urgent Business

There were no items of Urgent Business.

8. Date of the Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee will take place on Thursday 28 November 2019 at 10:30am in Cabinet Room 'D' (The Henry Bolingbroke Room) at the County Hall, Preston.

L Sales
Director of Corporate Services

County Hall
Preston