

Lancashire County Council

Children, Families and Skills Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday, 1st November, 2023 at 10.30 am in Committee Room 'C' - The Duke of Lancaster Room, County Hall, Preston

Present:

County Councillor Sue Hind (Chair)

County Councillors

M Clifford	J Potter
S Barnes	R Woollam
A Cheetham	N Khan
L Cox	P Britcliffe
A Hindle	S Clarke
T Hurn	

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from County Councillor Stewart Jones.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

None.

3. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 20 September 2023

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 20 September 2023 be confirmed as an accurate record.

4. Young People in Education, Employment or Training and Young People not in Education, Employment or Training

The Chair welcomed County Councillor Jayne Rear, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, Julie Bell, Interim Director of Education, Skills and Culture, Aby Hardy, Head of Education Improvement and Sarah Hirst, 16-19 Education and Skills Lead to the meeting.

The committee considered a report that provided an update to the report presented at the April 2023 meeting on the work the council was doing to support young people into education, employment, or training (EET) after they had completed their compulsory school education.

A presentation was also provided to the committee, a copy of which is attached to the minutes.

Comments and queries raised from the committee were as follows:

- Ensuring a young person in employment would continue to receive future training to advance their skills and enhance their prospects for the future, was important to the committee, and it was noted that the council was continuing to work with employers to upskill their workforce and were continuing to provide training for young people to ensure they were given the necessary skills and training for future career aspects.
- Young people in Lancashire who were residing in the county and in care or leaving care between the ages of 12 and 25 received support from the Employment and Support Team within the Virtual School. It was also noted that the support also extended to those who had an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) and a SEND employment officer had been employed by the council specifically to look at that cohort. Additionally, to enable young people, including those with SEND, to advance in further education, the council had worked closely with colleges to make sure that the necessary qualifications and courses were available.
- It was expected that Lancashire County Council would get funding for post-16 education as part of the Devolution Deal, and it was highlighted that the districts must be involved in any youth-related initiatives in their local communities.
- The purpose of the recently established Youth Futures Team was to offer young people who were not in employment, education or training, impartial support and guidance. The team was currently running as a pilot programme and would be reviewed after 18 months to determine whether it had the desired effect and whether the team could then be operated throughout the county.
- The Youth Futures Team priority was to engage with young people who were not in education, employment or training and would originally be focused on the three priority districts of Preston, Burnley and Lancaster due to the levels of new to the country and new to the area living in those districts. However, all districts would continue to be looked at.
- Talks with colleges had already started in response to the government's announcement that A-levels and T-levels would be abolished. However, because the details of the plan were still quite vague, it was challenging for the council and colleges to plan ahead and have a clear idea of how the change may look in the future.
- The county council had a statutory duty to monitor all children who were not in education, employment or training and living in Lancashire, regardless of



their place of origin, even if they were placed there by another local authority or were under the supervision of another local authority.

- The Youth Offending Team were responsible in providing support for employment, education, and training to any young person who was on remand following a criminal offence. They would also make sure that the young person would either be supported into returning to school, if they were still of school age, or if they were 16 or 17, they would support them into finding employment or further education or training.
- It was noted that the new Advanced British Standard required young people to continue to take Maths and English up to the age of 18, and the committee asked if this would have any impact on the figures for young people not in employment, education or training. However, it was clarified that there was already a requirement for young people who failed English and Maths to retake them up until they were 18, so the introduction of the new Advanced British Standard wouldn't necessarily have any impact on the figures of young people not in education, employment or training.
- The committee asked why the figures in Tables 7, 8, and 9 of the report showed that fewer young people were finding work in the public sector, it was noted that this was likely due to the young people's preference rather than the fact that there were fewer opportunities to work in the public sector. It would, however, be looked into and reported back to the committee.
- Having the most recent contact information for those young people who were in the 'Not Know' figures as stated in the report, was one of the county council's biggest. However, the Youth's Future Team continues to search for new ways to get in touch with those young people in order to help reduce the number of 'Not Known' young people and make sure the county council had the most recent data on those young people.
- The county council did not keep track of refugees' employment, training, or apprenticeship status because it was not incorporated into the regular reporting system. However, this could be considered in the future via data collected by colleges.
- It was suggested that the Youth Futures Team be invited to a future meeting to hear from their experiences, to share the progress of their work, and if they had encountered any barriers.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member and officers for answering the committees' questions.



Resolved: That the following recommendations be shared with the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills:

- i. The Youth Futures Team be invited to attend a future meeting of the Children, Families and Skills Scrutiny Committee to talk about their work, the progress they have made and any challenges and barriers they have faced.

5. School Place Planning Annual Update

The Chair welcomed Mel Ormesher, Head of Service Asset Management to the meeting.

The committee considered a report that provided the annual update on school place planning in Lancashire against the School Place Planning Strategy 2022-25, the School Place Delivery Programme 2023-25, and provided an update on academy conversion.

A presentation was also provided to the committee, a copy of which is attached to the minutes.

Comments and queries raised from the committee were as follows:

- The committee expressed concerns about the lack of detail in the report about the new school programme, specifically in the Northwest Preston area, it was noted that three proposals for new schools had been submitted for that area. Two primary schools and a secondary school were proposed for the former Whittingham Hospital and Cottam Hall sites, respectively, and the Tulketh High School site. It was requested a report be presented to a future meeting of the committee to consider the new schools programme in Northwest Preston, taking into consideration the outcome of the consultation, feedback from existing schools and what that meant in terms of the next stage.
- The term "internal remodelling", as shown in the delivery plans in Appendix 'C' of the report was clarified for the committee and it was noted that it was about reconfiguring the internal structure of the school. However, it was highlighted that the Department for Education (DfE) had clear guidance on the use of education land and what the council could and couldn't do on the land. A copy of this guidance could be circulated to the committee.
- Before a decision was made to dispose of any county council-owned land designated for educational purposes, the land was first included in the council's long-term forecasting models and any local plans to see if the land was needed or could be needed in the future.
- The county council was still extending SEND places in mainstream schools and work was continuing with the inclusion services to see what was being proposed for expanding special schools, making sure that it was appropriate



in terms of forecasting, and that the best place was being established to meet that child's needs.

- Regarding forecasting, it was highlighted during the Inquiry Day that some places changed from a hot spot to a cold spot, it was suggested that a letter be written to established schools in areas where they felt destabilised. The committee would receive confirmation once the letter had been circulated.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member and officers for answering the committees' questions.

Resolved: That the following recommendations be shared with the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills:

- i. A report to be presented to a future meeting of the committee to consider the new schools programme in Northwest Preston, taking into consideration the outcome of the consultation, feedback from existing schools and what that means in terms of the next stage.

6. Work Programme 2023/24

The committee considered a report which provided information on the work programme for the Children, Families and Skills Scrutiny Committee.

It was suggested if the committee meeting scheduled on 1 May 2024 could be moved, as it was the day before the local elections.

It was also noted that attached at Appendix 'B' of the report was the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills and the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport responses to the committee's recommendations, following its review of the report on the School Place Planning Inquiry Day on the 20 September 2023 and committee members were asked if they had any comments on the responses.

Among the comments raised included concerns about school transportation, bus routes, bus fares due to the distance a child lived from a school and the lack of public transportation. The Cabinet Member and officers noted the comments raised by the committee.

Resolved: That;

- i. The Children, Families and Skills Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2023/24 be noted; and
- ii. The response to recommendations of the School Place Planning Inquiry Day be noted.

7. Urgent Business

There were no items of Urgent Business.



8. Date of Next Meeting

It was noted the next meeting of the Children, Families and Skills Scrutiny Committee would take place on Wednesday 13 December 2023 at 10:30am at County Hall, Preston.

H MacAndrew
Director of Law and Governance

County Hall
Preston

