

Lancashire County Council

Education Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 19th July, 2016 at 10.30 am in Cabinet Room 'C' - The Duke of Lancaster Room, County Hall, Preston

Present:

County Councillor Cynthia Dereli (Chair)

County Councillors

P Buckley	S Holgate
Mrs S Charles	A Kay
A Cheetham	D Lord
B Dawson	G Molineux
G Dowding	Y Motala
J Gibson	D T Smith

Co-opted members

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

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Dr Sam Johnson who has replaced Fred Kershaw as the representative for CE Schools.

County Councillor Julie Gibson attended on behalf of County Councillor Misfar Hassan, County Councillor Yousuf Motala attended on behalf of County Councillor Bev Murray, County Councillor Gina Dowding attended on behalf of County Councillor Sandra Perkins and County Councillor Steve Holgate attended on behalf of County Councillor Chris Henig.

The Chair welcomed to the meeting:
Bob Stott, Director for Education, Schools and Care
Alison Kenny, Early Education and Learning Improvement Team Leader

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of interest in relation to matters appearing on the agenda.

3. Appointment of Chair and Deputy Chair

Resolved: That the appointment of County Councillor Cynthia Dereli as Chair of the Committee and County Councillor Peter Buckley as Deputy Chair for 2016/17 be noted.

4. Constitution, Membership and Terms of Reference

The Committee received the report which set out the constitution, membership and terms of reference of the Education Scrutiny Committee for the municipal year 2016/17.

Resolved: That the membership and terms of reference for the 2016/17 municipal year be noted.

5. Minutes of the meeting held on 5 April 2016

Resolved: That the minutes from the meeting held on the 5 April 2016 be confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

6. Proposals for Designated Children's Centres

Bob Stott, Director for Education, Schools and Care, presented to the Committee the current patterns and future proposals of service delivery in Lancashire which constitutes the children's centre offer.

Committee members were advised that the designated children's centres proposal formed part of a wider Property Strategy consultation which was due to end on the 14th August 2016, with final proposals to Cabinet for approval on the 8 September 2016.

Information detailing the percentage changes in access from the current provision to the proposed delivery sites was highlighted to the Committee which indicated a drop of 4% in access for 0-4 year olds in the most deprived areas and 17% in the less deprived areas (LDAs). It was confirmed that the rationale behind the drop in access in the LDAs was that there would potentially be better access to transport.

Members of the Committee were invited to comment and raise questions and a summary of the discussion is set out below:

- It was confirmed that consultation was taking place with health around the wellbeing agenda.
- A question was raised in relation to the implications for those families in the most deprived areas and whether the percentage reduction in access was evenly spread. It was confirmed that further information would be made available.
- A request was made for further detailed information at a district level around the geographical locations and distances to the proposed delivery sites,

particularly in areas of rurality and where there were pockets of most deprived areas within LDAs.

- Members felt that the timescales from the end of the consultation to final approval was limited and requested assurance that enough time and consideration would be given to responses.
- Members were assured that close links have been made with teams across children's services to identify any potential impact from these proposals.
- An issue was raised in relation to consideration given to the reduction in bus routes which may impact on families being able to access children's centres and it was suggested that the Bus Services Working Group be asked to specifically respond to the consultation regarding the impact on travel to children's centres.
- It was felt that further information was required around the relocation of services particularly on any changes to the current service offer. In addition, members queried the rationale around the suitability of buildings for the co-location of services (for 0-25 year olds). Members were advised that the team were looking hard at access and suitability depending on services to be delivered.
- Concerns were raised from members about the transitional period and further information was requested around this area of work.

County Councillor Matthew Tomlinson, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools was then welcomed to the Committee. Members were advised that although assurances could not be given on service level at this time, the youth provision would not cease and early help remained key to supporting the demand on children's social care services.

Resolved: That

- i. The report be noted.
- ii. The Committee's concerns and comments be noted.
- iii. A formal response from the Committee to the proposals be submitted.
- iv. A breakdown by district on the access to the proposed sites for the most deprived areas be requested.
- v. Assurance that sufficient time and consideration be given to the volume of responses received and to allow for any further changes to the proposals.
- vi. Assurance that links would be made in relation to the reduction in bus services and the impact for the proposed sites.
- vii. A request be submitted from the Committee to the Bus Services Working Group to request a response to the consultation and to indicate if there is possible overlap in changes to both the children's centre location and bus service reduction.
- viii. A report to come back to the November meeting of the Committee after the conclusion of the consultation around the proposed service offer including further detail on the risks outlined in the report, how the transitional period would be managed, and the impact on the rural and most deprived communities.

7. Early Education and Early Years, School Improvement Service

Alison Kenny, Early Education and Learning Improvement Team Lead, School Improvement Service, provided information to the Committee on the Early Education and Early Years Teams, School Improvement Service.

The Early Years Consultants Team were reported to provide support to the private, voluntary and independent (PVI) childcare settings around the quality improvements in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). It was confirmed that 95% of the PVI settings were judged as good or outstanding by Ofsted. Members were informed that the focus of Ofsted inspections in these settings included leadership and management, safeguarding, wellbeing and the quality of the learning environment.

The Quality Childcare Development Team was reported to provide targeted work to newly registered childminders and settings and those due to be inspected to offer support and guidance.

Members were advised that the ratios for childminders were dependent on the child's age and that the team work with newly registered childminders to understand these ratios.

In response to a query regarding complaints, members were assured that any complaint from parents would go to Ofsted in the first instance. Ofsted will then advise the team so that the service can target work with that setting or childminder.

Members were informed that from September 2017, the Free Early Education (FEE) funding would be increased to 30 hours. As a result of this, there could be additional pressure to ensure there would be enough childcare. The team were reported to be currently working with the sector to plan for this. Members were assured that the market has always met demand and this was likely to continue.

The Safeguarding Officer post was reported to have an active role in serious case reviews (SCR) as well as supporting settings offering safeguarding advice. Members questioned whether one post was sufficient to carry out these duties effectively and were assured that safeguarding also plays a significant part of both the Early Years Consultants and Quality Childcare Development teams. In addition, this role worked closely with the Safeguarding Team and the Early Education and Early Years Team Leader for the SCR work.

The Childcare Sufficiency Officer role was reported to be assisting with the preparation for the 30 hours FEE funding as part of the overall work to ensure childcare sufficiency in Lancashire. Members were informed that school readiness formed part of this role. In response to a query relating to the children's centre proposal, it was confirmed that there may be some impact on childcare settings which are currently based in children's centres and information has been fed back into the wider property strategy.

It was reported that in addition to providing support, advice and guidance to parents on childcare in Lancashire, the Family Information Service also had a key role in signposting parents to a number of services.

Resolved: That

- i. Officer be thanked for the report and attendance at the meeting.
- ii. The report be noted.
- iii. The Committee's concerns and comments be noted.
- iv. A further report would be provided for the Committee in November.

8. Outcomes of the White Paper

Bob Stott, Director for Education, Schools and Care, presented an update to the Committee on the outcomes of the White Paper.

The Committee was advised that meetings were attended across Lancashire to discuss the outcomes of the White Paper which included Primary Heads in Lancashire (PHiL), Lancashire Association of Secondary School Heads (LASSH), the Sounding Board Group and the Diocesan Liaison Group. It was highlighted to members that one of the changes around the introduction of a national funding formula was of great significance. This change would entail schools to be funded directly by 2018-19 and it was reported that local authorities would only have responsibility for the high needs funding for special educational needs and alternative provision.

Members were informed that there were to be a number of conferences held in the autumn term to further discuss the implications around the proposed national schools funding formula. In addition, these conferences would discuss the proposal on academies and Multi Academy Trusts (MATs). It was reported that MATs were the future model as opposed to the Single Academy Trusts (SATs) which form the majority of the academy schools currently.

It was confirmed that bite size briefings on the funding will take place when information has been made available.

Members of the Committee were invited to comment and raise questions and a summary of the discussion is set out below:

- Members queried the free school option and were advised that the view was that free schools would potentially be new schools only. In addition, members were assured that although there were only a few free schools currently in Lancashire, they do engage with the local authority and are formally consulted on the opening of any new free schools.
- It was confirmed that cross boundaries MATs were already in place.
- Members raised concerns around the local authorities' responsibilities if the national funding formula was to go ahead and its future role with schools.

- It was suggested that the chair and deputy chair would be invited to attend the conferences in the autumn and that attendance would be open to other members of the Committee.

Resolved: That

- i. That the report be noted.
- ii. The Committee's concerns and comments be noted.
- iii. A special meeting or work shop of the Education Scrutiny Committee could be convened at the end of October if further information became available.
- iv. Dates of the upcoming conferences in the autumn be circulated to committee members.

9. Burnley University Technical College

Bob Stott, Director for Education, Schools and Care presented a position statement to the Committee on the situation around the closure of Burnley University Technical College in summer 2016.

Committee members agreed that this was a significant report as it highlighted a question around how this situation would be addressed if this school was part of a MAT. In addition, it was felt that this highlighted potential issues within the skills agenda as this was a clear pathway for young people yet did not succeed.

Resolved: That the position statement and comments be noted.

10. Work Plan

Wendy Broadley, Scrutiny Officer, presented the report on the draft workplan to the Committee which had been updated to include current and future topics for scrutiny.

Resolved: That

- i. The workplan be noted.
- ii. The workplan be updated following discussions from the items on Early Education and Early Years, Outcomes of the White Paper and Proposals for Designated Children's Centres.

11. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

12. Date of the Next Meeting

Resolved: That future meetings of the Education Scrutiny Committee will have a start time of 10.30am.

The next meeting of the Education Scrutiny Committee is due to be held on Tuesday 29 November at 10.30am in Cabinet Room 'C', County Hall, Preston.

I Young
Director of Governance, Finance
and Public Services

County Hall
Preston