

Lancashire County Council

Children's Services Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday, 11th April, 2018 at 2.00 pm in Cabinet Room 'C' - The Duke of Lancaster Room, County Hall, Preston

Present:

County Councillor Andrea Kay (Chair)

County Councillors

N Hennessy	H Khan
I Brown	J Rear
A Cheetham	M Salter
L Cox	D T Smith
D Howarth	M Tomlinson

Co-opted members

County Councillor Christian Wakeford, Education Scrutiny Chair
County Councillor Ms Sobia Malik, Education Scrutiny Committee
County Councillor Jenny Molineux, Education Scrutiny Committee
County Councillor Jenny Purcell, Education Scrutiny Committee
County Councillor Cosima Towneley, Education Scrutiny Committee
County Councillor David Stansfield, Education Scrutiny Committee
Mr John Withington, Education Scrutiny Committee

For Children's Services Scrutiny County Councillor Matthew Salter replaced County Councillor Joe Cooney. For Education Scrutiny County Councillors Jenny Purcell and Barrie Yates replaced County Councillors Edward Nash and Stephen Clarke respectively.

In accordance with Standing Order 19(1), members of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee were asked to give consent for members of the Education Scrutiny Committee to speak at the meeting.

1. Apologies

From Children's Services Scrutiny apologies were received from County Councillor Andrew Gardiner, Councillor Gail Goodman and Jess Basquill, Youth

Council Representative. From Education Scrutiny apologies were received from County Councillors Munsif Dad and John Potter, Mr Ian Beck, Mrs Janet Hamid, Dr Sam Johnson and Mr Kenvyn Wales.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

None were disclosed.

3. Minutes from the meeting held on 14 March 2018

Resolved: That the minutes from the meeting held on the 14 March 2018 be confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

4. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities - Service Update

The Chair welcomed David Graham, Head of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities; Steve Belbin, Head of School Improvement; Sally Richardson, Principal Education Psychologist; and David Middleton, Education Psychologist, to the meeting.

The report presented provided an overview on the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) service update following the outcome of the SEND joint local area inspection in November 2017. In addition, information was presented to members on the SEND standards in Lancashire schools for 2017.

Members noted that standards in Lancashire for SEND pupils required improvement. They enquired how the SEND team differentiated between children with mental disabilities and children with physical disabilities. It was reported that the majority of children's needs were met within the school. There were a range of different mechanisms in schools that children with SEN could access which includes braille service for visually impaired children. There was also an Educational Psychologist Service in place to provide advice and support.

Members enquired if average attendance rate for children could be included in the statistics. It was pointed out to members that matching attendance and exclusions against attainment and progress was not possible as the field was too complex. The SEND team stated that standards across Lancashire remained good but there were still certain areas of SEN attainment and progress that required improvement. Children's attainment covered many different areas.

It was noted that attainments would vary by district, by ethnicity, by gender and by SEN. Certain areas of Lancashire were more challenging than others. When the SEND team was successful in bidding for additional funding, the money was used to support the more challenging areas. The team was aware of what challenges it needed to focus on and resources would be allocated accordingly.

LCC was working with schools to improve standards and the children's progression, to raise Lancashire's average to the level of the national average.

Members enquired about how a child that was not improving was measured. It was highlighted that it was about the anticipated progress of the child within his/her limiting condition. Where progress had stalled, intervention would need to be considered. It was about what worked best for the child within the context of the school.

Concerns was raised in relation to support at home for children with sensory impairments to have specialised equipment not just in schools. It was confirmed that a child did not require an EHC Plan to obtain equipment as it was based on assessment and need. If the child required equipment for home as well then support should flow between the school and the home. There were specialist teachers and specialist technicians in place who assessed the child's needs.

The committee felt that in terms of attainment and rates of progress it would be useful to see how schools were compared with each other across the County.

Members were then presented with the draft Lancashire Special Educational Needs and Disability Written Statement of Action (WSoA) which had been produced as a direct response to Lancashire's local area SEND inspection undertaken by Ofsted and the CQC. The WSoA addressed 12 areas of significant concern identified by the inspection. It also described the high level actions that would be taken to address the significant areas of concerns around Lancashire's SEND services.

It was reported that the DfE and NHS would meet bi-monthly with LCC to monitor and judge what progress was being made against the targets that had been set. Reports would then be produced through the SEND Partnership Board which would be shared with both the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee and the Education Scrutiny Committee.

Members enquired if additional resources would be made available for the work through the wider children's services. Some of the SEND Recruitment Partnership Team had been recruited as well as lead improvement partner. A communication and engagement officer would also be recruited. The CCGs and LCC had committed additional resources to support improvement.

In terms of progress, the committee enquired how it would be monitored from the parent and carer's point of view. It was confirmed that the plan would be published on the Local Offer along with updates and progress reports. It was vital to work in close partnership with parents and carers and members welcomed the reconstitution of the Lancashire Parent and Carer Forum.

Regarding engagement, it was reported that the SEND service would work with the Parent and Carer Forum to develop a strategy and approach. A series of engagement events across Lancashire were to be announced shortly through the FINE Newsletter, various groups and through schools. Elected members requested early information on these events and were informed that they were welcome to attend.

On the topic of reducing exclusions, members asked what LCC could do to prevent children being excluded. Exclusions were a real concern for the authority and were also raised by Ofsted. These discussions had been taken to school leaders in terms of working with alternative provision providers such as short stay schools and special schools.

Concerns were raised around the transition period from primary education to secondary education. The committee was informed that the transitional arrangements were good however the experience after transition needed further support. The SEND service would work closely with parents whose children had an EHCP in terms of finding the most appropriate provision.

Resolved: That;

- i. A future report be presented to Education Scrutiny Committee on the progress of support around SEN standards of attainment across all age groups.
- ii. An update on the WSoA plan be circulated to members on a bi-monthly basis. Any areas of significant concern to then be brought back to committee.

5. Work Plan 2017/18

The work plan for the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee for the 2017/18 municipal year was presented. The topics included were identified at the work planning workshop held on 21 June 2017.

Resolved: The report presented be noted.

6. Urgent Business

There were no items of Urgent Business.

7. Date of the Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee will take place on Wednesday 22 May 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

