

Lancashire County Council

Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 17th May 2022 at 10.30 am in
Committee Room 'C' - The Duke of Lancaster Room, County Hall, Preston

Present:

County Councillor Andrea Kay (Chair)

County Councillors

J Berry	S Malik
S Barnes	J Mein
A Cheetham	P Rigby
S Clarke	M Salter
S Hind	A Sutcliffe
T Hurn	R Swarbrick
N Khan	R Woollam

Co-opted members

Mr John Withington, Representing Parent Governors (Primary)

1. Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Mr Daniel Ballard.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

None.

3. Minutes of the Meeting Held on Wednesday 20 April 2022

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 April 2022 be confirmed as an accurate record.

4. Healthy Eating: Rapporteur Report

The Chair welcomed to the meeting County Councillor Michael Green, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing, Sakthi Karunanithi, Director of Public Health, Ruksana Sardar-Akram, Public Health Consultant and Alison Moore, Public Health Specialist.

County Councillors Ash Sutcliffe and Sue Hind provided the committee with a presentation on the healthy eating rapporteur report, a copy of which is included

in the minutes. It was highlighted that there were a number of initiatives to promote healthy eating amongst children, both nationally and in Lancashire, though concern was raised about delays to the Government's plan to restrict the advertisement of unhealthy food and drink.

The rapporteurs' key findings had led to the following recommendations:

Short term:

1. Review and enhance the current communications strategy around all the different projects to promote healthy eating being undertaken across the county, including leaflets/posters on what is available in each area for schools/libraries/GP surgeries etc.
2. The Communications Service to 'launch' the recently signed Healthy Weight Declaration.
3. Further details to all councillors on healthy eating projects in their areas.
4. Councillor kept up to date with new initiatives in their areas to help support the work of the service, utilising the C-First latest news service.

Medium term:

1. Consideration be given to reviewing food advertising policy.
2. Consideration be given to funding support for specific work with teenagers/whole families on healthy eating.
3. Support by given to the implementation of the HENRY project in Lancashire.

Long term:

1. Building links with partner organisations and district councils following a review of food advertising policy.

Members thanked County Councillors Ash Sutcliffe and Sue Hind for their work and, during a period of discussion, comments and queries were raised as follows:

- Members expressed concern that the current cost-of-living crisis was having a significant impact on families' eating habits and were informed that the Public Health team was working closely with other services to minimise its impact. Although national issues were beyond the council's control, it was important to work with families and partners to convey key messages about healthy eating, preparing food better, and the importance of staying active. Healthy options were not always more expensive.
- The committee was informed that, through the school meals programme, the council had reduced school-aged children's salt and sugar intake by 50% over the past 7 years. Members also highlighted the quality of the school meals service provided in Lancashire, which school children had helped to shape.
- Members queried whether children were taught to cook cheap and healthy meals in school and noted the importance of families cooking meals together

from scratch. It was also recognised that the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on families' ability to pay energy bills in turn affected their ability to cook at home. Sakthi Karunanithi advised that the Public Health team was willing to listen to members' suggestions to help ensure that the health of Lancashire's most vulnerable residents was not diminished during such difficult times.

- It was noted that many projects and initiatives to support healthy living were not advertised widely enough, such as The Daily Mile, which some of Lancashire's schools had signed up to. County Councillor Michael Green highlighted the council's willingness to support projects such as this, which could be easily replicated, and asked members to share positive examples. It was suggested that these examples could be promoted via the school's forum.
- In response to concerns that not enough was being done to address early obesity, the committee was informed that there were a number of targeted programmes for children starting school obese. The Public Health team could share information on the schemes in progress currently, including the work of the Community Projects team which worked on related programmes, such as helping families to maximise their income.
- A food strategy was being developed as part of the council's Healthy Weight Declaration. Members highlighted the importance of strategic education about eating and nutrition and working closely with schools to promote healthy eating. It was also noted that almost 70% of adults in Lancashire were overweight or obese, so children were likely to inherit unhealthy eating habits or ways of life. Behaviours needed to change across all ages in order to benefit young people.
- Healthy eating was also a mental health issue and required a holistic response. Members commented that the support available to people with eating disorders in Lancashire was not as good as it should be.
- Members were encouraged to look at community projects local to them, which were supporting families to eat healthy, inexpensive meals. Burnley Community Grocery was highlighted as an example. The project provided families in Burnley with useful information, courses on healthy cooking, and an affordable shop. Additional information would be shared with committee members after the meeting.
- The Youth Council representatives drew the committee's attention to budget cooking courses available for school-aged children during the summer, as well as the importance of providing more outdoor spaces, such as multi-use game areas, which would encourage more children to exercise. Further to comments about the negative impact of social media on children's eating habits, the representatives suggested that a county council social media

campaign could encourage young people to eat healthier. The committee agreed that promoting healthy eating from the perspective of young people was something that should be taken forward.

The Chair thanked members and officers for their contributions to the discussion.

Councillors were asked to share information on local projects or school initiatives that encouraged healthy eating with County Councillor Michael Green, and the Youth Council representatives were asked to carry out their own research on what more could be done to encourage healthy eating.

County Councillor Michael Green also thanked the committee for reviewing such an important topic and highlighted his willingness to consider the committee's recommendations and to work with the Youth Council on this issue.

Resolved: That

- i) The key findings of the rapporteurs on healthy eating be noted; and
- ii) The following recommendations on healthy eating be agreed and shared with the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing:

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5. Young People in Education, Employment or Training

The Chair welcomed to the meeting Delyth Mathieson, Head of Education Improvement and Michele Lawty-Jones, Director of Business Growth at the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

The committee considered a report which provided an update on the number of 16- and 17-year-olds in education, employment, or training (EET) after completing their compulsory school education and the steps being taken to improve this.

The committee's attention was drawn in particular to Appendix 'A' to the report, which highlighted the council's statutory duties relating to 16- and 17-year-olds. Regarding Table 3 included in the appendix, members were advised that the 10 young people for whom Lancashire County Council was their corporate parent, who fell under 'not known' at the time report, were all now looking at EET or already in EET.

It was noted that the county council only had three members of staff working in this area, monitoring circa 28,000 16- and 17-year-olds, so the service worked closely with Blackpool Council, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, and other partners.

Michele Lawty-Jones, Director of Business Growth for the LEP, emphasised that the Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub was keen to raise young people's aspirations and worked closely with local authorities, the LEP and the LEP's Skills and Employment Advisory Panel to do so.

In response to questions from members, it was highlighted that:

- Regarding the recent successful bid for funding from the Careers and Enterprise Company's transition fund, a piece of work was being undertaken to establish where the funding should be allocated.
- Young people were involved in both practical and classroom-based work experience, depending on the nature of the businesses they were interested in.
- Identifying 16- and 17-year-olds who left college early was a challenge and reducing the number of 'not knowns' was an area for improvement, but the council worked with colleges to monitor and support those individuals.
- Approximately 50% of people would go to university. The Skills and Employment Hub was keen to promote a balanced view of career options, including the technical education route. It was important to give young people as much information as possible and encourage them not to make judgements about the prestige of different sectors or jobs.

- The council's Education Strategy contained a number of priorities, including seeking to reduce the number of exclusions so that more young people could benefit from being in school. All schools in Lancashire worked proactively to fulfil their obligations and to improve the outcomes of all children.
- Former youth training schemes had evolved into the apprenticeship programme, which allowed young people to enter practical careers whilst achieving a qualification. Councillors were asked to be advocates for apprenticeships in their communities.
- The National Cyber Force was a ten-year project and expected to produce up to 3,000 jobs by 2030. A Skills Workstream Group had been established with partners, including education providers, to look at developing local skills. This would include raising awareness of future job opportunities amongst young people, as well as retraining adults in digital and cyber roles.

Additional comments were raised by committee members as follows:

- The work undertaken to improve the number of young people in EET was to be commended but more resources, particularly investment in staff, should be made available to support the council's Education Improvement Service.
- Young people's access to transport networks was not referred to in the report, despite its significant impact on their ability to access career opportunities.
- It was important that Children Looked After continued to receive support to find careers or further education after the age of 18, and more support was needed for young people with learning difficulties.
- Councillors and officers were encouraged to look out for, and support, the Care Leavers' Charter.

Further to the European Social Fund (ESF) projects aimed at young people coming to an end, it was requested that the committee should review the success of these projects, including reflection on their impact and any lessons learned. It was agreed that officers would be asked to prepare a written report for the next meeting, which would be presented by the Chair.

Resolved: That

- i) The report provided on young people in education, employment, or training be noted;
- ii) A written report on the impact of the European Social Fund projects for young people be provided at the next meeting of the committee.

6. Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2021/22

The committee considered the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee Work Programme for 2021/22.

It was noted that a programme of work for 2022/23 would be established following the Annual General Meeting of the Full Council on 26 May 2022.

Resolved: That the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2021/22 be noted.

7. Urgent Business

None.

8. Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee was due to be held in June 2022 on a date to be agreed.

L Sales
Director of Corporate Services

County Hall
Preston

Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee

Healthy Eating Rapporteur Report

County Councillors:

Sue Hind

Ash Sutcliffe

Minute Item 4

Context

Highlighted in the Children's Health report presented to the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee meeting on 18 January 2022, data indicated a variation between the Lancashire total number of obese children aged 4-5 years old in comparison with the England average and a concerning upward trend in the number of obese children in the 10-11 year old age range.

And in the Public Health Annual Report 2021-22 presented to Cabinet on 3 February 2022, the following statistics were presented:

- 25% of reception aged children are overweight or obese, which is worse than England (2019/20).
- 35% of year six children, are overweight or obese (2019/20). This rate is similar to England but increasing and getting worse.
- 57% of children are inactive.
- 72% of 15 year olds report mean daily sedentary time of more 7 hours daily.

School Meals Provision

Current Position for The Application of School Food Standards:

Nutritional standards are in place for school meals in England, aimed at ensuring that the food provided to pupils in school is nutritious and of high quality, and at promoting good health and eating behaviour amongst pupils. The standards apply to:

- all local authority-maintained schools
- pupil referral units
- academies that opened prior to 2010
- academies and free schools with agreed funding from June 2014
- non-maintained special schools

Designing School Meals

- School meal menus should be designed to follow a three week cycle to allow sufficient opportunity for all of the required School Food Standards food groups to feature. Menus should offer a combination of food groups which broadly follow Public Health England (now UKHSA) Eatwell Plate.
- Menu design should consider cultural and ethical choice, be child friendly and should engage children in widening their food palate whilst nudging preferences towards healthier choices.
- Menu design must also consider the identification and communication of the 14 defined allergens, a defined legal requirement of the Food Information Regulations (FIR) 2014.

Examples of current UK and Lancashire initiatives and information available

- PASTA – Play and Skills at Teatime Activity
- HAF – Holiday Activities and Food Programme
- Cookery Clubs
- Healthy Heroes
- Healthy Weight Environment - Public Health working with colleagues in Transport and Planning and Environment for Liveable Neighbours, making streets more appealing to walk and cycle.
- Healthy Hearts Transformation Programme
- Local Authority Healthy Weight Declaration
- GULP – Give Up Loving Pop
- HENRY – Health, Exercise, Nutrition for the Really Young

Advertising

Research led by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine has shown that restricting unhealthy food adverts could lead to significantly reduced unhealthy food purchases.

Findings have shown that the Healthier Food Advertising Policy implemented on the Transport for London network has reported to have led to households buying 1000 fewer calories per week from high fat, salt and/or sugar foods and drinks. The policy had a particularly strong impact on sugary purchases with a reported decrease of 20% (318 calories) per week.

Key Findings

- There are concerning trends shown in data relating to unhealthy weights of children, young people and families across Lancashire which is further exacerbated by a continued sedentary life style.
- There is considerable work being undertaken across the county on healthy weight environments with many of these initiatives focussed on 0 – 11 age range.
- Lancashire Health and Wellbeing Board have recently signed the refreshed Lancashire Healthy Weight Declaration.
- School Meals Provision has been awarded the ‘Soil Association Food for Life’ Silver Award and ‘Sugarwise’ Gold Award
- Healthier Food Advertising Policy across the Transport for London network has provided interesting evidence to support the restriction of unhealthy food advertising.

Conclusion

