

Lancashire County Council

Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday, 1st September, 2021 at 10.30 am in Committee Room 'A' - The Tudor Room, County Hall, Preston

Present:

County Councillor Andrea Kay (Chair)

County Councillors

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

Co-opted members

Daniel Ballard, Representing CE Schools
Mr John Withington, Representing Parent Governors
(Primary)

County Councillors Paul Rigby and Sean Serridge replaced County Councillors Barrie Yates and Sobia Malik respectively for this meeting.

County Councillor Ron Woollam replaced County Councillor Joan Burrows permanently on the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Mrs Janet Hamid, Co-Optee Voting Member representing Parent Governors (Secondary).

2. Constitution: Chair and Deputy Chair; Membership; Terms of Reference

The report set out the constitution, membership, chair and deputy chair and terms of reference of the new Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee for the remainder of the municipal year 2021/22.

Resolved: That the following be noted:

1. The appointment of County Councillors Andrea Kay and Julia Berry as Chair and Deputy Chair of the Committee for the remainder of the 2021/22 municipal year.
2. The Membership of the Committee following the County Council's Annual Meeting on 15 July 2021; and
3. The new Terms of Reference of the Committee.

3. Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

County Councillors Anne Cheetham, Jennifer Mein, Paul Rigby and Rupert Swarbrick declared non-pecuniary interests as they were governors of schools.

4. Minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2021

Resolved: The minutes from the meeting held on 11 March 2021 were confirmed as an accurate record.

5. School Place Provision Planning

The Chair welcomed to the meeting Mel Ormesher, Head of Service Asset Management; Mike Kirby, Director of Strategy and Performance; Lynn Macdonald, School Planning Manager; and Debbie Ormerod, Access to Education Entitlements Lead Officer.

A presentation was delivered providing the committee with an overview of the planning, statutory duties, data, housing demands and longer term projects that informed the strategy which was due to Cabinet for consideration in the near future. The focus of the strategy was to have the right number of school places, in the right areas, at the right time to meet demand.

The aspirations of the strategy were for Lancashire to be a county for children of all abilities do well in its first class schools, colleges and universities, gaining skills for life. School Place Planning was a statutory duty for the county council as an education authority to provide a Lancashire place for every Lancashire child who wanted one. The committee was informed that all children in England between the age of 5 and 16 were entitled to a free place at a state school. State schools received their funding through their local authority or directly from the government.

The School Planning approach was evidence based. There was a twice yearly pupil forecast using pupil census, in-year migration and district supplied housing data.

There were three main areas of funding for projects:

1. The Department for Education Basic Need Grant. This was allocated on an annual basis against the School Capacity and Places Survey (SCAP) return as the proportion of the overall pot for England.

2. Schools could make their own contributions, mainly for fixtures and fittings, ICT, etc.
3. Regarding housing developers, the authority sought to obtain funding from the Section 106 Agreement or the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

In terms of longer term growth there was ongoing dialogue with district councils in relation to long term planning as part of their Local Plans. It was important to secure education infrastructure to mitigate the impact of housing developments. Where the need for a new school was identified at the Local Plan stage the authority considered requirements for early years and special education needs.

Comments and questions raised were as follows:

- Members enquired where the county council stood regarding planning developments and Section 77 playing field requirements. Section 77 was brought in to protect school playing fields building projects. When there was a proposal for building works there would be a calculation around the implication of the developments on the site. There were mechanisms in place to compensate for building on playing fields i.e. replacing the natural playing fields with all-weather playing fields. However, members were advised that the county council did everything it could to protect schools with playing fields.
- The committee enquired about how many children had applied for secondary school places after having started primary school and then been taken out. In addition, there were a number of children that were not able to maintain a full term in school due to health reasons. The committee enquired about how the authority accommodated the liaison of teachers with the children's hospitals regarding this. Members were advised that information on these queries would be provided to them.
- There was concern over the number of children who lived in secure accommodation who had not had proper full-time education. The county council had a duty as the education authority to make sure these children received an education. Education was part of the package commissioned for children placed in secure accommodation. The provision of education would be monitored and the authority would make sure the quality assurance was there.
- The question of how well Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payments worked in comparison with Section 106 Agreement payments was raised. It was pointed out that a Section 106 Agreement payment worked better than a CIL payment. A Section 106 Agreement could capture the education infrastructure requirements specific to the development and it tied in the funding for the land to the requirements. CIL looked at a much wider range of infrastructure proposals. It was noted however that the Section 106 process was challenging. However it gave more opportunity for presenting a case and receive the necessary funding.
- It was reported that the Department of Education determined the allocation of the Basic Need Grant to the local authority based on School Capacity

and Places Survey (SCAP) return. Schools that were not supported by the local authority received their funding directly from Government.

- There was concern over the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) of schools. The PFI was reported to be the body of contracts which was the funding mechanism for the operation of schools. It governed the maintenance of the school buildings and also the caretaking and cleaning. If the authority wanted to carry out a change to one of the school buildings that were subject to a PFI contract, there were various provisions within the contract for this. If the change is school driven the school will fund it. If it was a basic need project for additional places the local authority would fund it.
- Members enquired if the authority was taking into account the recent migration of refugees. They were informed that School Place Planning did take into account migration figures and the authority was receiving advice from the DfE about how these numbers were factored in. There was a request for an update at a future meeting of the committee on the school placements of refugees.
- There were concerns over the number of pupils applying for places in different districts and travelling across the county. It was confirmed that parental preference was taken into account regarding school place planning. It was pointed out that there were more children outside of Lancashire wanting to come to Lancashire schools.
- Geographic Priority Areas (GPAs) were introduced to deal with a new way of dealing with admissions. GPAs guaranteed children a place in a school which was nearest to their home address. However it was highlighted that GPAs were less effective today than previously due to changes in the school's landscape but are still reviewed annually
- It was agreed that it was important that Members know about the current Section 106 agreements in place in their areas.
- It was reported that Lancashire County Council was not a statutory consultee and so housing developers did not have to liaise with it before they submitted a planning application. However for applications that did come in, the authority was very diligent in assessing them and respond accordingly.

Resolved: That;

1. The information presented be noted
2. A response on the number of children who had been taken out of primary school that had applied for places at secondary school be provided.
3. A response on the accommodation of teacher liaison in children's hospitals be provided.
4. An update be provided for a future meeting of the committee on the school placements of refugees.

6. Work Programme 2021/2022

The Committee received a report which provided information on the draft work programme for the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee.

The topics included in the work programme were identified at the work planning workshop held on 5 July 2021.

There was a request for the Family Safeguarding Model to come to a future meeting of the committee.

Regarding the item on the Education Strategy in November, there was a request for what the school provision was for children with dual languages.

Resolved: That;

1. The report presented be noted.
2. Additional topics identified be included in the work programme.

7. Urgent Business

There were no items of Urgent Business.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee would take place on Tuesday 5 October 2021 at 10.30am at County Hall, Preston.

L Sales
Director of Corporate Services

County Hall
Preston