



To be submitted to the Council at its meeting on the 29th September 2022

CHILDREN AND LIFELONG LEARNING SCRUTINY PANEL

21st July 2022 at 4.30pm

Present:

Councillor Silvester (in the Chair)

Councillors Abel, Astbury (substitute for Hudson), Boyd, Brasted, Croft, Goodwin, Patrick and Westcott.

Officers in attendance:

- Diane Halton (Associate Director of Public Health)
- Sally Jack (Assistant Director – Education and Inclusion)
- Simon Jones (Assistant Director Law, Governance and Assets)
- Guy Lonsdale (Deputy Section 151 Officer)
- Beverly O'Brien (Scrutiny and Committee Advisor)
- Michelle Thompson (Assistant Director – Families, Mental Health and Disabilities)

Others in attendance:

- Councillor Cracknell (Portfolio Holder for Children and Education)
- Councillor Harness (Portfolio Holder for Finance, Resources and Assets)

SPCLL.1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN AND DEPUTY CHAIRMAN

It was noted that at the Annual General Meeting of the Council held on 26th May, 2022, Councillor Silvester had been appointed the Chair and Councillor Brasted the Deputy Chair of the Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel for the ensuing Municipal Year.

SPCLL.2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Hudson and McLean for this meeting.

SPCLL.3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Goodwin declared a personal interest for SPCLL.12 as she sat on the Children in Care Best Futures Board.

SPCLL.4 MINUTES

The Chair agreed that it would be beneficial if panel members received minutes from the Improvement Board so that they were not waiting a long time in between meetings for an update. He added that the Ofsted Improvement Plan update would remain a standing item on the agenda and if members had any queries from the Improvement Board minutes then these could be brought to the scrutiny panel for discussion.

RESOLVED –

1. That the minutes of the Children Services Improvement Board be received by the Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel via email.
2. That the minutes of the Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel meeting on 10th March 2022 be agreed as an accurate record,

SPCLL.5 QUESTION TIME

There were no questions from members of the public for this meeting.

SPCLL.6 FORWARD PLAN

The panel received the Forward Plan and members were asked to identify any items for examination by the Panel via the pre-decision call-in procedure.

Ms O'Brien identified that the quarter 1 finance monitoring and the Council Plan performance report were already on the work programme to come to this panel meeting. She also highlighted a future Cabinet report on the review of 16 plus Education Transport Policy. She believed it would allow members the opportunity to consider proposals for alternative ways of delivering the service provision. The panel agreed.

RESOLVED –

1. That the Forward Plan be noted.
2. That the Cabinet report titled 'Review of 16 Plus Education Transport Policy' be received at the next meeting of the Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel on the 22nd September 2022.

SPCLL.7 TRACKING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF SCRUTINY

The panel received a report from the Statutory Scrutiny Officer tracking the recommendations of the Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel.

RESOLVED – That items SPCLL.52 and SPCLL.62 be removed from the tracking report.

SPCLL.8 CHILDREN AND LIFELONG LEARNING SCRUTINY PANEL WORK PROGRAMME 2022/23

The panel considered a report from the Statutory Scrutiny Officer (Assistant Chief Executive) summarising the panel's agreed 2022/23 work programme and the timetable of activities to undertake this work. The panel also considered any issues it may wish to retain in or add to its work programme for 2022/23.

RESOLVED – That the Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel work programme for the 2022/23 municipal year be approved.

SPCLL.9 2021/22 PROVISIONAL FINANCIAL OUTTURN REPORT

The panel considered a report from the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Resources and Assets providing key information and analysis of the Council's position and performance at the end of the 2021/22 year.

An Elected Member stated concerns around the increase in fees for out of area children. They wondered whether children's education and social care figures could be broken down and circulated to members of the panel.

Members enquired around the Cabinet agreed £2 million capital investment in CCTV provision. They were particularly worried that the CCTV scheme sat under the Communities Scrutiny Panel, meaning the budget could not be duly scrutinised by the Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel. This left the panel considering whether it would be beneficial if this remit of work could be revised to sit within this panel's terms of reference. Councillor Boyd moved that it be proposed to the Executive and Scrutiny Liaison Board that the remit for discussion around CCTV review and upgrade be reallocated to the Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel due to the budget sitting within Children's Services. Councillor Brasted seconded this.

One Member queried whether the local authority needed to scrutinise why looked after children were being placed out of area. Another member was worried that the cost may lead to children not being sent out of area when it may be the best thing for them. Ms Jack explained that schools and the local authorities always consider what is in the best interest of a child or young person and where their needs can be best met. Mr Lonsdale added that the planning process for setting these budgets involved a lot of discussion between themselves and Children Services.

Ms Thompson stated that it was more about the wider system and understanding what was driving the demand leading to the overspend in Children's Social Care. The focus needed to be about how the system worked together to prevent children coming into care in the first place.

Councillor Cracknell added that the overspend for Children's Services was not new. She believed that what was important was to look at what was causing the escalation in costs. As an example, agency costs were also increasing and, to prevent this, People and Culture were now looking to recruit social care staff from countries other than the UK. She stated that initiatives such as this would assist our budget setting process.

Councillor Cracknell acknowledged that the preventative agenda was incredibly important. There was no simple answer and things needed to be done over a period of time which would contribute to the overall budget setting and reduce the overspend.

RESOLVED –

1. That children's education and social care out of area figures be broken down and circulated to members of the Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel.
2. That the Provision Financial Outturn Report for 2021/22 be noted.

RECOMMENDED TO THE EXECUTIVE AND SCRUTINY LIAISON BOARD - That the remit for discussion around CCTV review and upgrade be reallocated to fall under the terms of reference for the Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel.

SPCLL.10 EDUCATION AND INCLUSION STRATEGY 2022 - 2025

The panel received a report from the Portfolio Holder for Children and Education presenting the Education and Inclusion Strategy 2022-2025 for approval

The Chair noted that the strategy had not been refreshed since 2016. He wondered why. Ms Jack couldn't comment on why it hadn't been refreshed sooner, but she explained that there were shorter review points in this strategy which would be helpful to be kept up to date on certain aspects of the service. The Chair asked whether or not reviewing this area of work contributed to the poor Ofsted inspection. Ms Jack did not think so.

One Member asked how much input Learning Mentors had had with the transition from primary to secondary school. Ms Jack explained that the ability to move from primary to secondary was now fundamental. She stated that there was currently some excellent transition work across our schools. The Elected Member wondered whether seminars and

workshops could take place to help discuss the role and how everyone could help.

One councillor was concerned that a lot of the school trusts did not know each other. Ms Jack stated that relationships between the trusts was greatly improving, and all schools would need to continue to find ways to build on the existing relationships.

RESOLVED – That the Education and Inclusion Strategy 2022-2025 be noted.

SPCLL.11 CHILDREN'S JOINT STRATEGIC NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The panel received a report from the Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director for People, Health and Care on the Children's Strategic Needs Assessment which would contribute to a shared understanding of the needs of children and young people in North East Lincolnshire and inform a range of activity that sought to improve their outcomes.

The Chair asked whether this document was still relevant after being through a major pandemic. Ms Halton confirmed that the assessment was still relevant now to when it was prepared.

An Elected Member asked how much this needs assessment would contribute to the development of new services and developing the old. Ms Halton stated that it was there for everyone to use. There was a range of activities which would help different organisations see what worked. It was particularly helpful throughout Covid and helped in education to see the progression of certain things.

Members found it reassuring on how the needs assessment was being used.

RESOLVED – That the Children's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment be noted.

SPCLL.12 SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS AND DISABILITY (SEND) UPDATE

The panel considered a report from the Director of Children's Services updating Members on SEND, particularly on the outcome of the SEND revisit from Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission and the implications of the SEND Green Paper.

Members believed there was a major cross over with the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel when it came to the whole family approach (early help and prevention) to try and contribute to reducing SEND numbers. Members considered whether it would be useful to have a joint workshop where both panels could attend and receive information that was essential to both panels' remits. The panel believed that the

best way to progress with this was for Officers to go away and consider a focus for the workshop. A discussion could then be had with the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel on whether a joint workshop would be beneficial going forward.

RESOLVED –

1. That the Special Education Needs and Disability update be noted.
2. That the Assistant Director for Education and Inclusion consider a focus for a joint workshop with the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel to look at the whole family approach which contributed to the early help and prevention agenda.

SPCLL.13 QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDER

There were no questions for the Portfolio Holder at this meeting.

SPCLL.14 CALLING IN OF DECISIONS

There were no formal requests from Members of this Panel to call in decisions of recent Cabinet and Portfolio Holder meetings.

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 6.18 p.m.