



To be submitted to the Council at its meeting on the 12th December 2024.

CHILDREN AND LIFELONG LEARNING SCRUTINY PANEL

1st October 2024 at 5.00pm

Present:

Councillor Silvester (in the Chair)

Councillors Boyd, Cairns, Clough, Downes, Goodwin, Parkinson (substitute for Lindley), Patrick, K. Swinburn and Wheatley

Co-opted Member: Carole Harrison (Trade Union)

Officers in attendance:

- Paul Cowling (Service Director Children's Regulated Services)
- Simon Jones (Assistant Director Law and Governance, Monitoring Officer)
- Guy Lonsdale (Assistant Director Finance)
- Ann Marie Matson (Director of Children Services)
- Bev O'Brien (Scrutiny and Committee Advisor)
- Julie Poole (Head of Service, Practice, Performance, Quality and Assurance)
- Jennifer Steel (Service Director – Education, Inclusion and Integration)
- Charlene Sykes (Service Director – Safeguarding and Early Help)

Others in attendance:

- Councillor Cracknell (Portfolio Holder for Children and Education)
- Councillor Shutt (Heneage Ward Councillor)

There were no members of the press in attendance and one member of the public in attendance.

SPCLL.19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Lindley for this meeting.

SPCLL.20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received in respect of any item on the agenda for this meeting.

SPCLL.21 MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 25th July 2024 be agreed as a correct record.

SPCLL.22 QUESTION TIME

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

SPCLL.23 FORWARD PLAN

The panel received the current forward plan with a view to identifying any items for examination by this panel via the pre-decision call-in procedure

RESOLVED – That the forward plan be noted.

SPCLL.24 TRACKING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF SCRUTINY

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

RESOLVED – That the tracking report be noted and items SPCLL.8, SPCLL.9 and SPCLL.10 be removed from the tracking report.

SPCLL.25 2024/25 QUARTER ONE COUNCIL PLAN RESOURCES AND FINANCE PERFORMANCE REPORT

The panel received a report from the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Resources and Assets providing key information and analysis of the Council's finance and resources position at the end of quarter one

Members welcomed the report and asked for some clarification on:

- The process on Elective Home Education (EHE) and why it was becoming more popular.
- Flexibility of the budget on the use of capital receipts to support transformation activities
- The use of School Attendance Orders (SAO)
- Mitigating services that were of high cost for one individual.

The panel commented on the performance dashboard and felt that it would be more informative if comparative data was included. They also mentioned the cost of transport and felt that it may be useful if this was considered by the panel at a later date.

RESOLVED –

1. That transport costs be added to the Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel work programme for 2024/25.
2. That the 2024/25 quarter one council plan resources and finance performance report be noted.

SPCLL.26 MAINTAINED NURSERIES AND DAYCARE PROVISIONS

The panel considered a verbal update from the Director of Children's Services on the maintained Nurseries and Daycare Provision and discussed the scope for the special scrutiny panel meeting on 10th October 2024.

Ms Steel informed the panel that the settings had been working really hard. Reynolds Day Care setting was now showing a significant surplus budget and were now looking at expanding their workforce to cater for the waiting list of children wanting a place. She also notified Panel Members that she had attended a budget monitoring meeting with Scartho and Great Coates Nurseries and the settings predications looked favourable.

The Panel felt that they now had a better understanding of what the impact was of the consultation but felt that the acute attention had drawn light to the issues these settings were facing, which had now helped draw a clear action plan for the future. Some Members were concerned that having the special meeting to discuss the consultation may bring up old emotions. Ms Steel commented on how they had worked hard to restore their relationships with these settings, particularly with the headteachers and governors, and she wouldn't want to lose focus on the constructive work that had been undertaken.

After listening to the discussion and update, Councillor Boyd proposed to cancel the special scrutiny meeting on the 10th October 2024 and for it to not be rescheduled in the future. Councillor K. Swinburn seconded this.

The Panel voted unanimously in favour of the proposal.

RESOLVED –

1. That the maintained Nurseries and Daycare Provision update be noted.
2. That the special Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel scheduled to take place on Thursday 10th October be cancelled and not be rescheduled.

SPCLL.27 CHILDREN'S SERVICES IMPROVEMENT JOURNEY

The panel considered a report from the Director of Children's Services providing the panel with an update on the performance and implementation of the transformation programme that would deliver the Improvement Plan.

Members welcomed the Improvement Journey update and felt that it was a good read. Some Panel Members asked for reassurance around the geography of people travelling to Family Hubs as they were worried there may be weaker location spots where individuals struggle to get to the hubs. Officers reassured Members that there was a good connectivity between communities and the Family Hubs.

Members also asked for reassurance around the significant reduction for the Integrated Front Door service, Team Around the Family model and Children Services vacancy rates, particularly Social Workers. Officers reassured Members of all their concerns and read out examples of their teams current moral.

The Chair believed it would be helpful if an Integrated Front Door visit was offered out to all Elected Members of the scrutiny panel.

RESOLVED –

1. That the Children Services Improvement Journey be noted.
2. That the Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel Members be invited to a visit at the Integrated Front Door.

SPCLL.28 NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE LOCAL OFFER TO CARE EXPERIENCED PEOPLE

The panel considered a report from the Director of Children Services on the local offer to care experienced people.

RESOLVED – That the local offer to care experienced people be noted.

SPCLL.29 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY (SEND) SPECIALIST FREE SCHOOL

The panel received a progress update on the SEND specialist free school.

The panel had some questions around the costings of the project. The Chair asked that this be kept on their work programme so the panel could keep on top of progress made.

RESOLVED –

1. That the progress update on the SEND specialist free school be noted.
2. That the SEND specialist free school be added to the 2025/26 work programme for the Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel.

SPCLL.30 URGENT BUSINESS - CARE EXPERIENCE AS A LOCALLY PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC

The panel considered a report from the Portfolio Holder for Children and Education on care experience as a locally protected characteristic. The item was considered as urgent due to certain time constraints of it being received by Cabinet.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET – That the recommendations within the report to Cabinet be agreed.

SPCLL.31 QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDER

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

SPCLL.32 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.

SPCLL.33 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED - That the public and press be excluded for the following item on the grounds that discussion of the following business was likely to disclose confidential information within paragraphs 1 and 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 172 (as amended).

SPCLL.34 CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE IMPROVEMENT

The panel were provided with an opportunity to discuss any confidential matters of concern with the Director of Children's Services and to consider the risk register in relation to the Improvement Journey.

Members noted that financial pressures were not identified on the risk register and believed it would be beneficial if they were.

RESOLVED – That the matters of concern be noted.

There being no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 6.43 p.m.