



# Rutland County Council

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Record of a meeting of the **PEOPLE (CHILDREN) SCRUTINY PANEL** held in the Council Chamber, Catmose, Oakham at 7.00 pm on **Thursday 12 April 2012**

**PRESENT:** Miss G Waller – Chairman (in the Chair)  
Mr M E Baines  
Mrs J Figgis  
Mr J Lammie  
Mr J Munton  
Mrs L I Stephenson

**CO-OPTED MEMBERS:** Mr P Goringe

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Mr K A Bool, Portfolio Holder for Education and Children's Services

**OFFICERS PRESENT:** Mr I Baugh Democratic Services Officer  
Ms C Chambers Deputy Chief Executive & Strategic Director – People  
Mr M Naylor Assistant Director for Services for People  
Miss T D Stokes Democratic Services Manager

**APOLOGIES:** Mr Dale, Mr Clark, Mr Plews, Mrs Vernon, Mr Walters ,

## **686 RECORD OF LAST MEETING**

- i) The Record of the Special Meeting of the People (Children) Scrutiny Panel held on 18 January 2012, copies of which had been previously circulated, was confirmed and signed by the Chairman.
- ii) The minutes of the Meeting of the People (Children) Scrutiny Panel held on 26 January 2012, copies of which had been previously circulated, was confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

## **687 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Mrs Stephenson declared a personal but not prejudicial interest in Item 10 Ofsted Reports of Recent Schools Inspections, as she works 1 day per week in Leighfield Primary School, Uppingham.

Miss Waller declared a personal but not prejudicial interest in Item 11, Ofsted Reports of Recent School Inspections, as she is a school governor in the local authority.

## **688 PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS**

There were no petitions, deputations or questions received from members of the public.

## **689 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS**

In accordance with the provisions of Procedure Rule 219, Questions with notice from Members, Mr T Clarke asked two questions, as follows:-

i) Why specifically was the task and finish group's report into pupil place planning discussed in secret as an exempt item on January 26? What 'exempt information' was likely to be disclosed?

Response: The public and press were excluded from the discussion on the item on the grounds that it was likely that there would be discussion on the financial or business affairs of some or all of the schools within the county, which was further compounded by the fact that a number of schools were now academies. This did arise, as anticipated, in the context of possible options for catchment areas and groupings. Not all aspects had necessarily been discussed with schools in advance.

ii) What has been the impact of academies on Rutland's education Local Authority (LA), what is happening around the services the LA used to supply to schools which have now become academies? What is the future of the LA: a) if the current schools organisation regime stays as it is, and b) if more schools become academies?

Response: As more schools convert to academy status there was a greater impact on the budget for the remaining schools. The Local Authority was developing a brochure that would show which services were available for all schools and academies to purchase, where appropriate. Clearly, as more schools converted the impact on the remaining schools would increase. It was inevitable that more schools would convert in the coming months, particularly as pressure increased from the Department for Education (DfE).

There was some discussion on transport provision, this remained a function of the Council and there were no plans at present to outsource this.

The issue of admissions was raised, it was noted that academies, voluntary aided and foundation schools were their own admissions authorities. The council retained strategic oversight of admissions and for LA schools it was the LA who managed any appeals.

There was some discussion regarding school opening hours and support for the governor's forum. It was noted that these were all affected by the changing relationship between schools and the LA with the continuing development of academies.

## **690 NOTICES OF MOTION FROM MEMBERS**

No Notices of Motion were received from Members.

## **691 CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE PANEL FOR A DECISION IN RELATION TO CALL IN OF A DECISION**

No matter was referred to the Panel for a decision in relation to call-in of a decision in accordance with Procedure Rule 206.

## **SCRUTINY**

### **692 YOUTH OPPORTUNITY FUND (YOF)**

The meeting was due to receive a presentation from several young people on the YOF, unfortunately due to school holidays this had not been possible to arrange. There was some discussion on the YOF and its continuation, the Government funding had ceased in 2010/11, Rutland Council had continued £50k funding for the 2011/12 financial year, this had now been reduced to £11k.

It was proposed that officers prepare a breakdown of how the money had been spent to

help inform future scrutiny panel decisions together with the criteria of how funding applications were approved.

**Agreed:**

- 1) That Officers provide a breakdown of how the money had been spent, the process for application and what criteria had been applied to the approvals. Also to provide a list of known grant opportunities.**

#### **693 BUSINESS PRESENTATION**

It was noted that due to the school holidays it had not been possible to arrange this presentation. This would be rolled forward to the next meeting, when Mr Trevor Ellis, Managing Director of CS Ellis (Group) Ltd and local businessman, would be asked to attend.

**Agreed:**

- 1) That Mr Munton would use his good offices to speak with Mr Ellis.**

The Chairman noted the importance of keeping Post 16 issues on the agenda for scrutiny, it was noted that legislation is changing in this area of work. It was proposed that there should be a standing item on future agendas to cover 'Changing Statutory Responsibilities'.

**Agreed:**

- 1) That future agendas include a standing item on 'Changing Statutory Responsibilities'**

#### **694 OFSTED REPORTS ON SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES FROM DECEMBER 2011 TO MARCH 2012 AND DISCUSSION ON SCHOOLS**

Report No 70/2012 from the Strategic Director for People was received.

Discussions centred around the grading classification. It was noted that the Council should not be satisfied with 'satisfactory' markings and should be encouraging schools to improve. The issues affecting Cottesmore school were noted (including the reduction from 5 to 3 classes with mixed year teaching) as was the unfortunate timing of the Ofsted inspection; the headteacher had tried to postpone the date of the inspection. Concern was expressed that the report could deter parents from sending their children to the school. It was agreed that communications around the report required careful management, this was being taken forward by one of the Council officers in a planned meeting with Forces personnel.

It was noted that one of the report's targets for the school (to sharpen the use of targets in Key Stage 2) was in April.

**Agreed:**

- 1) That Officers establish whether the targets had been achieved and inform panel members by email.**

#### **695 KEY STAGE 4 ANALYSIS OF RUTLAND RESULTS 2011**

Report No. 71/2012 from the Strategic Director for People was received.

Discussion centred around the trend of the results. It was noted that the Uppingham

Community College (UCC) Principal had contacted the Council to correct a mistake – on page 24 s 4.3 UCC had achieved 60.5% and not 59.5%.

Concerns were expressed that for example 35% of students at Catmose college were not achieving satisfactory grades. The Chairman asked that the statistics should include the English Baccalaureate.

**Agreed:**

- 1) That Officers investigate the statistics and provide further details to the Panel members, including back-dating the figures to 2007.**

It was noted that while the Council had no direct control over outcomes in academies it was important to maintain a monitoring role and any issues that arose should be raised with the relevant head teachers. Mr Bool noted that through the 16-19 Project Board a good dialogue had been established with Casterton Business and Enterprise college, he was sure they would be prepared to share how they are improving their standards.

It was suggested that the Council's analysis of the results should be sent/made available to parents as the information could be regarded as trustworthy. It was pointed out that the Council should be able to represent parents' needs and concerns and raise any issues with the heads. It was further noted that many head teachers were keen to have a dialogue with the LA.

Ms Chambers noted that this area raised the issue of working relationships with schools and especially the academies. It would be important to agree with the schools what information they were willing to share and how it would be used.

#### **696 UPDATE ON SAFEGUARDING ACTION PLAN**

The update report was tabled by Mr Bool. It was noted that for the one Amber item the work would be completed in time for the next meeting. This item was amber as the deadline for completion had not yet been reached. The Chairman noted that the panel had asked that documentation on safeguarding was copied to the Panel.

**Agreed:**

- 1) That Officers ensure Panel members are copied in to safeguarding documents.**

Mr Munton noted that Officers should be congratulated on providing good explanations in the report.

#### **697 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT REPORT 2011/12 QUARTER 3**

The Chairman proposed that as consideration was given to the Portfolio's financial position at the time the budget 2012/13 was debated, it was no longer necessary to give detailed consideration of the Quarter 3 forecast and therefore Report No 25/2012 be noted. This was agreed by the members.

#### **698 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT – QUARTER 3 2011/12**

Report No 41/2012 from the Chief Executive was received and the contents were noted.

NI060 "Percentage of core assessments for children's social care carried out within 35 days of commencement" was showing as red, although a downward trend it would remain red.

NI063 "Stability of placements of looked after children: length of placement" although

red, this was a temporary blip.

Discussions centred around the difficulties and time taken to fill vacancies. Mr Baines proposed that a letter of thanks be sent to Steven Attwood, Assistant Director for People, for all his work on the Panel.

**Agreed:**

- 1) That the Chairman would write to Mr Attwood expressing thanks.

## **PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS AND TOPICS**

### **699 FORWARD PLANNING**

Copies of the current Forward Plan (April to July 2012) were distributed.

**Agreed:**

- 1) That Officers provide a report on Youth Funds and Young People for the next meeting.

**Agreed:**

- 2) That Officers include proposed changes in school funding in the standing item on Legislative changes.

The Chairman asked that in 6 months time the report on the outcomes of the Core Group be tabled at this Panel.

More work was required to look at the issue of young people outside of education.

**Agreed:**

- 3) That the Chairman ask Mr Plews to look into this as the portfolio lead.

**Agreed:**

- 4) That Officers provide a report on school attendance for the next meeting but to exercise care due to the confidential nature of the information.

The Chairman asked that a future meeting should look at Sure Start centres, this would be later in the year.

**Agreed:**

- 5) That the Panel examines Sure Start centres later in the year.

It was proposed that the Panel discuss the area of apprenticeships at a future meeting.

**Agreed:**

- 6) That the Panel consider apprenticeships at a future meeting.

### **684 ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

The Chairman noted the letter from Mr Tor Clarke tendering his resignation from the panel due to work reasons with effect from 13 April 2012. All expressed thanks for his contribution and support in his role as a co-opted member of the Scrutiny Panel.

**Agreed:**

- 1) That the Chairman would write to Mr Clarke expressing thanks.

**685 DATE AND PREVIEW OF NEXT MEETING**

This would be confirmed following the meeting of the full Council on 16 April 2012 when the 2012/13 Programme of Meetings would be considered.

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The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.18pm

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