



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 July 2012**

PRESENT: Miss G Waller – Chairman (in the Chair)
Mr M E Baines
Mrs C Cartwright
Mrs J Figgis
Mr J Lammie
Mr J Munton
Mr M Oxley
Mrs L I Stephenson
Mrs C Vernon
Mr A Walters

CO-OPTED MEMBERS: None present

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Mr K A Bool, Portfolio Holder for Education and Children's Services
Mr G Plews, Portfolio Holder for Youth, Sport and Community Safety
Mr B Roper
Mr T Ellis – Representing CE Ellis Ltd
Members of Rutland Youth Council

OFFICERS PRESENT: Mr I Baugh Democratic Services Officer
Ms C Chambers Strategic Director – People
Mrs J DiFolco Team Manager Team 2
Mrs D Greaves Accountant People Services
Mrs J Haigh Senior Manager: Health, Wellbeing and Commissioning

APOLOGIES: Mr Wainwright

151 RECORD OF LAST MEETING

- i) The Record of the Meeting of the People (Children) Scrutiny Panel held on 12 April 2012, copies of which had been previously circulated, was confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

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AGENDA ITEMS

The Chairman proposed that agenda item 8 Youth Council Presentation be taken first, followed by Item 9. This was agreed by the Members.

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152 YOUTH COUNCIL (item 8)

Mrs DiFolco introduced members of the Rutland Youth Council (RYC) – Anya Loomes, Jake Loomes, Yasmin Proctor-Kent and Jessie Harris who gave the presentation on the work of the RYC.

The role of the British Youth Council was described and the history of the Youth Opportunities Fund. They described the number and types of applications made for funding and noted that all projects were required to submit an annual progress report. The following items were raised in discussion:

1. The return rate for the questionnaire was raised – despite low numbers extremely good feedback had been received.
2. Mrs Vernon asked how members of the RYC were chosen. This was by publicity in schools and elections of members. Over 2000 votes had been cast. RYC has a website to promote its activities. Mrs Vernon suggested that the presentation could usefully be made to the full Rutland County Council.
3. Mr Baines asked what would be the top priority action in the opinion of the RYC. All members of the RYC noted the issue of rural transport. The Chairman noted that a Task and Finish Group was looking into this and invited the RYC to come to talk to this group.
4. The question of involvement of local independent schools was raised, these have been contacted.
5. Mrs Vernon noted the possible use of local village publications and Parish Council websites to promote the work of the RYC.
6. Mrs Figgis asked about the foreign trips. These were for local projects and personal development of vulnerable people and young people were also expected to make a financial contribution to these trips.

153 EXPECTATIONS OF EMPLOYABILITY (item 9)

Mr Trevor Ellis (Managing Director of CS Ellis (Group) Ltd) gave a short talk about his company and the employability of young people in industry and in his organisation in particular. He noted the issues of literacy and numeracy of young people and noted he would like to see more training at schools focus on specifics such as SAGE accounting. He suggested that we needed to break the stigma of failure if a young person did not go on to university. He had issues of Health and Safety preventing him taking on short term work experience people. He stressed that industry needs to reach out to young people to encourage them into such jobs. The following items were raised in discussion:

1. Mr Oxley noted the issue of young people preferring short term higher paid jobs rather than going for jobs that offered better prospects in the longer term but which offered lower initial salaries.
2. Mrs Vernon noted that her company had tried to recruit young people but with great difficulty owing to red tape.
3. Mrs Figgis noted that the target of getting a certain % of young people to university was putting young people off securing jobs in industry and commerce. The role of careers advisors was noted, many of these were from a more academic rather than an industrial background.
4. Mr Lammie raised the point about young people being able to do work experience if they are having to stay on until age 17.

5. Mr Bool noted that a range of courses and qualifications were needed to cover both academic and vocational areas.

The Chairman expressed thanks on behalf of the panel to Mr Ellis for a very useful discussion.

154 QUARTER 4 PERFORMANCE REPORTS

With the approval of the members the Chairman proposed to discuss the Q4 reports at this stage.

Ms Chambers introduced the reports and noted that they had been colour coded to help scrutiny panels identify those services relating to children and young people. Members commented that the comments on the papers were extremely helpful. The following questions were raised:

1. Variations in spend on items 5003 and 5300 were noted. This was due to changes in schools becoming academies and the resulting accounting treatment.
2. Item 5268 – underspend on youth workers was raised. This had not impacted on service delivery as other savings had been made by putting the Rutland Wanderer out of service during the winter months.

155 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Ms Waller declared a disclosable interest under the Code of Conduct as she was a school governor at one of the Rutland primary schools.

Mrs Vernon declared a disclosable interest under the Code of Conduct as she worked in a recruitment company. She left the meeting before discussion took place on matters relating to recruitment in education regarding item no 11 in the Ofsted Reports.

156 PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS

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

157 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS

No questions had been received.

158 NOTICES OF MOTION FROM MEMBERS

No Notices of Motion were received from Members.

159 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.

160 FORWARD PLAN (item 7)

The Chairman noted the following items that were due to be presented to the Panel scrutiny:

1. A paper on what services RCC may offer to academies
2. Report on the Core Group
3. A report on school attendance and exclusion
4. Analysis of the performance and costs of the youth service

161 RAISING THE PARTICIPATION AGE AND APPRENTICESHIPS (item 10)

Ms Chambers introduced her paper (a paper copy of the presentation had been circulated to members). Ms Chambers noted that from 2013 young people would be required to stay in education or training until age 17 by 2015 this would rise to 18. It was pointed out that on slide 6 the employers' duties had now changed. The current data shows that in Rutland 90% of young people are in education or training. There are encouraging results in the take up of apprenticeships.

Mr Oxley asked whether the proposed work bus would help the take up of opportunities. It was noted that the recent award of the £4m grant for transport would help in this area.

Mrs Stephenson asked about the potential cost of truancy – it was noted that this was to have been the responsibility of the employer but the government had recently changed this. The Chairman noted that this topic should come back to scrutiny in a year's time.

Mrs Figgis asked when the age increase to 17 would apply; in response Ms Chambers noted that the first cohort would be those taking GCSE in 2013.

It was proposed that an electronic copy of the presentation be sent to members.

Agreed:

1) Democratic Services to circulate electronic copy of presentation.

162 OFSTED REPORTS ON SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES FROM MARCH – JUNE 2012 (item 11)

Report no 76/2012 was received from the Strategic Director for People.

Ms Chambers introduced the report and noted that although this Ofsted report had shown a 'satisfactory' mark this was not judged as a good result. The Council is working with the school to improve the situation. It was noted that the school had not met the 'floor standards' set by Government. It was pointed out that a large number of children join the school mid way through terms due to movements of service families.

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Before a discussion on recruitment Mrs Vernon left the meeting owing to a personal interest in the subject.

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Mrs Vernon rejoined the meeting.

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Ms Chambers noted that the school had recruited 3.5 new teachers which represented a significant turn over of staff. This was seen as an opportunity to work with the school to improve the standards there.

Mrs Vernon rejoined the meeting.

Mr Baines noted he would like to see comparisons with other service schools in terms of standards. He noted the high risk of the current situation to pupils education attainments, this was recognised.

Mrs Cartwright asked why an independent report had been commissioned; in response it was noted that this had been carried out to provide an independent view on the performance of the school.

Mrs Figgis asked whether the school could apply to become an academy. In response it was noted that because of the poor Ofsted report they could not apply, but they could apply to be federated with an outstanding school. At present the school would not have the time nor resources to do this.

163 CHILDRENS SAFEGUARDING UPDATE (item 12)

Report no 131/2012 was received from the Strategic Director for People.

Mrs Haigh introduced the report and noted that last year the core assessment target had not been met. This was explained in Para 4.4. The forthcoming Q1 report will show improved performance of 100% completion.

Mrs Haigh also explained some of the complexities surrounding the definition of 're-referrals'. There has been some inconsistency in the interpretation but this has now been resolved and the Q1 report will show a more accurate picture.

164 CHILDREN'S PLAN (item 13)

Report no 132/2012 was received from the Strategic Director for People. The background to the development of the plan was explained, including the role of the Children's Trust, how it fed into the shadow Health and Wellbeing Board and the expectation of every partner organisation to deliver their aspect of the plan. The plan does not contain considerable detail as these details are in other plans and officers are keen to avoid unnecessary duplication. This is the first time that a Children, Young People and Families Plan has been written and this is seen as a real benefit from the reorganisation into a People Directorate.

Mr Lammie asked that officers clarify which definition of 'Child Poverty' is used in the plan as there are a number in circulation nationally. He also commented on the impact of unemployment in families in poverty. It was noted that Job Centre Plus is a partner on the Children's Trust.

Mrs Stephenson asked that the role of mental health is emphasised in the plan.

Ms Waller asked about the timing of the equality impact assessment risk assessment, in response it was noted that this would be carried out once the report had been completed.

Following a discussion about employment as a factor in child poverty it was agreed that an item on this subject would come to the meeting of the Panel in October.

AGREED:

Item on Employment as a Factor in Child Poverty to be on Panel Agenda for October 2012 meeting.

165 ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

Mr Oxley asked about the recruitment of non-elected members to the panel. The Director explained that no volunteers had been forthcoming to date.

166 DATE AND PREVIEW OF NEXT MEETING

16 August 2012

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The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.55pm

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