



# 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 16 August 2012**

**PRESENT:** Miss G Waller – Chairman (in the Chair)  
Mr W Cross (substitute for Mrs Stephenson)  
Mrs J Figgis  
Mr J Lammie  
Mrs C Vernon  
Mr N Wainwright

**CO-OPTED MEMBERS:** None present

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Mr K A Bool, Portfolio Holder for Education and Children's Services  
Mr P Goringe, Peterborough Diocese  
Mr D Richardson

**OFFICERS PRESENT:** Mr I Baugh Democratic Services Officer  
Ms C Chambers Strategic Director – People  
Mrs D Greaves Accountant  
Mrs J Haigh Senior Manager: Health, Wellbeing and Commissioning  
Mr M Naylor Asst Director People  
Ms W Poynton Asst Director

**APOLOGIES:** Mr E Baines  
Mrs C Cartwright  
Mr M Oxley  
Mrs L Stephenson  
Mr A Walters

## 235 RECORD OF LAST MEETING

- i) The Chairman noted that the Clerk had had to leave the previous meeting (12 July) early and some queries were raised. Cllr Walters requested that, in the Children and Families Plan, employment should not be described as a key aim. He also requested that health should be more clearly identified. These amendments were accepted by members and the Record of the Meeting of the People (Children) Scrutiny Panel held on 12 July 2012, copies of which had been previously circulated, was confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

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## AGENDA ITEMS

**236 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None were declared.

**237 PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS**

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

**238 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS**

No questions had been received.

**239 NOTICES OF MOTION FROM MEMBERS**

No Notices of Motion were received from Members.

**240 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.

**241 FORWARD PLAN (item 7)**

The Chairman invited members to raise any topics/issues for scrutiny. It was noted that the Task and Finish Group on School Transport would finish in Oct/Nov and the Director had been asked to develop two topics for further work by a Task and Finish Group starting in January/February.. Options may include sport and children's social care.

In answer to a question, the Chairman noted that this Scrutiny Panel only dealt with issues affecting children and young people. Specific issues on resources, capital etc should be raised at the appropriate Scrutiny panel.

**242 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT REPORT 2012/13 QUARTER 1 (Item 8)**

A question was raised regarding cost centre code 5003 (payments to schools). It was noted that the first set of contingency money had been received from the MoD. Rutland County Council had contributed £470k with MoD providing £90k.

A question was raised about cost centre 5393 (Golden Hellos). It was pointed out that any such monies came direct from the Department for Education and is currently being phased out. These payments related to shortages in specific subjects.

A question was asked about the cost of part-time youth workers (cost centre 5268 - £405k). Officers agreed to provide further detail after the meeting. The October meeting of the panel will include a report on the Youth Service.

**Agreed:**

**Officers to provide Cllr Wainwright with further details and circulate to other members.**

There was some discussion on cost centre 5332 – dedicated schools grant. The variance was due to a carry forward of an underspend. This money is ring fenced.

With regard to cost centre 4210 (Looked after children) it was pointed out that children moving schools can affect the figures. The aim is to maintain stability for the children involved. This may involve additional costs for school transport.

Cost centre 5712 – Catmose sports and swimming – it was pointed out that Rutland County Council meet any maintenance costs above £3000.

**243 SCHOOLS FUNDING REFORM (item 9)**

Report no 153/2012 was received from the Strategic Director for People.

Mrs Greaves introduced the report and noted that the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) remains ring fenced. The future funding will be in 3 parts: early years; high needs; schools. In response to a question it was noted that the schools block has a modelling tool, this is being looked at by the Task and Finish Group.

Discussion centred on the effects and costs of attempting to protect smaller schools. It was pointed out that funding should follow each pupil and not be school based. In time the lump sum will disappear and this could put smaller schools at risk. Questions were asked about the impact of academies. It was noted that the Council had to provide funding with academies in the budget for the Department of Education and then the funding is split. There was some discussion regarding the costs of providing services to schools and to extent to which academies are obliged to pay.

It was noted that most schools come to the local authority for the provision of services, but in future it is not expected that any one local authority will provide all services. In future Rutland County Council may commission services on behalf of schools.

There was a discussion on the funding for schools in general. It was noted that the funding for an area like Rutland (with sparse population and low deprivation indices) was lower than many other areas. The new funding formula does not take into account the number of pupils who should be in any particular school. Rutland Council can give a block grant to help but this will be phased out after the next two years.

The issue of the presumption of not closing rural schools was noted and the issues that this caused. It was noted that the Schools Forum can give extra funding to smaller schools. Officers of the Council have met with all schools to explain the new funding proposals. Schools are being encouraged to work in 'federations' to help protect smaller schools.

It was pointed out that many smaller schools add value to their communities by providing out of school activities and events.

**244 QUARTER 1 SAFEGUARDING REPORT FOR ADULTS, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE 2012/13 (item 10)**

Report no 156/2012 was received from the Strategic Director for People. Mrs Chambers introduced Mrs Poynton who had been appointed as the new assistant director in the People directorate.

The report showed that performance is good and improving, targets have been exceeded in one area, with some attention needed regarding re-referrals. It is hoped that Quarter 2 will show improvements in this area.

95.4% of initial assessments are completed within 10 days, with all core assessments within 30 days. It was noted that one child protection conference had been out of time but this had been due to issues beyond the control of the council. The Chairman commented on the very pleasing improvements shown in the report.

**245 SUMMARY OUTCOMES FROM THE CORE GROUP (item 11)**

Report no 135/2012 was received from the Strategic Director for People. Officers noted that monitoring was being undertaken of all maintained schools with the aim of challenging poor performance. The new Core Group included chairs of governors, heads and Diocesan representation. Two meetings had been held in January and July. The report shows that the meetings have worked well and a good dialogue has been established with schools. Mr Goringe praised the robust challenge by officers. The excellence of several schools was noted and the aim was for good schools to help others.

A question was asked about high level support and what triggered this. It was noted that poor performance by one or two pupils could affect the overall performance figures. It was noted that monitoring will track the early signs of poor performance and early intervention will have taken place before poor performance triggers are activated.

In response to a question about the frequency of meetings it was noted that council resources can only at present support two meetings due to the level of work involved. The Chairman noted that it was pleasing to see improvements in schools and re-assuring to know that support was in place.

In response to a question it was noted that officers are alerted to issues of poor performance from a number of sources including complaints, governors and parents concerns. The number of pupils being moved out of schools can indicate problems. There was some discussion regarding the performance of academies, although it was pointed out that only highly performing schools can become academies in the first instance.

A question was asked regarding the geographical split of performance across the county; officers noted that there was no evidence for this.

**246 SERVICES FOR SCHOOLS (item 12)**

Report no 137/2012 was received from the Strategic Director for People. The

report provided a brochure of the services available for schools from Rutland County Council. These were based on a full cost recovery model. It was noted that academies are able to purchase services from any appropriate source. Non academy schools have been keen to see the brochure to help them assess the likely costs of becoming an academy.

In response to a question it was noted that academies are securing services from a wide variety of sources including other local authorities. It was pointed out that academies could use their money to appoint individuals to provide specific services rather than purchasing them. Rutland County Council is equally able to offer services to other authorities' schools. Members commented on the excellent document and extended their thanks to the author Mrs Bysouth.

There was some discussion on the coordination of admissions to schools.

**247 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT QUARTER 1 – 2012/13 (item 13)**

Report number 164/2012 had been previously circulated to members. The improved outcomes compared to the previous report were noted. There were no other questions raised.

**248 ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

The Chairman noted that the exam results for Rutland County College were due out. Officers were asked to inform panel members of the results when available.

**Agreed:  
Officers to inform members of the exam results for students at Catmose College.**

**166 DATE AND PREVIEW OF NEXT MEETING**

11 October 2012

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The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.37pm

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