



# 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 21 February 2013**

**PRESENT:** Miss G Waller (Chairman, in the Chair) (for part of the meeting)  
Mr M E Baines (in the Chair) (for part of the meeting)  
Mrs J K Figgis  
Mr J M Lammie  
Mrs L I Stephenson  
Mrs C Vernon  
Mr N M Wainwright  
Mr A S Walters

**CO-OPTED MEMBERS:** Mr Goringe Diocesan, Church of England  
S Gullan – Whur Primary Schools  
Ms P Rubinstein Secondary Schools

**OFFICERS PRESENT:** Ms C Chambers Strategic Director for People  
Mrs K S Dunleavy Democratic Services, Peterborough City Council  
Ms W Poynton Assistant Director – Services for People

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Mr G Plews Portfolio Holder for Youth, Sport, Community Safety and Culture

**APOLOGIES:** Mr K Bool, Mrs C Cartwright and Mr M A Oxley

## **732 RECORD OF LAST MEETING**

The Record of the Meeting of the People (Children) Scrutiny Panel held on 29 November 2012, copies of which had been previously circulated, was confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

The Record of the Special People (Children) Scrutiny Panel held on 16 January 2013, copies of which had been previously circulated, was confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

## **733 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Mr Walters declared a disclosable interest in Report No 39/2013, Heritage Lottery Fund Bid Submission, due to his involvement with heritage work.

A number of members declared disclosable interests in Report No 40/2013, Ofsted Reports on School and Colleges from September 2012 to December

2012, which included the inspection report for St Mary & St John CofE VA Primary School. Members declaring an interest were:

- Mrs Vernon as she was employed in the recruitment profession, but had not been involved in the recruitment of Head Teachers;
- Mrs Figgis had previously been employed at the school; and
- Miss Waller informed the Panel that she would leave the meeting for the Ofsted report on school & colleges, due to being the Vice Chair of Governors.

Following the declarations of interest, Members agreed to alter the order of the Agenda to allow consideration of Report No. 40/2013, Ofsted Report on School & Colleges from September 2012 to December 2012 prior to the Chairman leaving the meeting owing to her declaration of a disclosable interest in this item. It was proposed, seconded and agreed that Mr Baines would chair this item of business.

#### **734 PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS**

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

#### **735 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS**

No Questions with Notice of Motion were received from Members.

#### **736 NOTICES OF MOTION FROM MEMBERS**

No Notices of Motion were received from Members.

#### **737 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.

#### **738 ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

With the consent of members present, it was agreed to consider Agenda Item Number 20, Any Other Urgent Business, at this juncture.

##### Ms Sarah Bysouth – Head of Service Lifelong Learning

The Chairman, Miss Waller, informed members that Ms Sarah Bysouth would be leaving the Authority in April 2013. Members requested that their gratitude for Sarah's hard work and contribution to the Authority be noted in the record of this meeting.

##### National Youth Agency (NYA)

Miss Waller introduced a report on the National Youth Agency (NYA), Routes to Success Programme, which had been requested in relation to a previous Panel agenda item on the Young People's Democratic Engagement Review.

During discussion the following points were raised:

- a) Young people and pregnancy – the Strategic Director for People, Ms Chambers, advised that the Council would not record the detail surrounding young people’s life choices or their marital status regarding pregnancy. However, fourteen year olds would receive extra support compared to those aged nineteen whether their circumstance was by choice or not;
- b) General Practitioners (GPs) – the Strategic Director for People, Ms Chambers, advised that services offered to patients were regulated, which inhibited the Council imposing any changes to GP processes. The recent work with Young Inspectors through the Children’s Trust Board (CTB) and the introduction of the Statutory Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) may be utilised in the future to influence the way GPs offered services to young people in particular to speed up access to emergency contraception appointments;
- c) Youth Worker support – the Strategic Director for People, Ms Chambers, advised that the Council employed a part time Youth Worker trained to deliver advice on sex and relationships to young people. In addition all of the Youth Team members were trained to offer relationship and contraceptive advice to young people;
- d) Members requested to be kept informed of progress through the CTB and HWB in particular to improvements for GP appointment services and the services provided to young people.
- e) In response to comments made about the quality of the report, the Portfolio Holder for Youth, Sport, Community Safety and Culture, Mr Plews, advised that a considerable amount of work had been conducted to produce the report’s findings which had included consultation with members, young people, and observations at Youth Forums to highlight and include young peoples ideas and aspirations;
- f) Youth Services budget provision – the Strategic Director for People, Ms Chambers, advised that the allocation of £435K included service costs as well as the employment of twenty part time Youth Workers; and
- g) Youth Forum – the Portfolio Holder for Youth, Sport, Community Safety and Culture, Mr Plews, advised that recent community work had included the provision of a free Christmas dinner for the elderly.

**AGREED:**

That the Panel’s Work Programme would include:

- i) An update on the work of the Youth Forum; and
- ii) An officer evaluation of the Routes to Success inspector’s recommendations.

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Mr Plews left the meeting.

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## **SCRUTINY**

### **739 SCHOOLS FUNDING REFORM EARLY YEARS BLOCK/ HIGH NEEDS BLOCK**

Report No. 33/2013 from the Strategic Director for People was received.

The Strategic Director for People, Ms Chambers, introduced the report which outlined the background information on the work completed on the Early Years Block and High Needs Block (Schools' Funding Reform) by the Schools Forum, with a recommendation to Cabinet on the preferred options to be implemented from 1 April 2013.

During discussion the following points were raised:

- a) Early Years Base Funding Calculation – Ms Chambers advised that the provision allowed for a higher level of qualified staff, that the funding level had previously been inflated and that issues around deprivation and qualifications had been attached to its allocation;
- b) Mr Walters commented on the enormous amount of work involved, which should be applauded.

#### **AGREED:**

That the contents of Report No 33/2013 be noted.

### **740 HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND BID SUBMISSION**

Report No. 39/2013 from the Strategic Director for People was received.

The Strategic Director for People, Ms Chambers, provided feedback on the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) application to provide funding for the restoration of Oakham Castle. The following points were highlighted:

- That the bid had recently been submitted;
- That if the application was to be successful a project board would need to be appointed.

During discussion the following points were raised:

- a) The application was welcomed by the majority of members;
- b) Audience development and school involvement – the Strategic Director for People, Ms Chambers, advised that if approved, a project officer would be appointed to develop the various stages under each of the headings, which would include the exploration of options such as resource provision through schools. In addition, the Panel's comments would also feed into the project work;
- e) Mr Walters stated that he did not want to see the introduction of a Café within the development plans;
- d) The Strategic Director for People, Ms Chambers, advised that it was important to note that the development and improvements to Oakham Castle would attract tourism and events such as weddings and larger

**AGREED:**

That the contents of Report No 39/2013 be noted.

**741 YOUTH REPRESENTATIVES ON THE CHILDREN'S SCRUTINY PANEL**

Report No. 54/2013 from the Strategic Director for People was received.

The Strategic Director for People, Ms Chambers, introduced the report which proposed a mechanism for the membership of the Scrutiny Panel for Children to be augmented by the addition of two young people.

During discussion the following points were raised:

- a) Concerns were raised over the length of the Panel's meetings and that it may be sensible to adopt a more structured agenda so that the items of interest to the youth representatives were discussed earlier in the meeting and to introduce a minimum age for the representatives;
- b) It would be important for the youth representatives to ensure consistent attendance in order to keep them up to speed with the topics discussed;
- c) The contribution already made by the Youth Council at previous Panel meetings had ensured good debate and aided the Panel's deliberations in the past;
- d) The Youth Council were keen to become formal co-opted members of the Panel and were very good at questioning and challenging any issues or topics under discussion;
- e) Members of the Panel may want to consider becoming mentors to the youth representatives;
- f) Following concerns at whether topics such as Ofsted should be discussed in the presence of young people, the Strategic Director for People, Ms Chambers, advised that in the past young people had demonstrated their maturity and ability in knowing when to speak, along with their thoughtfulness and honesty. In addition, the young representatives would be elected members from the Youth Council and would receive a level of training in order to conduct their duties. The Assistant Director, Services for People, Ms Poynton, also advised that during a recent Ofsted inspection it was recommended that the Council should involve young people in shaping services and that this could usefully include democratic processes and discussions over community issues;
- g) It was commented that young people had recently demonstrated, through their citizenship education, that they had made great progress over the projects they take on;
- h) It was suggested that candidates from the Youth Council should be invited to attend a meeting before the new Municipal Year.

**AGREED:**

The mechanisms for the adoption of two representatives of the Youth Council to become co-opted members of the Panel include:

- (i) All members of the Youth Council would receive training on their role

- (ii) There would be an expectation that the young people representatives would communicate with the Youth Council on the issues for debate in order to present a range of views;
- (iii) That the young people of the panel would be co-opted as non-statutory representatives and would not be entitled to vote; and
- (iv) That the introduction of the two Youth Council co-opted members would be introduced from May 2013.

## **742 CHILD POVERTY STRATEGY**

Report No.52/2013 from the Strategic Director for People was received.

The Strategic Director for People, Ms Chambers, introduced the report on the Child Poverty Act, which obtained Royal Assent on 25th March 2010 which ensured that sustained action must be taken to tackle child poverty by local government and their partners.

During discussion the following points were raised:

- a) EYFS – the Chairman, Miss Waller, advised that the definition was Early Years Foundation Stage, which was an assessment conducted to identify child poverty for the four year old age group. There were a number of categories within the assessment and Rutland's aim was to reach a score of 78 points;
- b) It was requested that in future reports a table should be included to show statistics to identify the progress made by Ward to tackle child poverty and to show how performance was measured;
- c) Careful consideration should be given over the selection of the relevant criteria in order to identify the most accurate performance measures in tackling child poverty, especially if there was an improvement in the economic climate;
- d) Provision of good transport and Job Centre accessibility for young people should be explored further by the Council. Ms Chambers advised that a representative from Job Centre Plus should be invited to a future meeting in order to provide a briefing on their work over child poverty and the relevant benefit changes;
- e) Ms Chambers advised that Rutland offered apprenticeship schemes through the Adult Learning Support Service, which had recently experienced an increase in take up;
- f) Troubled Families - Ms Chambers advised that the ways in which to identify poverty was through the Government's Troubled Families scheme. The scheme provided an opportunity to access data through working with partner agencies; and
- g) School meals - Ms Chambers advised that whilst most families preferred not to be identified through the free school meals scheme, there had been an increase in the take up of pupil premium.

### **AGREED:**

That the contents of Report No 52/2013 be noted.

## 743 OFSTED INSPECTION OF CHILD PROTECTION/SAFEGUARDING ASSURANCE VISIT

Report No. 48/2013 from the Strategic Director for People was received.

The Assistant Director, Services for People, Ms Poynton, introduced the report which set out the findings of the Ofsted inspection of the arrangements for the protection of children and of the Safeguarding Assurance Visit (SAV), which had taken place between 7th and 16th January 2013. The following points were highlighted:

- a) The Council had felt that the findings were fair and staff were keen to make improvements;
- b) The Council was meeting its requirements in comparison to the Ofsted definitions;
- c) The majority of authorities were scoring an adequate level with only one authority attaining an outstanding score;
- d) The previous risk report to the Panel which highlighted concerns around child care cases was accurate;
- e) Both the Ofsted report and the SAV report had indicated that no child known to RCC was found to be left at risk.

During discussion the following points were raised:

- a) It was good to learn that the Ofsted inspection found that no child had been left at risk.
- b) Members welcomed an update on the action plan following the inspection and that this would include action points for improvement in relation to the recommendations, particularly:
  - o The recording of decision making and case discussions, and the management overview of decision making;
  - o Arrangements to strengthen the influence of the experiences of the views of children and their families in the development services;
  - o Clear plans and reviews of plans;
  - o Robust processes for cases moving between support provided under the common assessment framework (CAF) and targeted social care interventions – and improved quality of work undertaken under the CAF;
  - o Focus on service quality in performance management and quality assurance arrangements, including a safeguarding audit of disabled children's cases;
  - o Although good leadership was applied by the Local Safeguarding Children's Board, the Board needed to ensure effective scrutiny and challenge of the work to improve early help services in Rutland.

### **AGREED:**

- 1) That the contents of Report No 48/2013 be noted.
- 2) That a report detailing the Action Plan be presented to the May 2013 meeting.

#### **744 CHILDREN'S CENTRE OFSTED INSPECTION**

Report No. 53/2013 from the Strategic Director for People was received.

The Strategic Director for People, Ms Chambers, introduced the report on the Inspection of Visions Community and Children's Centre which had been carried out over the 7th/8th November 2012 and which had been judged as "satisfactory" in all areas. The centre's capacity for sustained improvement was also "satisfactory" leading to "satisfactory overall effectiveness".

#### **AGREED:**

That the contents of Report No 53/2013 be noted.

#### **745 QUARTER 3 SAFEGUARDING REPORT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE 2012-13**

Report No. 49/2013 from the Strategic Director for People was received.

The Assistant Director, Services for People, Ms Poynton, introduced the report which provided children's safeguarding data and analysis and provided an overview of safeguarding activity in Quarter 3 of 2012/13.

During discussion the following points were raised:

- a) Members wished to see a 100% improvement over child care case timescales? I don't know what this means or where it has come from – many of the performance indicators are at 100%. Should this be "members were pleased with the improvements over child care case timescales"?
- b) Statistical information regarding ethnic group populations had differed in the Ofsted report compared to the quarterly safeguarding report due to the recent publication of Census data;
- c) Concern was expressed over the high numbers of abuse in the neglect category. Ms Poynton advised that neglect was one of the most common cases of abuse nationally;
- d) Additional information would be provided in future reports to give the Panel more information on the quality of the work undertaken as well as reporting on the quantitative measures.

#### **AGREED:**

That the contents of Report No 49/2013 be noted.

#### **746 Q3 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT 2012/13**

Report No. 21/2013 from the Chief Executive.

The Strategic Director for People, Ms Chambers, introduced the report which outlined the Council's performance in the third quarter of 2012/13 and for the year to date. Members were advised that the report would, in future, provide qualitative as well as quantitative information.



**AGREED:**

That the contents of Report No 21/2013 be noted.

**747 Q3 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT REPORT 2012/13**

Report No: 22/2013 from the Strategic Director for People was received.

The Strategic Director for People, Ms Chambers, introduced the report which outlined how the Council was performing against its revenue and capital budgets and to report the forecast year end outturn position as at 31 December 2012.

During discussion the following points were raised:

- a) Whilst the recent high turnover of staff and the budget issues had now settled, there would be one off cases that the Council were unable to plan for;
- b) The targets which had been set for staff savings had brought about a reduction in the provision of some services which would affect the Council's income stream and that a balance needed to be found; and
- c) The staff training budget had reduced by 10% because there was a reduced amount of training required at this time of year.

**AGREED:**

That the contents of Report No 22/2013 be noted.

**748 BUDGET 2013/14, MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME**

Report No. 5/2013 from the Strategic Director for People was received.

The Strategic Director for People, Ms Chambers, introduced the report on the budget proposals for 2013/14 and which were to inform members of the estimated position on the Collection Fund as at 31 March 2013. The following points were highlighted:

- Proposed General Fund Budget 2013/14 and MTFP 2013/14 to 2018/19;
- Savings proposals and potential further savings;
- Service pressures;
- Indicative Directorate budgets;
- The draft capital programme;
- The proposed Council tax freeze grant for 2013/14;
- The indicative proposals for changes to technical reforms to Council tax;
- The estimated surplus of £150,000 on the Collection Fund as at 31 March 2013 of which £130,000 is the Rutland share.

During discussion the following points were raised:

- a) A joint meeting for the People (Children) Scrutiny Panel and Places Scrutiny Panel had been arranged to consider the report of the Transport Task and Finish group.

**AGREED:**

That the contents of Report No 5/2013 be noted.

**749 WORK PROGRAMME 2012/13 AND REVIEW OF FORWARD PLAN**

Mr Walters provided an update on the Safeguarding Adolescents Task and Finish group and requested that a substitute was identified in the event that the membership requirements for political balance were waived.

**AGREED:**

That Miss Waller be appointed as a substitute member to the Safeguarding Adolescents Task and Finish Group in the event that the membership requirements for political balance were waived.

**750 REVIEW OF RISK REGISTER**

The Chairman advised the Panel that improvements were underway to provide a clearer and simpler format of the risk register reports for all Scrutiny Panels.

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Following her declaration of a disclosable interest in the following item of business, the Chairman, Miss Waller, left the meeting at this juncture.

Mr Baines assumed the Chair.

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**751 OFSTED REPORT ON SCHOOLS & COLLEGES FROM SEPTEMBER 2012 TO DECEMBER 2012**

Report No. 40/2013 from the Strategic Director for People was received.

The Strategic Director for People, Ms Chambers, introduced the report which provided an overview of the Ofsted reports of maintained schools in Rutland, which had been carried out in the period September 2012 to December 2012. The school covered in the report was St Mary & St John CofE VA Primary School which had received a grading outcome of Requires Improvement, the grading from the last inspection in 2008 was Good.

During discussion the following points were raised:

- a) The Ofsted report had outlined that the behaviour of children was generally good. There was not a high expectation from teachers, which was of concern;
- b) The inspection had come at a time when the school did not have a permanent Head Teacher;
- c) Mr Baines commented that the Ofsted report was positive over the Early Year's provision;
- d) The Strategic Director for People, Ms Chambers, advised that expectations were that the school should be graded as Outstanding

- e) Ms Chambers advised that it was expected that the Her Majesty's Inspectors would conduct a rigorous follow up inspection at the school and if significant improvements were not in place, then the school was at risk of being placed into special measures;
- f) The school's governing body had set the criteria for the recruitment of teachers rather than the Diocese. This was in order to attract strong educational practitioner candidates rather than attracting limited candidates who had a strong religious ethos.

**AGREED:**

That the inspection judgements, overall effectiveness, capacity for sustained improvement and what the school needed to do to improve further, be noted.

That a progress report following the HMI inspection be presented to the meeting due to be held in May 2013.

**752 DATE AND PREVIEW OF NEXT MEETING**

Thursday 2 May 2013 at 7.00pm.

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**The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.31pm.**

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