



Rutland County Council

Catmose Oakham Rutland LE15 6HP
Telephone 01572 722577 Facsimile 01572 75307 DX28340 Oakham

Minutes of the **MEETING of the PEOPLE (CHILDREN) SCRUTINY PANEL** held in the Council Chamber, Catmose, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 6HP on Thursday, 17th November, 2016 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Mr J Dale (Chair)
Mr G Conde
Mrs D MacDuff
Mr R Foster
Mr D Wilby

CO-OPTED MEMBERS Mr A Menzies Mrs L Youngman

APOLOGIES: Mr E Baines Mr N Begy
Mr O Bird Mr K Bool due to Chairman's
duties
Mrs R Burkitt Mrs L Stephenson
Mrs S Gullan-Whur

OFFICERS PRESENT: Dr T O'Neill Director for People and Deputy
Chief Executive
Mr J Adamson Business Intelligence Manager
Mrs B Caffrey Head of Families Support: Early
Intervention
Mr M Fowler Head of Learning and Skills
Mrs S Hickman Early Years Foundation Scheme
Consultant
Mrs S Ramsay Corporate Support Officer
Ms R Wilshire Head of Service - People

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr R Foster Portfolio Holder for Safeguarding
Children and Young People
Mr D Wilby Portfolio Holder for Lifelong
Learning
Mrs S Iveson General Manager, Healthwatch
Rutland

386 RECORD OF MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the People (Children) Scrutiny Panel held on 1 September 2016, copies of which had been previously circulated, were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

387 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- (i) Mr Conde declared a personal interest in Agenda item 9 by virtue of the fact his granddaughter attended a Rutland nursery.

388 PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS

No petitions, deputations or questions had been received from members of the public.

389 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS

No questions were received from members.

390 NOTICES OF MOTION FROM MEMBERS

No Notices of Motion had been received from Members.

391 CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE PANEL FOR A DECISION IN RELATION TO CALL IN OF A DECISION

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

392 QUARTER 2 FINANCE REPORT

Report No. 191/2016 was received from the Director for Resources

During discussion the following points were noted:

- a) Members were surprised to see a reduction in the forecast spend on winter pressures so early in the year, the Assistant Director for Finance advised that the reduction was due to the funds being put into reserves, should the need arise in the future the funds would be released from this reserve, members were assured that the funding had not been lost.
- b) Members noted that there was a significant overspend on the fostering and adoption budget, it was understood that this was a demand led service but were the current numbers pertaining to this a historic low? Officers advised that the number of Children Looked After had fluctuated between 30 and 40 over the previous 18 months, with an average of 35, and was currently at 37.

AGREED:

1. That the Panel **NOTED** the Report.

---oOo---

Mr Della Rocca left the meeting at 7.07 p.m.

---oOo---

393 QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT

Report No. 194/2016 was received from the Director for Resources.

During discussion the following points were noted:

- a) Members requested further information on the take up of secondary school places offered, the % indicator in the report referred to the offer of a place and did not reflect actual take up. Officers clarified that the initial offer of a place for the normal academic year was made by the local authority on behalf of the schools however, the academies in the county set their own entrance criteria and in the previous year this resulted in Rutland children not being offered a place at one of the local schools. The school in question had voluntarily amended the entrance criteria to avoid this happening in the future.
- b) Members asked that, where people were housed in bed and breakfast accommodation how many of these were children, officers advised that no children have been housed in this manner.
- c) Members asked if the authority was on target in regard to early years funding, Mr Fowler advised that this was done on the basis of participation and amended to suit the need.
- d) Dr O'Neill introduced Rebecca Wilshire, Head of Safeguarding and Service Improvement, to members and apologised for not having done so previously.

AGREED:

1. That the Panel **NOTED** the Report.

394 SAFEGUARDING IN SCHOOLS

Report No. 199/2016 was received from the Director for People.

Mr Fowler presented the report, advising members that it contained statistics that needed careful interpretation. The key source of information on school safeguarding came from an online survey completed by schools in September. These findings are checked by triangulation with other indicators.

Care should be taken in interpreting the data as:

- 14 extra schools completed the survey this year, so simple comparisons could not be made with previous years (this year the survey was sent not just to all Rutland schools, including independents, but also to schools outside the county where Rutland children had been placed;
- Several new questions had been added for which no data were available from previous years;
- The questions had been summarised for this report for the sake of brevity – in some cases, the full question needs to be read to understand the response;
- Readers should not see 100% response as the ideal in all cases. For example, whilst 100% of schools may have taken part in “Prevent” training last year, readers should not expect all schools to take part in Prevent training the following year.

Mr Fowler indicated that whilst the section of the report dealing with the survey would need further elaboration, the areas of concern and recommendations for action were identified. A more detailed list of actions would follow.

During discussion, the following points were noted:

- a) Members noted that the report showed clear evidence of improvement in safeguarding and asked how many of the training assessments were mandatory. Officers advised that this depended on the nature of the training - some were constant and mandatory and some were cyclical. Mr Fowler advised that further information could be provided regarding which were mandatory and to indicate the relevant time frame for each.
- b) As the report covered varying areas of safeguarding members requested the report to be weighted, possibly using a traffic light system.
- c) The report did not take account of the autumn training; it may be possible to provide an update at the February meeting.
- d) Members asked how significant the issue of young carers was in Rutland. Officers advised that schools were invited to nominate a Young Carers Champion who were in turn invited to attend a training session on how to identify and support young carers. It was noted that not all schools put a nominee forward and so the numbers were thought to be under reported. A strategy had been developed with a Barnardo's champion and an awareness campaign was being launched in January 2017. Dr O'Neill advised that a written update note would be provided to the next panel meeting. Ms Caffrey later advised the panel that based on the 2011 census the following number of under 25's were reported as providing unpaid care:
 - i. 144 reported 1-19 hours
 - ii. 9 reported 20-19 hours
 - iii. 11 reported over 50 hours

Mrs Youngman asked officers why statistic on the availability of child protection policy was not 100%. Officers indicated that the question in the survey was not simply about the availability of the policy but what the school had done to inform parents on its availability. The survey question was, "*have you informed parents that the child protection policy is available to view on request*". Furthermore, officers advised that whilst some schools had answered the question positively, others had not responded, thus lowering the statistic percentage.

- e) Mrs Youngman further asked why films aimed at raising awareness of social media, for example Kayleigh's Love Story, was only aimed at secondary school when it could also affect those in their last year at primary school (Year 6)? In response, officers indicated that the film was being rolled out to relevant age groups and their parents, feedback from screening was being gathered and the impact assessed.
- f) The increase in the number of missing children being reported was queried by members. The officer reported the procedures by which these children are identified and dealt with. The increase in 2015-16 is a feature of the criteria used in recording these pupils. When a child is identified as missing by both the school and the School Inclusion Development Officer this case is recorded, whatever the reason. In the last year three cases involved service children whose parents had not notified the school or LA as they were moved out. Two others related to children whose parents had chosen to home educate them without notifying the school or LA. All cases were resolved within 24 hours.

AGREED:

1. That the Panel **NOTED** the Report.
2. That Dr O'Neill would, if the autumn training had altered the figures as per item c), produce an updated Safeguarding in Schools report.

395 **POVERTY SCRUTINY PROJECT**

Report No. 212/2016 was received from the Director for People. The Scrutiny Commission had agreed to undertake a review of Poverty in Rutland. The project objectives were:

- To develop an agreed definition of Poverty in Rutland;
- To develop a Council policy in the form of a White Paper to be approved by Full Council that will outline for Rutland how the Council will act to positively impact on poverty within the County.

The following areas were identified for the Children's Scrutiny Panel to consider:

- Accessibility of Childcare – cost, quality, availability
- Indicators below the threshold – early indicators, preventions
- Indicators of those just below the threshold for receiving support in relation to child poverty (prevention)
- Important to acknowledge inter-connectivity of Poverty
- Perceptions of poverty (from expert witnesses) and how easy it is to refer any concerns or sign-post to support

During discussion, the following points were noted:

- a) Mr Adamson provided members with a recap on the context of the project, he advised that each scrutiny panel would receive a report on pertinent areas. A Child Poverty Strategy was, until recently, a statutory requirement and this gave the Children's Scrutiny panel a different starting point. It was clear from workshop discussions that members did not want to start again, but rather look at existing information with a fresh outlook, take more evidence and hear from expert witnesses. The paper presented had two key focus areas for this meeting: childcare funding arrangements and Early Help plans to reduce child poverty. The panel were advised that questions around these areas would develop clarity on the three biggest issues to take forward to the green and white papers.
- b) Members were advised that, in regard to childcare, the government proposal to increase free entitlement for three and four year olds from 15 to 30 hours, for working parents, would increase the financial pressure on the authority. Early indications were that Rutland could be paid less than other East Midlands authorities, Members noted that the current provision for 3-4 year olds could be stretched over 51 weeks of the year rather than term time. Mrs Hickman advised that the proposed Early Years National Funding Formula, if implemented, could have a significant impact on the viability of Rutland Early Years Providers. She also advised that the council would be lobbying the Department of Education in regard to the funding allocation for Rutland.
- c) Members also requested information in regard to the length of the entitlement, Mrs Hickman advised that once allocated the entitlement remained, this was 15 hours per week for 38 weeks (570 hours in total), some families chose to spread the hours over more than 38 weeks having shorter weekly sessions.

Members asked if there was any way for the entitlement to be extended beyond the 38 weeks to help those working families on low salaries. It was suggested that this be included in the green paper along with a proposal to link free school meal entitlement to childcare along with possible contributions toward fee paying after school clubs for those on low incomes.

- d) It was noted that the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) were to be the lead organisation for the Fair Society element of the Rutland Children, Young People and Families Plan 2016-19 (CYPFP), members representing wards in the east of the county advised that some residents used the CAB in Stamford and that there was a danger of those being missed by just using Rutland CAB, members requested that a CAB representative be invited to the next meeting

AGREED:

1. That the Panel **DISCUSSED** the contents of the report.
2. The Panel agreed that target 7 “to reduce child poverty levels...” be the overarching target and propose subjects for discussion and, or action.
3. That a representative from the Stamford CAB be invited to the next meeting.

396 PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS AND TOPICS

Copies of the Forward Plan were distributed to attendees.

- The Rutland Education performance report was due to be presented to Cabinet in December, members requested to receive the report as a discussion item at a future meeting.
- The Special Educational Needs review was due to be considered by Cabinet in January, Dr O’Neill agreed to take this as a presentation to Scrutiny

397 ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

In response to an earlier question the information provided by Ms Caffrey with regard to Young Carers has been incorporated into minute number 394.

398 DATE AND PREVIEW OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on Thursday, 18th January 2017 at 7.00 p.m.

AGREED:

Agenda Items

1. Budget only

---oOo---

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.47pm.

---oOo---