



Rutland County Council

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Minutes of the **MEETING of the STRATEGIC OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chamber, Catmose, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 6HP on Thursday, 21st September, 2023 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT Councillor R Ross (Chair)
Councillor L Stephenson (Vice Chair)
Councillor T Carr
Councillor M Chatfield
Councillor K Corby
Councillor H Edwards
Councillor R Payne
Councillor R Powell

APOLOGIES Councillor S Lambert
Councillor K Payne
Peter French Diocesan Deputy Director of Education,
Dioceses of Peterborough

STATUTORY CO-OPTED MEMBERS – EDUCATION REPRESENTATIVES

PRESENT

Andreas Menzies Roman Catholic Diocese

PORTFOLIO HOLDERS PRESENT

Councillor T Smith Portfolio Holder for Children's Services
Councillor C Wise Portfolio Holder for Highways, Transport
and the Environment

OFFICERS PRESENT

Dawn Godfrey Strategic Director of Children and Families
Penny Sharp Strategic Director of Places
Bernadette Caffrey Head of Early Help, SEND and Inclusion
Emma Odabas Interim Senior Transport Manager
Jane Narey (Clerk) Scrutiny Officer

ATTENDED

Councillor A Brown Chairman of the Council and Chair of the
Economic Strategy Task and Finish Group

1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES RECEIVED

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. He thanked Councillor Nick Begy for his service to the committee and welcomed his replacement, Councillor Kevin Corby. Apologies were noted from Councillor Karen Payne, Councillor Stephen Lambert and Mr Peter French. Councillor Raymond Payne attended the meeting as Councillor Lambert's representative.

2 RECORD OF MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on the 13th July 2023 were approved as an accurate record.

3 ACTIONS ARISING

There were no actions from the previous meeting.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

5 PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS

No petitions, deputations or questions were received.

6 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS

No questions with notice with notice were received from Members.

7 NOTICES OF MOTION FROM MEMBERS

No notices of motion were received from Members.

8 CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE IN RELATION TO THE CALL-IN OF A DECISION

No call-ins were received.

9 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS/OUTCOMES

The recommendations from the Economic Strategy Task and Finish Group were presented to Cabinet on the 15th August 2023 and the response was noted.

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Councillor Hannah Edwards joined the meeting at 7.04 p.m.

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10 REVIEW OF THE WORK PLAN

A) PROPOSED ITEMS FOR SCRUTINISING

The Chair confirmed that two proposal forms had been received for items to be added to the Committee's work plan:

1. Charging for Care and Support Policy

- It was agreed that the item should be added to the Committee's work plan for the Committee's meeting on the 8th February 2024 due to its Extent (it would affect a number of Rutland residents) and that it would be a matter of Public Interest.

- The Chair proposed that the Scrutiny Committee should also review the draft public questionnaire prior to its submission to Cabinet on the 17th October 2023.

RESOLVED

That the Committee:

- a) **APPROVED** the inclusion of the Charging for Care and Support Policy to the Committee's work plan for discussion at its meeting on the 8th February 2024.
 - b) **AGREED** that the draft public questionnaire should be reviewed by the Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Committee prior to its submission to Cabinet on the 17th October 2023.
2. Oversight provided by the Rutland Health and Wellbeing Board in the development of the plan for future health service provision for Rutland residents.
- The Chair informed members that the Strategic Director of Adult Services and Health had attended the Committee's pre-meeting and provided additional information to members.
 - It was noted that though this matter was of Public Interest, it was questionable as to what impact the Scrutiny Committee could have by scrutinising it.
 - The Chair proposed that the item should not be added to the Committee's work plan. Instead, a plan of health responsibilities and key decisions should be presented to the Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Committee in November.

RESOLVED

That the Committee:

- a) **DECLINED** to include 'Oversight provided by the Rutland Health and Wellbeing Board in the development of the plan for future health service provision for Rutland residents' to the Committee's work plan.
- b) **AGREED** that a plan of health responsibilities and key decisions, which detailed all the current health plans, identified whose plans they were, showed how they all fitted together and detailed the development process for the current five-year plan for Rutland through to its completed form would be added to the Committee's work plan for discussion at its meeting on the 23rd November 2023.

11 SEND PROGRAMME UPDATE

Report No. 138/2023 was received from Dawn Godfrey, Strategic Director of Children and Families. The report was presented by Councillor Tim Smith, Portfolio Holder for Children's Services and a presentation was received from Bernadette Caffrey, Head of Early Help, SEND and Inclusion (copy attached). During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- The aim of the DfE Delivering Better Value (DBV) Programme was to improve outcomes for SEND children and young people and deliver a balanced high needs block budget. Phase 1 of the DBV Programme had been completed.
- Rutland County Council (RCC) had been appointed joint lead alongside Leicestershire County Council and Leicester City Council for the East Midlands Change Partnership in relation to the SEND and AP national change programme

- Phase 2 of the Delivering Better Value Programme would run until March 2025 with regular reporting to the DfE. The first report, including financial forecasts was required by the DfE in February 2024.
- Councillor R Payne asked what support was being provided to armed forces families. The Strategic Director of Children and Families confirmed that SEND officers had been to Cyprus to meet the children of those armed forces families that would be moving to Kendrew Barracks over the summer 2023. Each child's needs and the level of support required had been identified to ensure a suitable school place was secured for when the family arrived.
- The Head of Early Help, SEND and Inclusion confirmed that an induction session had been arranged at Kendrew Barracks for the incoming families to be briefed about Children's Services and to meet the staff involved.

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Councillor Ross declared a non-pecuniary interest in that his wife had been a Special Educational Teacher

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- Councillor Stephenson proposed that the Scrutiny Committee should send a letter supporting the continuation of the 'statutory override' relating to the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). The 'statutory override' meant that any DSG deficit was not included in the Council's main revenue budget but this would cease in 2026.
- The Strategic Director of Children and Families confirmed that RCC had a good relationship with its health colleagues and that the new governance arrangements would only strengthen the strategic partnership relationships.

RESOLVED

That the Committee:

- a) **NOTED** the Area SEND inspection outcome and the Delivering Better Value (DBV) Programme progress.
- b) **ADVISED** how the Committee wished to be involved in the progress of the Delivering Better Value Implementation Plan.
- c) **AGREED** that the Committee would receive a report detailing the progress of the Delivering Better Value Implementation Plan at its meeting on the 21st March 2024.
- d) **AGREED** that the Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Committee would send a letter to the Member of Parliament / Minister of State for Education supporting the continuation of the 'statutory override' relating to the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant.

12 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

It was proposed by the Chair that Agenda Item 14 B) – Asset Review Task and Finish Group was taken before Agenda Item 14 A) – Economic Strategy Task and Finish Group and that the public and press be excluded from the meeting in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 as the following items of business were likely to lead to the disclosure of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). This was seconded and upon being put to the vote the motion was unanimously carried.

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The Chair closed the public meeting at 8.01 p.m.
Dawn Godfrey, Strategic Director of Children and Families and Bernadette Caffrey,
Head of Early Help, SEND and Inclusion left the meeting.

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13 TRANSPORT NETWORK REVIEW BUSINESS CASE & POST-16 TRAVEL OPTIONS

14 ASSET REVIEW TASK AND FINISH GROUP

15 GROUP AND PANEL UPDATES

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The Chair re-opened the public meeting at 9.06 p.m.

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A) ECONOMIC STRATEGY TASK AND FINISH GROUP

The final report of the Economic Strategy Task and Finish Group was presented by Councillor Andrew Brown, Chair of the Economic Strategy Task and Finish Group. During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- Councillor Brown informed attendees that both members and officers had found the Economic Strategy Task and Finish Group process beneficial. This was because the Task and Finish Group had started by being properly scoped with clear, realistic, timely and time limited objectives identified.
- All the meetings between members, officers and external partners had been very positive with all parties working in partnership.
- Members of the group had understood the topic under review and how it would affect the council and its residents.
- Positive questioning had led to positive and productive responses and this had resulted in the group providing recommendations regarding the new Economic Development Strategy.
- Councillor Brown expressed his thanks to members and officers for all their hard work and hoped that the Committee saw the Economic Strategy Task and Finish Group as an example of 'good practice' for future scrutiny task and finish groups.
- The Strategic Director of Places thanked the Group noting that it had been a positive process for officers as it had added value to what the Council wanted to achieve.

RESOLVED

That the Committee:

- a) **APPROVED** the final report of the Economic Strategy Task and Finish Group.

16 ANY URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

17 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday, 23rd November 2023 at 7.00 p.m. in the Council Chamber.

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The Chair declared the meeting closed at 9.14 p.m.

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Scrutiny Committee September 2023

DfE Delivering Better Value Grant and Implementation plans

SEND Recovery and Improvement

Capital priorities that underpin change

DfE Delivering Better Value in Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Grant Funding

- Building on the SEND Recovery Plan started 2018, iterate this to an Improvement Plan
- New Governance arrangement- SEND Area Strategic Partnership Board
 - Chaired by Health, vice chair DCS
 - More engaged partners, children's and parental involvement
 - Incorporate learning from Area SEND Inspection
 - SEND Capital Programme 2023-24 (DfE Grant)
 - Refresh of Rutland SEND and Inclusion Strategy
 - In line with the national SEND and AEP Change Programme

DfE Delivering Better Value in Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Grant Funding

- Complex application process Dec 2022-July 2023-multiple stages, data and diagnostics, parental surveys, case deep dives, practice reviews, listening forums, children, parents , practitioners.
- £1 million investment against key opportunities weighted by impact and confidence in delivery/complexity of change – funding of £1million is now confirmed
- DfE will undertake quarterly review through DSG management plan
- DfE to see demonstrated return on investment over 5 years, proportionate to proposed spend and fit with Rutland population needs
- Data from 2017-2021 years, impact of School Support Partnership not fully revealed.

Diagnostic analysis of Rutland's SEND systems

The diagnostic activity has been co-produced with partners across the system



Surveys



51 Parents & Carers

with children at every phase of education responded to a survey



48 Education providers

across roles and settings responded to a survey

Listening Forums



5 SENCOs

supported a deep dive into the drivers of parental confidence



3 CYP

Joined in a workshop to share their likes & dislikes



2 Parents

Told us their story

Case Reviews



37 CYP

Cases were reviewed in case reviews to understand if we achieved their ideal outcomes



29 Reviewers

across education, health, social care, local authority and parents contributed to the discussions

Data Analysis



10,000+ Data points

of CYP level data were analysed to better understand variation

— • Focus areas identified to have most impact through analysis



Expanding Specialist Support

Diagnostic evidence shows a strong support for SSP but also a gap in offer for those with complex needs

- **This could support CYP without the need for a specialist placement**
- **Expanding the SSP to those with EHCPs and running pilots to understand what the most effective specialist provision might be**



Consistency of Ordinary Available

The diagnostic themes pointed to greater consistency in OA providing reassurance to parents and best practice in schools

- **Co-producing process and standards by identifying and sharing best practice**
- **Providing information and training which enables all practitioners with clarity and skills**



Early intervention

Another lever to support CYP is through early intervention and partnership working with health and social care partners

- **We could avoid plans by intervening early and effectively with the right support**
- **Establishing a process that can support parents and staff to know how to access support**



EHCP process & reviews

The evidence indicates frustration with the overall process. We also saw the wording and phrasing in plans contributing to a lack of clarity on when outcomes had been met.

- **Supporting the SEND team to ensure plans are of high quality with SMART goals that are agreed with parents/carers**

Parental Confidence Building

Data-driven decision making and performance management

Effective project and change management

Key areas to bring cost avoidance £3.8m over 5 years

Impact of workstreams



Activity	Description	Impact
Specialist Team	<i>A highly skilled team of SENCOs who will provide direct, hands on support and advice for schools on individual children and whole school practise. Demonstrating impact of change in practice. Advise and develop the graduated response including Post- EHCP, identify training needs and facilitate where appropriate. Act as a guide for schools to bring in targeted support at the right time, for example SALT, OT or Mental Health, above and beyond what the NHS can offer. This will be swift and responsive. Working in partnership with the Schools Support Partnership and the ICB for ongoing sustainability.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children better supported in Mainstream and RP - Teachers and practioners upskilled to better support - Parents have confidence in mainstream education - Confidence in inclusionary practise in schools - Long term ways of working established with ICB
Social Support Early Intervention	Social support for children and families to be provided through Early Help with a dedicated resource whose focus is increasing reach and supporting children, young people and families with SEND. The role will work to create healthy communities of support that ensures the pathways are appropriate and ideal for each CYP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parents feel they have the right support at the right time - Parents have confidence in their own abilities to meet need - Parents are supported to navigate 'the system' - Children better supported outside of a specialist setting
Parental Engagement	Engaging <i>all</i> Parents & Carers. Initial interaction strategy with increased clarity of opportunity for support, how to find information. Creation of a map that shows what the provision will be without an EHCP or what you are able to access in terms of support. Programme of engagement to improve the narrative around recent changes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parents trust the local offer delivers the best outcome for their child - Tribunals are reduced - LA Concessions are reduced - More children supported without the need for an EHCP - Parental satisfaction
Data Infrastructure	Dedicated resources to support our data management system ensuring it is fit for purpose and make necessary improvements. Improve the process for generation and recording of data. Exploring data visualization tools to improve decision making across the system, especially intelligent commissioning. Increasing knowledge of children with SEN Support and those whose needs might escalate. Ability to support DBV workstreams in data, case management and reporting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More accurately see impact of change - Facilitate conversations with partners and decision making to enable more effective outcomes - Explicit data driven commissioning

— Capital programme to increase mainstream inclusion capacity

DfE High Needs Capital Grant £1,039,000 remaining

Mainstream Plus Primary up to 3 class groups across schools

Develop and equip- Expression of Interest process Autumn 2023

Primary nurturing environments likely 8 across county

Develop, minor refurb through straightforward grant type process Autumn 2023 £3-6k per site

Alternative Provision development- 1 Secondary site/ maybe Primary

Develop and equip – EOI Autumn 2023

- Expressions of Interest with schools during Autumn 2023
- Cabinet update proposed Winter 2023
- Allocations by end 2023, onsite refurb and building Jan to June 2024

— DBV timeline

- Stage 1 Application submitted 17th July 2023, DfE assurance process passed
 - Stage 2 submitted 8th Aug- outlining existing mitigations in Rutland system not in bid
 - Expect funding 8th October 2023
 - Programme Delivery phase July 2023-March 2025 - DfE clawback if not spent 2025
- ↗ Projects had to be 'new' or adding to existing ideas to make them quantifiably additional

Rutland Focus

- SEND data reporting fluidity
- Transformation capacity across partnership
- Mainstream placement confidence- Capital work and Parental confidence
- Avoid Specialist placements— *10 children a year to meet target*

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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