



Rutland County Council

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Minutes of the **MEETING of the PEOPLE (CHILDREN) SCRUTINY PANEL** held in the RUTLAND COUNTY MUSEUM - RIDING SCHOOL on Thursday, 19th November, 2015 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Mr J Dale (Chair)
Mr E Baines
Mr J Lammie
Mr G Conde
Mr A Walters
Mrs D Mc Duff
Mr K Bool

CO-OPTED MEMBERS: Mr P Goringe

OFFICERS PRESENT: Mr M Andrews Deputy Director for People
Mr M Fowler Head of Service – Learning and Skills
Mr S Tanner Head of Safeguarding
Ms B Caffrey Head of Families Support-Intervention and Early Years
Ms D Greaves Accountant
Mrs R Hynds Corporate Support Officer

APOLOGIES: Mrs L Stephenson, Mrs R Burkitt

387 MINUTES OF MEETING

The record of the People (Children) Scrutiny Panel held on 17 September 2015, copies of which had been previously circulated, was confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

388 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There was a declaration of interest:

Mr A Walters declared an interest in item 7 as he has a member of his family at the school.

389 PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS

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

390 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS

No Notices of Notice were received from Members.

391 NOTICES OF MOTION FROM MEMBERS

No Notices of Motion were received from Members.

392 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.

393 PUBLISHED OFSTED REPORTS IN EDUCATION AND LEARNING SETTINGS

Report No.221/2015 was received from Mark Fowler on behalf of the Director for People.

During the discussion the following points were noted:

- i. There is a presumption that the school would join another Church of England Primary school and this is not always the case.
- ii. The inspectors were expected to report back to the schools with their deliberations.
- iii. The Head teacher of Oakham C of E Primary School explained that they had created more time to teach by changing other tasks in the school day.
- iv. It was agreed to invite the Head Teacher, Steve Cox and the school governor to the Scrutiny Panel meeting in February.
RCC will look into the matter of the misleading press release regarding the 'Good' result for the school.

During the discussion the following points were raised:

- i. A question was asked if the school would become an academy by 2016, and would there be another inspection before then. Officers told the Panel that there would be another inspection
- ii. A further question was asked if it would be likely that the school join a group of schools, like Whissendine, Ketton St. Nicholas and Langham. Officers explained that this was quite likely.
- iii. There was concern that teachers did not appear be knowledgeable enough in their own subject.
- iv. There was concern that teachers were not setting challenging enough tasks for the children.
- v. The Head of Learning and Skills explained that there was an error on the report and that it was identified a year ago, when there was a temporary Head Teacher in post. The new Head Teacher and Governor would be invited to the next meeting in February.
- vi. The panel asked who decides the Pupil Premium. Officers explained that this is decided by the school.
- vii. The Panel expressed concern over a press report in the local paper stating that the school had a 'Good' rating and advertising for the new intake.

AGREED:

The Panel approved the contents of the report.

394 FOSTERING-ANNUAL REPORT

Report No.223/2015 was received from Steve Tanner on behalf of the Director for People, Councillor Foster.

During the discussion the following points were noted:

- i. The next annual report would be available in July 2016 and we would endeavour to ensure an earlier presentation to members next year.
- ii. Government through the ADCS has proposed a proportionate distribution of Syrian refugees across local authorities. As Rutland is so small this is likely to be around 2 families. We have had, however, a small number of unaccompanied asylum seekers from Afghanistan and Iraq. We try to ensure an appropriate location and match for the young person within their community and have used placements in Leicester. If a child or young person in care or care leaver of another local authority is placed in Rutland then the placing authority retains responsibility for supporting and funding.
- iii. RCC is currently recruiting for foster carers for teenagers, sibling groups, and children with disabilities.
- iv. Head of Safeguarding told the Panel that nearly all the children in care are in foster care or connected person's placements. More teenagers in care in Rutland are "staying put" beyond 18 with their existing foster carers. This will support them into independence however; this is reducing the availability of placements for new teenagers coming into care and is an additional cost to the authority because we may have to buy in the new placements from independent fostering agencies.

During the discussion the following points were raised:

- i. The Panel asked if there had been any potential improvement of numbers of foster carers in respect of children from Syria. The number of foster carers overall has remained similar over recent years and we haven't experienced an upturn in interest following the refugee crisis.
- ii. The Panel were concerned about unaccompanied refugee children. If they move from the county, are we still responsible for them? Officers explained that we would be responsible for them.
- iii. The Panel asked if there are any more foster carers for teenagers.
- iv. Head of Safeguarding explained that this area is a challenge, especially for older and disabled children although we are assessing some potential carers at the current time.
- v. The Panel asked Officers for the statistics for children in care are to be brought to the next meeting.

AGREED:

The Panel noted the contents of the report.

395 IRO- ANNUAL REPORT

Report No.209/2015 was received from Steve Tanner on behalf of the Director for People

AGREED:

The Panel noted the Decision of the report.

396 SAFEGUARDING IN SCHOOLS

Report No.222/2015 was received from Mark Fowler on behalf of the Director for People.

During the discussion the following points were noted:

- i. Children with mental illness were included with children with disabilities.
- ii. RCC would look into a cyber parent evening.
- iii. The Head of Families Support- Intervention and Early Years explained that all staff was trained to recognise safeguarding issues and that people could contact RCC to raise any concerns.
- iv. The Deputy Director told the Panel that work had started in looking at a Front Door Service, so that advice and support could be accessed when needed. The Panel would be kept informed of progress on this service.
- v. The Head of Learning and Skills explained that had been training and there were several methods already up and running in schools about e-safety.
- vi. The Head of Learning and Skills reassured the Panel that the Community Safety Team was focused at primary as well as secondary schools.

During the discussion the following points were raised:

- i. The panel asked if there was a confidential hotline for people who need to speak to an experienced person for advice. Officers explained that anyone concerned with a safeguarding issue can always call RCC.

AGREED:

The Panel approved the report.

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Mr S Tanner and Mr M Fowler left the meeting at 8.00pm

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397 AIMING HIGH- SHORT BREAKS

Report No.220/2015 was received from Bernadette Caffrey on behalf of the Director for People.

During the discussion the following points were noted:

- i. Councillor Conde thanked Bernadette Caffrey and her team for spending time with him going over this report.

During the discussion the following points were raised:

- i. The Panel queried the direct debit payments and how do you know it is used for what it was intended to. The Head of Families Support-Early Years and Intervention explained that processes are being put in place to track the direct debit payments and that the money is being used correctly.

AGREED:

The Panel noted the contents of the report.

398 EARLY HELP STRATEGY

Report no 171/2015 was received from the Head of Education

AGREED:

The Panel noted the contents of the report.

399 YOUTH SERVICE REVIEW

During the discussion the following point was noted:

- i. The Head of Families Support-Early Years and Intervention told the Panel that the balance of expenditure is our obligation. It is resource intensive, due to the need of three or four officers at a youth club.
- ii. The Deputy Director told the Panel that the universal services can only be accessed at one point. In reality it is never the case and to get the measure of the true impact is very difficult and it is hard to get the metrics correct. Some local authorities questioned whether they should use volunteers or supply the resources themselves.
- iii. The Portfolio Holder for Lifelong Learning suggested involving the military in making provisions for young people that could not easily access activities, due to not having their own transport.
- iv. The Deputy Director explained that the longer it is left the less savings would be made. February's meeting may be too late as it has gone through the processes so far.

During the discussion the following point was raised:

- i. Concern was raised over the higher costs than previously expected.
- ii. The panel was concerned that it was difficult to support Option 3 when there was not much background to it.
- iii. Referring to point 2.6.1 the numbers seemed low to the amount of money put into it.
- iv. The Panel questioned the value for money and if it was too indulgent.
- v. The Panel asked the Officers, how many trips went ahead.
- vi. The Panel questioned the Advocacy Worker and how often this person was used.
- vii. Queried what would work as not many youths have the access to a car or able to drive, and this proves difficult in rural areas.
- viii. The panel expressed concern over needing to vote, but feel that they need more financial information before they approve Option 3.
- ix. The Panel felt frustrated that they hadn't been more involved in the past with Youth Services and explained that it was their oversight and not the Officers. The panel suggested that three panel members could work with Officers in a Task and Finish Group
- xi. The Chair suggested that given extra time on this would benefit all round.
- xii. The Panel said that if a working group was put in place with the Portfolio Holder and Officers, then bring suggestions, recommendations and bring them back through the Portfolio Holder to this meeting.
- xiii. The Panel suggested that the Chairman in conjunction with the Portfolio holder contact the leader as a concern and to see about it being raised at Cabinet and Scrutiny.

- xiv. The Panel asked if this time it was too late to make much impact on this that we look at a Task and Finish Group for 2017/18.
- xv. Concerned that the paper came to Scrutiny too late and that in future that it be best if came earlier in its process.
- xvi. Councillor Lammie recommended that the Panel take a view on Members thoughts, with another paper like this to be debated at a future Scrutiny meeting.

AGREED:

The Panel noted the contents of the report and felt that there were recommendations of a Task and Finish Groups to be set up alongside the Youth Services Report. All of the Panel were in favour.

400 STRATEGIC AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Report No.205/2015 for the Chief Executive was received The purpose of which was to provide the Panel with the opportunity to be consulted on the councils Strategic Aims and Objectives and to feed back to Cabinet any comments as part of the consultation process.

During the discussion the following point was noted:

- i. The Deputy Director explained that there is a risk of overlaying other target groups. We need to have objectives that we can all meet.

During the discussion the following Point was raised:

- i. The Panel felt that the report was encouraging under health for young children. A brighter future for all and that we should be supporting all schools. The Panel noted the contents of the report.

401 QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT

Report No.217/2015 from the Director for Resources was received. The purpose of which was to inform the Panel on the Council's performance for the second quarter of 2015/16.

AGREED

The Panel noted the contents of report.

402 QUARTER 2 FINANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT

Report No. 206/2015 from the Director for Resources was received. The purpose of which was to inform the Panel of the full year forecast position as at Quarter 2 for 2015/16, and to alert them to issues that may impact on the Medium Term Financial Plan. This will enable them to maintain sound financial management of the Council's operations.

AGREED

The Panel noted the contents of the report.

403 PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS AND TOPICS

Members noted the Programme of Meetings and Topics

404 REVIEW OF FORWARD PLAN 2014/15

Members noted the forward plan.

405 ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There was no other urgent business.

406 DATE AND PREVIEW OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 14 January at 7pm.

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The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.40pm.

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