

Children's Services Committee

Minutes of the Meeting Held on Thursday 20 November 2014
2:00pm Edwards Room, County Hall, Norwich

Present:

Mr J Joyce (Chair)

Mr R Bearman (Vice-Chair)
Mr B Bremner
Mrs J Chamberlin
Mr D Collis
Ms E Corlett
Mr D Crawford
Mrs M Dewsbury
Mr C Foulger

Mr T Garrod
Mr P Gilmour
Mr M Kiddle-Morris
Mrs J Leggett
Mr J Perkins
Mr E Seward
Mr R Smith
Miss J Virgo

Church Representatives

Mr A Mash

Non-voting Parent Governor Representatives

Mrs K Byrne

Non-Voting Schools Forum Representative

Mrs A Best-White

Non-Voting Co-opted Advisors:

Mr A Robinson
Ms B Carrington
Ms V Aldous
Ms C Smith

Norfolk Governors Network
Special Needs Education
Primary Education
Secondary Education

1 Apologies and substitutions

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Ms D Gihawi (Mr B Bremner substituted); Mrs H Bates, Church Rep; Ms T Humber, Special Needs Education (Mrs B Carrington substituted); Mrs S Vertigan, Parent Governor Representative.

2 Minutes from the meeting held on 15 October 2014

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 15 October were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to the job title for the lead officer of the Looked after Children Task and Finish Group reading "Interim Assistant Director Social Care".

3 Matters arising

- 3.1 The Committee requested updates at its next meeting on the progress of the Safeguarding Forum and the Signs of Safety Working Groups.
- 3.2 The action plan from the report into the allegations of schools receiving advance notification of inspections would be circulated to Members of the Committee.
- 3.3 The Committee requested an update report to be brought to its January meeting about the additional work that had been carried out relating to the budget, following the recommendations agreed at the last meeting under item 7 - Strategic and Financial Planning 2015-18.
- 3.4 The Chair would arrange for a list of the decisions taken between Committee meetings by the Chair and Vice-Chair to be circulated to the Committee.

4 Declarations of Interest

- 4.1 There were no declarations of interest.

5 Items of Urgent Business

- 5.1 There were no items of urgent business
- 5.2 The Committee **agreed** to defer agenda item 11 (A New Education Landscape to serve Norfolk Learners) to a future meeting, to give the Small Schools Working Group an opportunity to discuss and comment on the proposals contained in the report. Mr G Boyd, the Assistant Director, Education Strategy and Commissioning, Children's Services suggested that any Member who wished to comment on the report could send their comments to him for consideration.

6 Local Member Issues/Member Questions

- 6.1 No local member questions or issues had been received.

7 Children's Services Integrated Performance and Finance Monitoring Report for 2014-2015.

- 7.1 The Committee received a report by the Interim Director of Children's Services providing an update on performance and finance monitoring information for 2013/14 financial year. It set out the latest Children's Services performance information showing evidence of improvements and trends for a range of measures and indicators within the children's social care service; support for school improvement and children's services finances.
- 7.2 The following points were noted in response to questions from the Committee:
 - The Key Stage results for all schools and academies had been included within the report. The Assistant Director, Education Strategy and

Commissioning, Children's Services agreed to arrange for the academy results to be extracted and the information forwarded to the Committee.

- Free school meal funding was not directly monitored by Norfolk County Council, but as part of the quality analysis role, Children's Services was looking at the quality of the information available about free school meals on school websites.
- The Norfolk Pupil Premium Strategy would be published soon and would include the challenge to school leaders and governors to close the gap for pupil's eligible for Pupil Premium and Pupil Premium Plus.
- Persistent absence was clarified as the proportion of children whose non-attendance level was 15% or more. The Committee noted that this measure would be changing to 10% soon. The restructuring of Children's Services department would ensure that attendance remained a high profile topic which would hopefully lead to much better results in the near future, particularly for those children with special educational needs.
- One element of the Variations in Educational Attainment by District Task and Finish Group would be to try to reduce the variation in district school performance. One of the key features would be to contact Governor Services to gather their ideas and input.
- Regarding, risk RM14148 – Over-reliance on interim and agency staff which would result in unsustainable improvement in services to children and families, the Committee noted that although it did cost more to recruit agency staff, there was little choice at present due to the national shortage of social workers. Children's Services had recruited 25 trainee social workers.
- Concern was expressed about the lack of general knowledge regarding "The Promise" which had been established to help those children who were about to leave care.
- The Committee was reassured that steps had been put in place to monitor future performance of the contract awarded to Skylake following the recent audit which had identified a significant improvement was required. The Committee was also advised that there was a penalty clause in place should it be necessary to deal with any unsatisfactory performance
- Although there was no statutory deadline for the amount of time between a referral and a social worker seeing a child, Norfolk County Council worked towards children being seen within 20 working days of referral. Children seen alone were being dealt with separately, although Norfolk County Council had no legal right to see a child if the parents did not give their permission. Under those circumstances, a court order would need to be obtained.
- The Pathway Plans Task and Finish Group had completed its work in March 2014 and the Committee expressed its disappointment that no significant improvements had been made since that time, particularly

around the establishing of the Care-Leavers pack, which had been one of the main recommendations from the group.

- Data relating to staff performance was managed through the Human Resources and Performance Management process and the Committee was reassured that performance data was reviewed and discussed on a weekly basis at team meetings.
- Family Support Plans were considered and discussed with all appropriate partners before final agreement was reached.
- Statistics for the number of Section 17 referrals would be included in future performance reports.

7.3 The Committee **noted** the information contained within the report, in particular:

- the improved standing of Norfolk schools in relation to validated GCSE results.
- Ofsted inspection ratings continued to improve.
- Increased system leadership within the school community and work to address performance differences across the county.
- Improvements and further challenges on school attendance.
- Improvements in most social care practice with continued challenges around LAC performance and the increased management attention being given to this.
- The continued focus required on the Looked After Children reduction to deliver the budgeted savings.
- The increased cost of Special Educational Needs transport.
- The cost associated with the use of temporary social workers.
- The re-profiled capital projects.
- The disappointing outcome of the Pathway Plans Audit on pages 47 and 48 of the report.

8 Staff Wellbeing

8.1 The Committee received a report by the Interim Director of Children's Services explaining the staff sick absence and turnover for the past 18 months and details the actions taken by the management of the service to improve the figures. The report also track turned the improvement in staff engagement over the last twelve months.

8.2 The following points were noted during the discussion:

- Children's Services had employed a temporary member of staff to collate and analyse the sickness absence data and to work with managers to help them understand what the data was showing.
- Although Headteachers of some Norfolk schools were employed by Norfolk County Council, the employment responsibility for all Headteachers, including for well-being, was undertaken by Governing Bodies.

- 8.3 The Committee **noted** the content of the report and supported the actions being taken.

9 Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

- 9.1 The Committee received a report by the Interim Director of Children's Services setting out details of the externally commissioned review of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

- 9.2 The following responses to questions from the Committee were noted:

- As the external Review report conducted by Retired Police superintendent Nigel Boulton had only been received recently, it had not been considered by the Norfolk Safeguarding Children Board (NSCB) and MASH Board. Once the NSCB and MASH Boards had considered the report, it would be made available to the Committee.
- The Committee requested that a report on Safeguarding should be added to the forward work programme for consideration at a future meeting.
- The funding for the post of overall MASH Manager would be agreed after discussion with all the Partners.

- 9.3 The Committee **RESOLVED** to note the contents of the report and to receive a report at a future meeting after it had been considered by the MASH and NCSB Boards.

10 Progress Report on Early Years Strategy

- 10.1 The Committee received a report by the Interim Director of Children's Services presenting an update on Early Years outcomes for Norfolk children and services to support those outcomes. The paper also outlined the key improvements in outcomes and some key aspects of the role of the local authority which should lead to the continued improvement of the quality of provision and outcomes for pupils.

- 10.2 The following responses to questions from the Committee were noted:

- The single funding formula had been amended due to a change in Government Regulations and to assure that the funding was more closely aligned to needs of the children in the settings.
- After consultation, proposal 3 (Single base rate with a supplement for deprivation, quality and flexibility, paid each claim period) had been deemed to be the preferred option.
- Government funding for pre-school places was only paid to places that were taken up.
- The Children's Centres Task and Finish Group was arranging visits to

children's centres. Letters were being sent to the local member with details of the visit as part of the arrangements, inviting the local member to attend if they were available.

10.3 The Committee **RESOLVED** to

- Note that outcomes for five-year olds were improving, but remained below the national average.
- **Agree** the proposed changes to the Early Years Single Funding Formula as detailed in Appendix 3 of the report, for implementation in April 2015, subject to Secretary of State approval.
- **Agree** the findings from the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2014 so that the Local Authority could meet its duty to secure sufficient childcare and publish the report.

11 Out of County Policy

11.1 The Committee received a report by the Interim Director of Children's Services detailing the proposed Policy aimed at significantly reducing the numbers of Looked After Children placed out of county and consequently enhancing the experience and improving the outcomes of having been in the authorities' care.

11.2 The following responses to questions from the Committee were noted:

- Paragraph 5.4 on page 139 of the agenda was amended to read "The focus on pathway planning and the introduction of a leaving care service is bringing the spotlight on the need for in-depth knowledge of and partnership with agencies who support care leavers, including education support and accommodation".
- It was hoped to bring back long-term out of county placements to Norfolk and work was being undertaken with social workers to try to achieve this.
- Pathway Plans should reflect the need for a young person to be living in Norfolk for a minimum of six months prior to reaching the age of 18.
- The Committee reiterated the importance of Pathways Plans in helping out of county youngsters to settle back in Norfolk after long-term out of county placements.

11.3 The Committee considered the content of the report and the policy at paragraphs 1.1 (Principles), 1.2 (Current out of county Placements) and 1.3 (New out of county placements) and **RESOLVED** to approve the implementation.

12 'Make Your Mark' Ballot – Presentation by Members of the Youth Parliament.

12.1 The Committee received a presentation from Annie Baldwin, MYP for Broadland and Kieren Buxton, MYP for Norwich South. A copy of the presentation is attached at Appendix A to these minutes.

12.2 The following points were noted in response to questions from the Committee:

- All MYPs felt very strongly about the implementation of a minimum working wage.
- Members were invited to attend MYP meetings and details of dates and times would be circulated to all Members.
- MYPs felt that everyone should be offered at least one week of work experience and were campaigning for this to be made available in all schools. Attending work experience, even for a period of one week, would give young people an idea of what it is like in the working world as not many young people had any idea of working. MYPs would also like to see an agreement between the employer and the employee so both parties knew exactly what would be required of them during the work experience.
- A further topic which had been identified as important was an opportunity to re-sit GCSE exams. The current arrangements for re-sitting exams was affecting college courses for some people as it did not allow students to re-take exams in sufficient time to commence college courses. MYPs expressed a preference to return to the previous system of re-taking exams.

12.3 The Committee thanked Annie and Kieren for attending and **noted** the presentation.

12.4 The Committee asked for a briefing note on work experience and what was taking place in schools at the moment to be circulated. The Interim Assistant Director, Improvement advised that schools made their own decisions about whether or not to offer work experience to students and that there was no statutory responsibility for them to offer this initiative.

13 Children's Equalities – issues and next steps

13.1 The Committee received a report by the Interim Director of Children's Services setting out the proposals for promoting equality of opportunity and equality of access to services for children and young people.

13.2 Members requested some additional clarification and information about the "percentage of parents LD or MH" as the percentage quoted in the report of 77.14% appeared disproportionately high.

13.3 The Committee **RESOLVED** to

- Improve and extend the evidence and database to improve analysis and highlight differences in relation to outcomes for particular groups.
- Strengthen the voice of children – promote a film produced by children from different groups in Norfolk to improve quality of practice.
- Promote leadership in relation to equalities issues – hold a Children's Services equality symposium to inspire, inform and promote a collective understanding of our future direction.

- Focus on development of managers – their management of diverse teams and having the knowledge and tools to challenge attitudes, behaviour and language and monitor quality.
- Deliver a targeted learning and development package.
- Improved co-ordination of equalities related work.

14 Getting in Shape – Restructuring Children’s Services

- 14.1 The Committee received a report by the Interim Director of Children’s Services setting out the approach to developing a new model for Children’s Services for Norfolk, details of which are contained in the ‘Getting in Shape’ Business Case.
- 14.2 During the presentation of the report, the Interim Assistant Director, Improvement advised that a formal staffing consultation with affected staff in relation to appointments to the Tier 4 posts in the new structure would commence on 24 November after which it was hoped that managers would be in post in January 2015 to participate in the recruitment of staff to posts below Tier 4.
- 14.3 The following responses to questions from the Committee were noted:
- It was confirmed that the recruitment to the department would be within the budget set for the next year, including the required budget savings.
 - The Design Authority had seen and commented on the proposed structure and confirmed that it was not out of kilter with the corporate structure of Norfolk County Council.
 - The proposals had been revised in light of consultation responses to link services for North Norfolk and Broadland District Councils rather than Norwich and Broadland as originally proposed. The revised proposal matched more closely the organisation of the Police operational partnership teams. It also avoided one locality being disproportionately large in terms of population and concentration of need. These outweighed the benefits of the original proposal which recognised the increasing need to link services across Norwich and Broadland in response to housing and economic development. These benefits would now be pursued through partnership arrangements rather than structural alignment.
 - It had been decided not to separate the Leaving Care service under the restructure as it would caused too many issues problematic to isolate this service.
- 14.4 The Committee **RESOLVED** to
- Note the objectives set out in the Business Case and endorse the strategic direction for services in Norfolk.
 - Note the consultation and engagement exercise and the feedback received.
 - Endorse the headlines in respect of the key elements of the structure going forward.

- Approve the indicative timetable set out and the proposals for future update reports including a report setting out any risks as a result of implementation and its impact on performance.
- Note that this will be delivered within the current financial envelope which takes into account the additional savings targets identified by Policy and Resources.

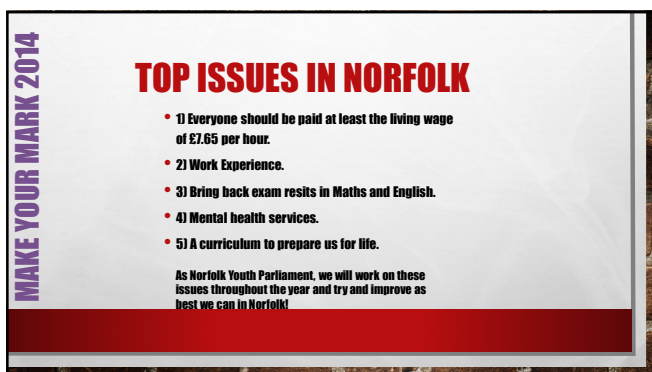
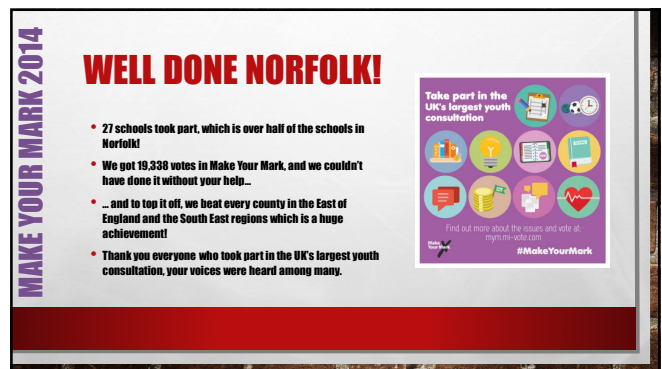
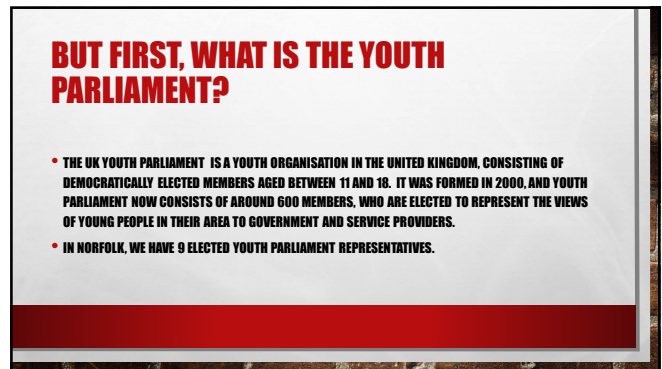
The meeting closed at 5.45 pm.

Chair



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Appendix A




MAKE YOUR MARK 2014

2) Work Experience

This came second in Norfolk.

5 Work Experience



We should have the chance to do at least a week's placement, at a place of our choosing. We should have access to professionals who inspire us.

#MakeYourMark

Vote to decide what your Members of Youth Parliament debate in the House of Commons. Vote online until 10th Oct. mym.mt-vote.com

MAKE YOUR MARK 2014

3) Bring back exam resits in Maths and English

This came third in Norfolk.

6 Bring back exam resits in Maths and English



Bring resits in English and Maths back in to schools in England and help us achieve our potential.


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MAKE YOUR MARK 2014

4) Mental Health services

4 Mental health



Services should be improved with our help. We should all learn about common mental health issues at school and negative stereotypes should be challenged.

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MAKE YOUR MARK 2014

5) A curriculum to prepare us for life

This came fifth in Norfolk.

3 A Curriculum to prepare us for life



Schools should cover topics like finance, sex and relationship education and politics.

#MakeYourMark

Vote to decide what your Members of Youth Parliament debate in the House of Commons. Vote online until 10th Oct. mym.mt-vote.com

MAKE YOUR MARK 2014


TOP ISSUES NATIONALLY IN THE U.K

- 1) Votes at 16.
- 2) Everyone should be paid at least the living wage of £7.65 per hour.
- 3) Mental health services.
- 4) Work Experience.
- 5) Bring back exam resits in Maths and English.

MAKE YOUR MARK 2014

1) Votes at 16

1 Votes at 16



Give 16 and 17 year olds the right to vote in elections and referendums.

#MakeYourMark

Vote to decide what your Members of Youth Parliament debate in the House of Commons. Vote online until 10th Oct. mym.mt-vote.com

Make Your Mark
Vote to decide what your Members of Youth Parliament debate in the House of Commons. Vote online until 10th Oct: myyp.norfolk.gov.uk

8 Everyone should be paid at least the Living Wage of £7.65 per hour (£8.90 in London)

LIVE ON IT

Anyone who works, regardless of age, should have a decent stand of living.

#MakeYourMark

2) Everyone should be paid at least the living wage of £7.65 per hour

MAKE YOUR MARK 2014

Make Your Mark
Vote to decide what your Members of Youth Parliament debate in the House of Commons. Vote online until 10th Oct: myyp.norfolk.gov.uk

4 Mental health

Services should be improved with our help. We should all learn about common mental health issues at school and negative stereotypes should be challenged.

#MakeYourMark

3) Mental Health

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5 Work Experience

WORK EXPERIENCE

We should have the chance to do at least a week's placement, at a place of our choosing. We should have access to professionals who inspire us.

#MakeYourMark

4) Work Experience

MAKE YOUR MARK 2014

Make Your Mark
Vote to decide what your Members of Youth Parliament debate in the House of Commons. Vote online until 10th Oct: myyp.norfolk.gov.uk

6 Bring back exam resits in Maths and English

Bring resits in English and Maths back in to schools in England and help us achieve our potential.

#MakeYourMark

5) Bring back exam resits in Maths and English

MAKE YOUR MARK 2014

HOUSE OF COMMONS 2014

• ON 14TH NOVEMBER 2014, 4 MYPS FOR NORFOLK WENT TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS WHERE THEY DISCUSSED AND DEBATED THE 5 ISSUES AND DECIDED ON THE TOP 2 ISSUES NATIONALLY.



MAKE YOUR MARK 2014

MAKE YOUR MARK 2014

CONTACTING NORFOLK YOUTH PARLIAMENT

- If your school would like more information on Make Your Mark or any of the issues listed please contact NYP@norfolk.gov.uk
- If you'd like to run your own campaign on any of the top 5 topics in Norfolk then please contact us and we can assist you on these!
- If you'd like to contact Norfolk Youth Parliament please email NYP@norfolk.gov.uk
- Follow what we do on twitter @ukypnorfolk (if you have twitter!)
- Like and comment on what we do on Facebook : UK Youth Parliament Norfolk (and obviously only if you have Facebook!)