

## SCRUTINY BOARD (CHILDREN'S SERVICES)

THURSDAY, 7TH JUNE, 2007

**PRESENT:** Councillor W Hyde in the Chair

Councillors C Campbell, J Chapman, J Elliott,  
S Hamilton, R Harington, A Lamb, B Lancaster,  
J Langdale, T Murray and K Renshaw

**CO-OPTED MEMBERS:** Ms C Foote - Teacher Representative  
**(NON-VOTING)** Mr T Hales - Teacher Representative  
Ms T Kayani - Leeds Youth Work Partnership Representative

### 1 Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed all in attendance to the first Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) meeting of the new municipal year.

### 2 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Murray declared personal interests in relation to agenda items 10 and 11 entitled, 'Work Programme – Sources of Work and Establishing the Board's Priorities' and 'Performance Management Information' respectively, due to being a Director of Learning Partnerships, a governor of Thomas Danby College, a governor of Garforth Community College, and due to his wife being employed within Children's Social Services (Minute Nos. 8 and 9 refer).

### 3 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received on behalf of Councillor R D Feldman, Mr E A Britten, Professor P H J H Gosden, Mr C Macpherson, Mrs S Knights, Mr P Gathercole and Mrs S Hutchinson.

### 4 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the previous Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) meetings held on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2007 and 17<sup>th</sup> May 2007 be approved as correct records.

### 5 Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2007 be noted.

### 6 Co-options to the Board

The Board received a report from the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development which sought Members' approval for co-options to the Scrutiny Board.

Members noted that Article 6 of the Council's Constitution required the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) to include both a Church of England and a Roman Catholic diocesan representative, together with three parent governor representatives as voting co-opted members of the Board.

In addition, Members noted that each Scrutiny Board was also permitted to appoint up to five non-voting co-opted members for the duration of the current municipal year. Having considered the arrangements which had been in place throughout 2006/07, Members proposed that a representative of the Leeds VOICE Children and Young People Services Forum could be sought and co-opted onto the Board, an approach which had been agreed in principle at the beginning of the previous municipal year. Members noted that the NCH representative for 2006/07 was also a member of the Children and Young People Services Forum, but that if any future nomination from the Children and Young People Services Forum did not possess specific social care experience, then up to two further representatives from appropriate backgrounds could be co-opted onto the Board for the duration of an inquiry.

**RESOLVED –**

(a). That the re-appointment of Professor P H J H Gosden (Church Representative – Church of England) and Mr E A Britten (Church Representative – Roman Catholic) as voting co-opted members of the Board for 2007/08 be confirmed;

(b). That the continued appointment of Mr R Greaves (Parent Governor Representative – Secondary), Mr C Macpherson (Parent Governor Representative – Special) and Mrs S Knights (Parent Governor Representative – Primary) be noted;

(c). That Mr T Hales and Ms C Foote (Teacher Representatives), Mrs S Hutchinson (Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership Representative), Ms T Kayani (Youth Work Partnership Representative) and Mr P Gathercole (Leeds VOICE Children and Young People Services Forum Representative) be appointed as non-voting co-opted members of the Board for 2007/08, and

(d). That the option to co-opt onto the Board a further two individuals for the duration of specific inquiries be noted.

**7 Terms of Reference**

A report was submitted by the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development which invited Members to note the revised arrangements for Scrutiny in addition to the Board's terms of reference, which had been appended to the report. Members were advised that following a review, Council had agreed the revised arrangements for Scrutiny, which were in line with the Council's change programme, at the Annual Meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2007.

**RESOLVED –** That the revised arrangements for Scrutiny, in addition to the terms of reference for the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services), as appended to the report, be noted.

## 8 Work Programme - Sources of Work and Establishing the Board's Priorities

A report was submitted by the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development which sought Members' views on the Scrutiny Board's work programme for the 2007/08 municipal year.

Councillor Brett, Lead Executive Member for Children's Services, Councillor Harker, the Executive Member for Learning, Rosemary Archer, Director of Children's Services, Chris Edwards, Chief Executive of Education Leeds and Jackie Wilson, Strategic Leader – Change and Performance, Children's Services, were all in attendance.

The two Executive Members present provided the Board with an overview of the range of issues currently being faced throughout the Children's Services portfolio in Leeds. The main points raised were as follows:-

- The actions being taken in preparation for the upcoming **inspection** of Children's Services provision;
- The finalisation of the revised **Children and Young People's Plan**;
- The focus which needed to be placed upon **vulnerable children**, including the services currently available to **young people with disabilities and looked after children**;
- The importance of those young people who fell within the **8-13 age group** and the need to ensure that appropriate services were provided to them;
- The development of early years service provision in Leeds through the **children's centre** programme;
- The issue of **governance arrangements** when considering the **multi agency approach** towards provision which was increasingly being taken in Leeds;
- **Parenting support** and the engagement of parents;
- The contribution of **youth services** in Leeds;
- The actions which needed to be taken to address the general **health and wellbeing of children and young people**, particularly in relation to obesity, mental health and sexual health;
- Proposals relating to the restructuring of **Further Education** and the **14-19** phase in Leeds, following a report which was published by the Learning and Skills Council on the issue, and **pathways to employment**;
- The **standards agenda and attainment** levels of children and young people in Leeds;
- The work currently being undertaken on school buildings and estates through the **Private Finance Initiative (PFI) and the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme** and the progress being made in relation to the provision of **information and communication technologies (ICT)** in education.

The Director of Children's Services advised new members of the Board of the changes in structure and approach towards children's services provision which were being adopted following the introduction of the Children Act 2004. She referred to the key challenges of developing partnerships, participation, personalisation, safeguards and standards.

Having received a brief summary of the information detailed within agenda item 11 entitled, 'Performance Management Information' (Minute No. 9 refers) from the Chief Executive of Education Leeds, a question and answer session ensued. The main additional areas of debate were as follows:-

- The role of **Area Management Boards (AMBs)** in Leeds and the support currently being given to those staff who were working to improve the behaviour levels of children and young people;
- The need to ensure that ongoing areas of work undertaken by the Board's predecessors continued to be monitored by the Board as appropriate. It was noted that several responses to inquiries which had been conducted throughout the previous municipal year were scheduled to be submitted to the July meeting of the Board for consideration. Members then proposed that a progress report on the **Specialist Inclusive Learning Centres (SILCs)** in Leeds, an area which had been the subject of an inquiry during 2005/06, was also submitted to the Board in July;
- The **sustainability of schools** in Leeds, and the actions being taken to promote environmental issues and address energy consumption levels within schools;
- The actions being taken to address the issues which were commonly faced by **young immigrants and their families** in Leeds;
- The role of **Academies** and the extent to which Education Leeds could engage with and influence all institutions which made up the increasingly **mixed economy of education provision** in Leeds;
- The actions being taken to address those matters which often affected young people during periods of **educational transition**, in a bid to improve attainment levels;
- The need to ensure that funding arrangements for service provision to children and young people reflected the change in the ways such services were now being delivered. Members then discussed the demise of the **Children's Fund** and how the implications of this were being addressed.

In conclusion, the Chair confirmed that a draft work programme, reflecting the issues raised by the Board, would be submitted to the July meeting for consideration.

#### **RESOLVED –**

- (a). That the report and information appended to the report be noted;
- (b). That further information on parenting support be submitted to the Scrutiny Board for consideration;
- (c). That services for 8-13 year olds be considered in more detail as part of the Board's work programme for the 2007/08 municipal year;
- (d). That ongoing areas of work undertaken by the Board's predecessors be monitored by the Board as appropriate;
- (e). That a progress report on the Specialist Inclusive Learning Centres (SILCs) be submitted to the July meeting of the Board for consideration.

(Councillors J Chapman and C Campbell left the meeting at 9.55 a.m. and 10.25 a.m. respectively, during the consideration of this item)

## 9 Performance Management Information

A report was received from the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development which presented Members with a range of Performance Management Information relevant to the Scrutiny Board's portfolio for the 2006/07 municipal year.

Having received a summary of the key information detailed within the report from the Chief Executive of Education Leeds during the previous agenda item (Minute No. 8 refers), Members also received an update on **safeguarding** issues from the Strategic Leader – Change and Performance, Children's Services. A question and answer session relating to the performance management information ensued. In addition to the areas already discussed in respect of the work programme, the main areas of debate were as follows:-

- The priority which was being given to reviewing the provision of services for **Looked After Children** in Leeds and the need to ensure that a bespoke service was being provided in order to meet the wide ranging needs of all young people in Leeds;
- The number of **unaccompanied asylum seekers** in Leeds;
- Staff turnover in services which affected children and young people and the range of work which had been previously undertaken by scrutiny in this area;
- The recent Ofsted report for the Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD) SILC;
- The levels of young people who were currently **not in education, employment or training (NEET)** and the development and delivery of appropriate packages for them.

### RESOLVED –

(a). That the report and the Performance Management Information appended to the report be noted;

(b). That the issues identified by Members as appropriate for further scrutiny be incorporated into the Board's work programme for the current municipal year.

## 10 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Thursday, 5<sup>th</sup> July 2007 at 9.30 a.m. in the Civic Hall, Leeds.  
(Pre-meeting scheduled for 9.00 a.m.)

(The meeting concluded at 11.25 a.m.)