

SCRUTINY BOARD (CHILDREN'S SERVICES)

THURSDAY, 5TH JULY, 2007

PRESENT: Councillor W Hyde in the Chair

Councillors J Chapman, J Elliott, R D Feldman,
R Harington, A Lamb, B Lancaster, J Langdale,
T Murray and K Renshaw

**CO-OPTED MEMBERS:
(VOTING)**

Mr E A Britten	- Church Representative (Catholic)
Prof P H J H Gosden	- Church Representative (Church of England)
Mr C Macpherson	- Parent Governor Representative (Special)
Mrs S Knights	- Parent Governor Representative (Primary)

**CO-OPTED MEMBERS:
(NON-VOTING)**

Mr T Hales	- Teacher Representative
Ms C Foote	- Teacher Representative
Mrs S Hutchinson	- Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership Representative
Mr P Gathercole	- Leeds VOICE Children and Young People Services Forum Representative

11 Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed all in attendance to the July meeting of the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services).

12 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Murray declared personal interests in relation to agenda items 11 and 13, due to being an LEA Governor of Garforth Community College, an LEA Governor of Thomas Danby College, a Director of igen and Chief Executive of Learning Partnerships (Minute Nos. 18 and 21 refer).

Mr P Gathercole declared a personal interest in relation to agenda item 10, due to being an employee of NCH, an organisation which acted as an adoption agency and provided services to looked after children (Minute No. 19 refers).

Mrs S Knights declared a personal interest in relation to agenda items 8 and 15, due to being Governor of the North West Specialist Inclusive Learning Centre (SILC) (Minute Nos. 16 and 23 refer).

Mr C Macpherson declared a personal interest in relation to agenda item 8, as his child attended the North West SILC (Minute No. 16 refers).

Further declarations of interest were made at later points in the meeting (Minute Nos. 16, 19 and 23 refer).

13 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received on behalf of Councillors C Campbell, S Hamilton and Ms T Kayani.

14 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the previous Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) meeting held on 7th June 2007 be approved as a correct record.

15 Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 16th May 2007 be noted.

16 Development of the Specialist Inclusive Learning Centres (SILCs)

Further to Minute No. 114, 8th March 2007, the Board received an update on the progress which had been made by Education Leeds in relation to the recommendations of the Scrutiny Board (Children and Young People), following the Board's inquiry into SILCs which was conducted during 2005/06. The report also sought Members' involvement in the consultation process for the refreshed Inclusion Strategy.

Appended to the report for Members' information were two documents entitled, 'Parent Partnership Service Scrutiny Board – Action Plan Response, June 2007' and 'The Revised Inclusion Strategy in Leeds 2007-2010: Achieving Excellence by Inclusion'.

Carol Jordan, Strategic Manager, Behaviour and Attendance, Education Leeds, Rosemary Archer, Director of Children's Services and Adam Hewitt, Public and Political Executive Support Manager, Children's Services, were all in attendance to present the report and answer Members' questions.

Having received a brief summary of the key issues detailed within the report, a question and answer session ensued. The main areas of debate were as follows:-

Issues relating to accessibility to Special Educational Needs Provision in Leeds

- Members made enquiries about the ability for pupils to transfer between specialist and mainstream settings and vice versa. Members noted that through the **revised Inclusion Strategy**, the Authority aimed to deliver a consistently high standard of provision across the education spectrum, whilst also having sufficient capacity to accommodate parents' preferences;
- The extent to which there would be a **choice** of education provision available to those young people who had been through the statementing process, and whether a statement remained a prerequisite to attending a SILC;

- Members also learned that a forum had been established comprising of professionals from both the mainstream and specialist settings in order to consider such issues.

Issues relating to Communication

- The Board made enquiries into the actions which would be taken to improve the levels of **communication and interaction with parents**. In response, it was acknowledged that parents' confidence in the system was key, and that they needed to be **accurately and clearly signposted** to the most appropriate educational pathways for their child;
- Members discussed the extent to which the responses to the Board's recommendations had fully addressed the issue of **communicating with parents in a clear and co-ordinated manner**, covering all aspects of support, not just educational support.

General Observations

- Having discussed the **funding arrangements** for the provision of services for those with special educational needs, Members learned that such funding required a greater degree of flexibility, in order enable an individual to undertake the most **appropriate educational pathway**;
- The Board sought further information on the provision of **staff training and development**;
- Members raised concerns regarding the lack of detail in the '**Revised Inclusion Strategy in Leeds 2007-10**', and were assured that the version of the document provided for this meeting outlined the principles rather than full details;
- Members then discussed the **timescales** for the consultation with stakeholders on the refreshed Inclusion Strategy, including a further report to the Scrutiny Board.

RESOLVED –

- (a). That the report and information appended to the report be noted;
- (b). That an update report on the Inclusion Strategy be submitted to the October 2007 meeting of the Board for consideration.

(Councillor Lancaster declared a personal interest in relation to this item due to being an LEA Governor of the North West SILC)

17 Formal Responses to Scrutiny Board Recommendations

A report was submitted by the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development which advised the Board that formal responses had now been received in relation to the majority of inquiry reports and statements published by the Scrutiny Board during 2006/07.

Members noted that a new, more rigorous system of formally tracking progress with recommendations on a quarterly basis was being introduced this year by all Scrutiny Boards.

RESOLVED – That the contents of the report be noted.

18 **The Implications of Trust Schools for the Local Authority - Formal Response**

Further to Minute No. 141, 17th May 2007, the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report detailing the formal response to the recommendations of the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) which had been published during 2006/07 as part of the Board's inquiry into the implications of Trust Schools for the Local Authority.

Rosemary Archer, Director of Children's Services, Adam Hewitt, Public and Political Executive Support Manager, Children's Services, and Pat Toner, Strategic Manager, Human Resources, Education Leeds, were all in attendance to present the report and answer Members' questions.

Following a brief summary of the key issues detailed within the report, a discussion ensued. The main areas of debate were as follows:-

- Having discussed the **pilot scheme which was being undertaken in East Leeds** and the impact that this may have upon how Trust Schools developed in the city, Members learned of the actions being taken to ensure that the Local Authority had an opportunity to influence how Trust Schools were established in Leeds;
- With regard to recommendation 2 of the Board's report, Members enquired how the Local Authority intended to ensure that it had **representation on all the Trusts established**. In response, the Board was advised of the actions which would be taken by Education Leeds to address such issues, which included the intended circulation of explicit **guidance** to all schools;
- In relation to the pilot scheme in East Leeds, Members made enquiries into the potential impact which would be felt by those schools situated within the vicinity of a Trust School;
- The Board then made enquiries into the **level of interest** which had been experienced in relation to the adoption of Trust School status, and how the Local Authority would ensure that any relevant guidance was communicated to those schools expressing such an interest. In response, Members learned that although schools had already received some information on this issue, guidance from the Local Authority was expected to be issued in the autumn, and that there would be an opportunity to make appropriate representations to any school considering the adoption of Trust status during the statutory consultation period.

In conclusion, the Chair thanked the officers present for their attendance and indicated that the Board wished to be kept updated on any further proposals for Trust status.

RESOLVED –

- (a). That the report and information appended to the report be noted;
- (b). That the Board be kept informed of any further proposals for Trust status.

19 **Adoption in Leeds - Formal Response**

Further to Minute No. 116, 8th March 2007, a report was received from the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development detailing the formal response to

the recommendations of the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) which had been published during 2006/07 as part of the Board's inquiry into adoption in Leeds.

Members were reminded that an additional response, particularly relating to recommendation 4 of the Board's report had been received and circulated on behalf of His Honour Judge Hunt, the Designated Family Judge for Leeds, and Mr. Martin J Lee, Legal Manager – Civil Teams, Leeds Magistrates' Court.

Rosemary Archer, Director of Children's Services, Adam Hewitt, Public and Political Executive Support Manager, Children's Services, and Val Hales, Fostering and Adoptions Team Manager, Social Services, were all in attendance to present the report and answer Members' questions.

Having received a brief summary of the key issues detailed within the report, a question and answer session ensued. The main areas of debate were as follows:-

- Members received an update on the establishment of the **third Adoption Panel**, and the current situation regarding Member representation on the Panel;
- Members considered the response received on behalf of His Honour Judge Hunt and Mr Martin J Lee, and proposed that the response was forwarded to the Ministry of Justice as suggested.

It was then formally moved by Councillor R D Feldman and seconded by Councillor Lancaster

That the formal response received on behalf of His Honour Judge Hunt, the Designated Family Judge for Leeds, and Mr Martin J Lee, Legal Manager - Civil Teams, Leeds Magistrates' Court, be submitted to the Ministry of Justice, along with a copy of the Scrutiny Board's inquiry report into adoption in Leeds.

Upon being put to the vote the motion was carried and it was

RESOLVED –

- (a). That the report and information appended to the report be noted;
- (b). That the formal response received on behalf of His Honour Judge Hunt, the Designated Family Judge for Leeds, and Mr Martin J Lee, Legal Manager - Civil Teams, Leeds Magistrates' Court, be submitted to the Ministry of Justice, along with a copy of the Scrutiny Board's inquiry report into adoption in Leeds.

(Councillor Lancaster declared a personal interest in relation to this item, due to being a member of the Elmete Adoption Panel)

20 Young People's Scrutiny Forum - 'Catching the Bus'

Further to Minute No. 130, 19th April 2007, the Board received a report from the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development which detailed the formal responses received in relation to the recommendations of the Young People's

Scrutiny Forum, which had been detailed within the Forum's report entitled, 'Catching the Bus'. In addition to considering the responses received, Members were invited to determine how best to progress the issues raised by the report of the Young People's Scrutiny Forum.

Adam Hewitt, Public and Political Executive Support Manager, Children's Services, was in attendance to answer Members' questions.

Members emphasised the need to support the work of the Young People's Scrutiny Forum, and proposed that a working group comprising of all relevant agencies could be established in order to monitor progress and help develop a response to the concerns detailed within the Forum's report.

RESOLVED –

- (a). That the report and information appended to the report be noted;
- (b). That a working group comprising of Councillors Lancaster, Renshaw, and Mr E A Britten, together with representatives of the Young People's Scrutiny Forum, the Director of Children's Services Unit and Metro be established, in order to monitor progress and help develop a response to the recommendations detailed within the Forum's report.

21 Officer Response to Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) Report on the 14-19 Review of Education and Training Provision in Leeds

Further to Minute No. 135, 19th April 2007, a report was submitted by the Chief Executive of Education Leeds which detailed the formal response received in relation to the recommendations of the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) following the publication of a statement issued by the Board regarding the Review of 14-19 Education and Training Provision in Leeds.

Appended to the report for Members' information was a document entitled, 'Raising Expectations: Staying in education and training post-16 – Consultation Response Form', submitted by Education Leeds to the Department of Education and Skills.

Adam Hewitt, Public and Political Executive Support Manager, Children's Services, was in attendance to answer Members' questions.

Members were reminded that an additional meeting of the Board had been held during March 2007 to consider the Review of 14-19 Education and Training Provision in Leeds, and that a statement encompassing Members' comments had been published on this issue.

Following a brief overview of the key issues within the report, a discussion then ensued. The main areas of debate were:-

- The Board highlighted the extent of the recent changes in this area and emphasised the need for the Board to continue to monitor the issue as part of its work programme;
- Members raised several issues relating to the **effectiveness of the partnerships** which had been established, the ways in which **best value**

for service provision in this field could be ensured, and **the rate at which progress was being made in relation to the review**;

- The Board discussed the extent to which there was an alternative to residential provision for those with special educational needs;
- Members also highlighted the **potential impact** that any changes resulting from the review would have **upon schools**.

RESOLVED –

- (a). That the report and information appended to the report be noted;
- (b). That a further progress report on the Review of 14-19 Education and Training Provision in Leeds be submitted to a future meeting of the Scrutiny Board for consideration.

22 Departmental Communications - Formal Response

Further to Minute No. 134, 19th April 2007, the Board received a report from the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development which detailed the formal response received in relation to the recommendations of the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) following the publication of a statement by the Board regarding Departmental Communications.

Adam Hewitt, Public and Political Executive Support Manager, Children's Services, was in attendance to answer Members' questions.

With regard to recommendation 3 of the Board's statement, the Public and Political Executive Support Manager sought clarification on what information the Board required. In response, Members proposed that costs for publications relating to Children's Services for 2007/08 could initially be sought from internal departments and submitted to the Board.

Regarding the information sought as part of recommendation 2, Members learned that preparations had been made to collate such information for 2007/08 and that it would be submitted to the Board in due course.

RESOLVED –

- (a). That the report and information appended to the report be noted;
- (b). That information detailing the costs for publications which related to Children's Services for 2007/08 be initially sought from internal departments and submitted to the Board in due course.

23 Work Programme

A report was received from the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development which invited Members to consider and approve the draft work programme for 2007/08.

Appended to the report for Members' consideration was the draft work programme for the current municipal year, an extract from the Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 1st July to 31st October 2007 which related to the Board's remit, together with the minutes from the Executive Board meeting held on 13th June 2007 and the minutes from the Leeds Admissions Forum meeting held on 19th April 2007.

Members learned that the Board's draft work programme had been compiled in line with the discussions which took place at the previous Board meeting, and also included several potential items for consideration which had been identified by the Board during 2006/07. Members then discussed several aspects of the draft work programme. The main areas of debate were as follows:-

Potential items for inclusion within the Work Programme which had been identified during 2006/07

- Members confirmed the arrangements which had been agreed earlier in the meeting with regard to the ways in which the Board could monitor the progress made in relation to the recommendations of the **Young People's Scrutiny Forum** and help develop a response to the concerns detailed within the Forum's report.

Potential items for inclusion within the Work Programme which had been identified at the June meeting of the Board

- The Board also considered the possibility of undertaking a scrutiny inquiry into the range of issues concerning **8-13 year olds**, and also conducting an inquiry into **Education Standards**. It was then proposed that working groups could be established in order to scope terms of reference for such inquiries;
- In response to Members' enquiries, the Board noted that the '**Draft Family Support and Parenting Strategy**' would be circulated to all Members, in order to give them the opportunity to comment as individuals on the draft document prior to the conclusion of the consultation period;
- The Board considered the issue of **governance arrangements** in relation to the multi-agency approach now being taken towards education provision, and the potential impact that the **David Young Academy** could have in respect of such provision in Leeds. In response it was proposed that further information could be sought on such issues and submitted to a future meeting of the Board, once discussions with relevant parties had taken place;
- Members noted that the issue of **immigration** had been referred to Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration, and agreed to refer issues concerning **the health of children and young people** to Scrutiny Board (Health and Adult Social Care) and **sustainability** to Scrutiny Board (City Development). Members were assured that the Board would be notified of any work undertaken in these areas by the relevant Scrutiny Boards;
- Members noted that it was proposed to schedule an additional meeting of the Board in the autumn to consider the **14-19 review proposals**, and that Members' availability for such a meeting would be sought in due course.

Further items for potential inclusion within the Work Programme

- The Board discussed a request for scrutiny to be undertaken in relation to **redundancies at Fountain Primary School**. Members were advised that although the Board was not permitted to look at individual cases, it could consider the background to the need for such redundancies and the roles

of various parties, including Education Leeds, in managing the budgetary and staffing situation since the formation of the school in September 2005. The Board agreed to accept the request and establish a working group to gather information.

Timing of Meetings

- The Board agreed to change the start time of future meetings to 10.00 a.m., with pre-meetings scheduled for 9.30 a.m.

RESOLVED –

- (a). That the report and information appended to the report be noted;
- (b). That the Scrutiny Board's draft work programme as appended to the report be approved, subject to the amendments made at today's meeting;
- (c). That a working group comprising of Councillor Chapman, Ms T Kayani, Mr E A Britten, Mr T Hales and Mr P Gathercole be established to scope an inquiry into services for 8-13 year olds;
- (d). That a working group comprising of Councillors Lamb, Murray, Lancaster, Mrs S Knights, Ms C Foote and Mr E A Britten be established to scope an inquiry into Education Standards;
- (e). That the issues of immigration, health of children and young people and sustainability be referred to the relevant Scrutiny Boards and that the Board be updated on any work undertaken in these areas;
- (f). That future meetings of the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) be scheduled to begin at 10.00 a.m., with pre-meetings scheduled for 9.30 a.m.;
- (g). That a working group comprising of Councillors Hyde, Renshaw, Mrs S Hutchinson and Ms C Foote be established to gather information in response to the request for scrutiny regarding Fountain Primary School.

(Councillor Elliott declared a personal interest in relation to this item, due to being a Governor at Fountain Primary School)

24 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Thursday, 13th September 2007 at 10.00 a.m. in the Civic Hall, Leeds.
(Pre-meeting scheduled for 9.30 a.m.)

(The meeting concluded at 12.00 p.m.)