

SCRUTINY BOARD (CHILDREN'S SERVICES)

THURSDAY, 13TH SEPTEMBER, 2007

PRESENT: Councillor W Hyde in the Chair

Councillors C Campbell, J Elliott, A Lamb,
B Lancaster, J Langdale, T Murray and K Renshaw

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

Mr E A Britten	- Church Representative (Catholic)
Mr I Falkingham	- Parent Governor Representative (Special)
Mr R Greaves	- Parent Governor Representative (Secondary)
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
Ms J Morris-Boam	- Leeds Voice Children and Young People Services Forum Representative
Ms T Kayani	- Leeds Youth Work Partnership Representative

25 Chair's Opening Remarks

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

26 Exclusion of the Public

RESOLVED – That the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of Annex 2 and related addenda to both the reports referred to in Minute No. 35. These documents are designated as exempt on the grounds that it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public are present there would be disclosure to them of the exempt information so designated under the terms of Access to Information Procedure Rule 10.4(1) and 10.4(2), and on the grounds that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, because Education Leeds has a duty to secure improvement and increased confidence in the schools concerned, and this would be adversely affected by the disclosure of the information.

27 Declaration of Interests

Councillors Lamb, Murray and Renshaw all declared personal interests in relation to agenda item 15 entitled, 'Update on Ofsted Inspections and Schools Causing Concern', due to being governors of schools which featured within the report (Minute No. 35 refers).

Mr T Hales declared a personal interest in relation to agenda item 15 entitled, 'Update on Ofsted Inspections and Schools Causing Concern', due to being a member of a Trade Union involved in negotiations concerning Fountain Primary School (Minute No. 35 refers).

Councillor Murray declared a personal interest in relation to agenda item 11 entitled, 'Youth Services Inquiry - Formal Response to Recommendations', due to being an LEA Governor of Thomas Danby College, a Director of igen and Chief Executive of Learning Partnerships (Minute No. 34 refers).

Further declarations of interest were made at later points in the meeting (Minute Nos. 32 and 33 refer).

28 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received on behalf of Councillors J Chapman, R D Feldman, S Hamilton, R Harington, and Professor P H J H Gosden.

29 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the previous Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) meeting held on 5th July 2007 be approved as a correct record.

30 Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 4th June 2007 be noted.

31 Recent Changes to the Co-opted Membership of the Scrutiny Board

A report was submitted by the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development which advised Members of recent changes to the Board's co-opted membership.

The Board was advised that since the last meeting, resignations had been received from voting co-optee, Mr C Macpherson, a Parent Governor representative for special educational needs provision, and non-voting co-optee, Mr P Gathercole, a representative of Leeds VOICE Children and Young People Services Forum. The Board learned that both Mr C Macpherson and Mr P Gathercole had since been replaced by Mr I Falkingham and Ms J Morris-Boam respectively.

The Chair welcomed Mr I Falkingham and Ms J Morris-Boam to their first meeting of the Board, and thanked Mr C Macpherson and Mr P Gathercole for the work they had undertaken in their respective positions as co-opted members of the Board.

RESOLVED – That the contents of the report be noted.

32 Performance Management Quarter 1

The Head of Policy, Performance and Improvement submitted a report which invited the Board to consider key performance issues from quarter one of 2007/2008, which were considered to be of corporate significance for the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services). The report also advised Members of a predicted **Corporate Performance Assessment** (CPA) score for 2007/08.

Appended to the report was a table detailing all relevant Performance Indicators for the Board.

Councillor Richard Harker, Executive Member with responsibility for Learning, and Keith Burton, Deputy Director of Children's Services (Commissioning and Partnerships), were 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:-

Fully Flexible Integrated Provision

- The Board discussed the percentage of schools in Leeds which offered **Fully Flexible Integrated Provision** (FFIP), and the challenges which existed for the Local Authority as it attempted to improve delivery in this area. Members were advised that quarter one statistics for this indicator were rarely positive, as the beginning of the academic year was usually the main date for starting any new provision;
- The Board noted that Leeds was one of sixteen Local Authorities currently participating in a pilot scheme, and was therefore a Pathfinder in this field;
- Members also enquired why there was no acknowledgement within the performance indicators to the contribution being made by **private sector providers** in Leeds. In response, officers concurred with Members' comments and acknowledged the vital contribution made by private sector providers, but emphasised that the performance indicators within the report were set nationally and therefore did not reflect the mixed economy of provision which currently existed.

Statements of Special Educational Need

- Members sought clarification on the data relating to the **preparation of statements of special educational need**, and enquired why Leeds did not perform as well as other core cities in this area. In response, the Board was advised that whereas some statements only required the input of the Local Authority, others depended upon contributions from external agencies, such as local health authorities, and therefore the time taken to prepare statements of special educational need often relied upon the relevant agencies prioritising such work;
- Members requested further information on the performance levels relating to those statements which required an input from external agencies;
- Members raised concerns about the extent to which service provision was signposted to parents. In response, Members learned of the procedures in

place for issuing statements, and the appeal mechanisms open to parents whose children had not been issued with statements.

General Observations

- Following Members' enquiries, the Board received an explanation of the relationship between the proportion of performance indicators achieving target at year end and those showing year on year improvement;
- Members made enquiries into the number of **teenage pregnancies** in Leeds;
- Members highlighted the importance of maintaining performance levels concerning the number of pupils **visiting museums and galleries**. In response, the Board learned that the data presented only reflected visits to Council run facilities;
- In response to Members' enquiries, the Board learned of the services provided in Leeds for **homeless families**;
- Further information was sought on the number of **looked after children** who had left school in the previous year, and what had happened to them.

RESOLVED –

- (a). That the report and information appended to the report be noted;
- (b). That the information requested by the Board be forwarded to Members for consideration.

(Mrs S Hutchinson declared a personal interest in relation to this item, due to being a provider of private childcare)

33 Children's Services and the Children and Young People's Plan

The Board received a report from the Director of Children's Services which updated Members on the key children's services work which had been undertaken since the last update report was submitted to the Board in April 2007.

The report also advised Members of the priorities identified in the recently reviewed **Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP)**. In order to assist the Board in monitoring progress in delivering the priorities within the Plan, the report focused on two specific priorities: improving the **assessment and care of children in need**; and reducing the proportion of vulnerable groups **not in education, employment or training (NEET)**.

Appended to the report was a chart illustrating Leeds' Children Trust arrangements, in addition to Leeds' CYPP priorities.

Keith Burton, Deputy Director of Children's Services (Commissioning and Partnerships), Tony Griffin, Head of Service Transformation (Children), Social Care, Mary Brittle, NEET Co-ordinator, Education Leeds, and Pat Heron, Connexions West Yorkshire, were all in attendance to answer Members' questions.

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

- Members highlighted the vital work undertaken by **foster carers** in Leeds and the positive outcomes which were being achieved by the Foster Carers' Liaison Group;
- Following Members' enquiries, the Board learned of the support available to adolescents whose home life had broken down, and who wished to remain in education or training, in addition to the provision of support available to those **looked after children** who suffered from mental health problems;
- The Board made reference to the percentage of young people in Leeds who currently fell into the **NEET** category, how this figure had remained constant over the past ten years, and emphasised the need to urgently address the scale of academic underachievement by young people in Leeds today.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the Board was introduced to Alan Rees, who had been appointed as head teacher of the '**virtual**' school for **looked after children**.

RESOLVED – That the report and information appended to the report be noted.

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

34 Youth Services Inquiry - Formal Response to Recommendations

A report was submitted by the Director of Children's Services detailing the formal response to the recommendations of the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) which had been published during the 2006/07 municipal year, as part of the Board's inquiry into Youth Services.

John Paxton, Head of the Youth Service, was in attendance to present the report and answer Members' questions.

Following a brief summary of the responses to the Board's recommendations, a discussion then ensued. The main areas of debate were as follows:-

Issues Relating to Service Provision

- Members sought clarification on the impact of proposals to localise selected services for young people as part of the development of the **Integrated Youth Support Service**. In response, the Board learned that the provision of services, such as health education, were to be driven forward at a local level, and that such changes to service delivery would not be accompanied by any reduction in resources. Members also noted that despite the move towards area based provision, there would still be a facility for centralised discussion between the five different wedges in order to promote sharing of best practice;
- Regarding the levels of service provided for young people in each Ward, Members noted that a **minimum allocation for each Ward** was to be

introduced, which had led to an increase in service provision within five Wards;

- Members enquired about the ways in which young people were consulted on the youth work undertaken in their area and on the buildings used to deliver such provision. In response, the Board was advised of the mechanisms which had been established to **consult with young people** on such issues, and that a strategy was in place to introduce larger, well equipped '**hubs**' for young people in each wedge, which would be in addition to the provision delivered at smaller, more localised centres.

General Observations

- In response to Members' enquiries which related to the **venues and spaces in the city centre for young people** to undertake their own activities, the Board learned that meetings on this issue were ongoing and that young people were actively working with the Youth Service on identifying alternative spaces and venues;
- Members learned of the actions being taken to ensure that there was increased levels of continuity between the junior and senior **Youth Inclusion Programmes** (YIPs) in Leeds;
- Members learned of the progress being made in relation to the number of qualified youth workers in Leeds;
- The Board sought further information on the actions being taken to ensure the promotion of inter-generational and all age activities in Leeds;
- Following Members' enquiries, the Board received clarification on the Youth Service's reach and recorded outcomes statistics.

RESOLVED – That the report and information appended to the report be noted.

35 Update on Ofsted Inspections and Schools Causing Concern

A report was submitted by the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development which introduced two reports from Education Leeds entitled, 'Termly Update on Ofsted Inspections and Schools Causing Concern (Primary)' and 'Termly Report on Standards in Leeds High Schools and Update on Ofsted Inspections and Schools Causing Concern', both of which had recently been submitted to Executive Board for consideration.

Dirk Gilleard, Deputy Chief Executive, and Dorothy Smith, Strategic Manager, School Improvement Team, both of Education Leeds, were in attendance to answer Members' questions.

Having received a brief overview of the key issues detailed within both reports, a discussion then ensued. The main areas of debate were as follows:-

Staffing Matters

- Members were reminded that a working group was considering the current situation in relation to **Fountain Primary School** and would be reporting back to the full Board shortly;
- In response to the Board's enquiries which related to staff who were not qualified teachers, Members were advised of the actions taken to ensure

that the work undertaken by such staff met all relevant standards, and that often a Teaching Assistant qualification was used as a stepping stone towards a teaching qualification;

- The Board discussed the level and focus of the support being offered by Education Leeds to **South Leeds High School**;
- Members discussed the actions being taken to ensure that the level of qualified and experienced staff in such challenging environments as the Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties Specialist Inclusive Learning Centre (**BESD SILC**) was being maintained. They enquired about the role and number of Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs) at the BESD SILC. The Strategic Manager, School Improvement Team, undertook to check the balance of teaching staff within the SILC and report this information back to Board Members.

General Observations

- The Board discussed the grades achieved by those schools which had been recently inspected, and sought further information on the financial **cost of supporting vulnerable schools** in Leeds. In response, the Deputy Chief Executive of Education Leeds indicated that the cost would be the base budget of the School Improvement Service and undertook to provide Members with specific details;
- In response to Members' enquiries relating to the **partnerships** which existed between schools in Leeds, the Board noted the number of partnerships which were currently in operation at both Primary and Secondary level, the average duration of such partnerships and how the performance of those schools involved in such partnerships was monitored;
- Members emphasised the need for continued monitoring of **Ofsted's inspection procedure**.

Following consideration of Annex 2 and related addenda to both reports, designated as exempt under Access to Information Procedure Rule 10.4(1) and 10.4(2), which were considered in private, it was

RESOLVED –

- (a). That the report and information appended to the report be noted;
- (b). That the information requested by the Board be forwarded to Members for consideration.

(Councillor Renshaw left the meeting at 12.06 p.m. during the consideration of this item, Councillors Lamb and Lancaster both left the meeting at 12.28 p.m., also during the consideration of this item, and Ms C Foote left the meeting at 12.30 p.m., at the conclusion of this item)

36 Recommendation Tracking

The Board considered a report from the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development which provided Members with the opportunity to monitor the progress of recommendations which had been previously made by the Board, in line with the new, more formal system of recommendation tracking which had been adopted by Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Appended to the report was a flow chart which helped Members classify and consider the progress of its recommendations, in addition to a table summarising the current position of all relevant recommendations.

Members were advised that the next cycle of quarterly recommendation tracking reports would be received in November. The Board was then invited to comment upon the draft document which summarised the progress of each of the Board's recommendations.

Members agreed the status of each recommendation and confirmed those recommendations which could now be signed off as complete.

RESOLVED –

- (a). That the report and information appended to the report be noted;
- (b). That the status of each recommendation be agreed as set out in the report.

37 Services for 8-13 Year Olds - Draft Terms of Reference

A report was submitted by the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development which sought the Board's approval of draft terms of reference for the inquiry into services for 8-13 year olds. A copy of the draft terms of reference had been appended to the report for consideration.

In accordance with Scrutiny Board Procedure Rules, the views of the relevant Director and Executive Member had been sought, and Members agreed to incorporate the comments received into the terms of reference.

RESOLVED –

- (a). That the report and information appended to the report be noted;
- (b). That subject to the above comments, the terms of reference be approved.

38 Work Programme

A report was submitted by the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development which detailed the Scrutiny Board's work programme for the remainder of the current municipal year.

Appended to the report for Members' information was the current version of the Board's work programme, an extract from the Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 1st September 2007 to 31st December 2007 which related to the Board's remit, together with the minutes from the Executive Board meetings held on 4th July 2007 and 22nd August 2007.

Members were advised that at a recent meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, it had been agreed that the **draft Leeds Strategic Plan** was to be considered by all Boards, and that it was proposed for this Scrutiny Board to consider the draft document at its October meeting.

Members noted that an additional meeting of the Board was required to consider the **14-19 Review**. It was then proposed that the additional meeting of the Board was scheduled for Thursday, 25th October, 2007.

RESOLVED –

(a). That subject to the above comments, the Board's Work Programme, as appended to the report be approved;

(b). That an additional meeting of the Board be scheduled for 10.00 a.m. on Thursday, 25th October 2007 (with a pre-meeting scheduled for 9.30 a.m.), in order to consider the 14-19 Review.

39 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Thursday, 11th October 2007 at 10.00 a.m. in the Civic Hall, Leeds.
(Pre-meeting scheduled for 9.30 a.m.)

(The meeting concluded at 12.38 p.m.)