

SCRUTINY BOARD (CHILDREN'S SERVICES)

THURSDAY, 14TH FEBRUARY, 2008

PRESENT: Councillor W Hyde in the Chair

Councillors C Campbell, R Harington, B Lancaster,
J Langdale and K Renshaw

CO-OPTED MEMBERS (VOTING):

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

CO-OPTED MEMBERS (NON-VOTING):

Ms T Kayani	- Leeds Youth Work Partnership
Ms J Morris-Boam	- Leeds Voice Children and Young People Services Forum Representative

90 Chair's Opening Remarks

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

91 Exclusion of the Public

RESOLVED – That the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of Annex 2 – Primary Schools in Extended Partnerships and Annex 3 – Secondary Schools in Extended Partnerships of agenda item 12 – Update on Ofsted Inspections and Schools Causing Concern. These documents have been designated as exempt on the grounds that it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted that if Members of the public are present that there would be a disclosure to them of information, which is likely to reveal the identity of individuals as designated within paragraph 10.4(1)(2) of the Access to Information Procedure Rules.

92 Declaration of Interests

Councillor B Lancaster declared a personal interest in relation to agenda item 10 entitled 'Recommendation Tracking' due to her being a Member of the Adoption Panel (Minute No. 98 refers).

Mr I Falkingham declared a personal interest in relation to agenda item 12 entitled 'Update on Ofsted Inspections and Schools Causing Concern' due to

his son attending one of the schools referred to in the report, and also on the basis that he was known to a Headteacher of one of the schools referred to in the report (Minute No. 100 refers).

Councillor K Renshaw declared a personal interest in relation to agenda item 12 entitled 'Update on Ofsted Inspections and Schools Causing Concern' due to her being on the Governing Body of East Ardsley Primary School, Seven Hills Primary School and Rodillian High School (Minute No. 100 refers).

Councillor W Hyde declared a personal interest in relation to agenda item 12 entitled 'Update on Ofsted Inspections and Schools Causing Concern' due to his wife being the Chair of Governors of one of the schools referred to in the report (Minute No. 100 refers).

Further declarations of interest were made at later points in the meeting (Minute No's. 96 and 99 refer).

93 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted by Mr R Greaves, Ms C Foote, and Mrs S Hutchinson and by Councillors J Elliot, R D Feldman, A Lamb and T Murray.

94 Minutes of Last Meeting - 17th January, 2008

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 17th January, 2008 be approved as a correct record.

95 Minutes of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny meeting held on 8th January, 2008 be noted.

96 Quarter 3 Performance Report 2007/08

The Head of Policy, Performance and Improvement submitted a report in relation to key areas of under performance at the end of Quarter 3 (1st October to 31st December 2007). Appended to the report was the Accountability Reporting Guidance together with the Children and Young People Quarter 3 Performance Information.

Rosemary Archer, Director of Children's Services and Councillors R Harker, Executive Member (Learning) and S Golton, Executive Member (Children's Services), were in attendance at the meeting to present information and respond to Members' questions.

The Director of Children's Services referred to key performance issues and areas of concern. The main areas of debate were as follows:

- Members expressed concern in relation to reported outcomes for young people aged 13-19. *(The Director of Children's Services reported that there had been a number of issues prohibiting the service from providing comprehensive data on youth work activity. It was also reported that an Action Plan had been devised and a month 10 audit had been undertaken, which would assist in addressing Members' concerns. It was agreed that further information in relation to some of the matters that had been discussed would be provided to the Board).*
- Members also expressed concern in relation to the number of Data Quality issues, that reported 'some or significant concerns'. *(The Director of Children's Services emphasised that the concerns related to data quality issues).*
- Members discussed how targets were set for the educational achievement of Looked After Children.
- They also expressed concern about the lack of improvement in maths achievement especially at Level 5 in key stages 2 and 3. It was suggested that issues such as this, where improvement did not reflect the resources being allocated and the acknowledged good practice taking place, was a potential future topic for scrutiny.
- Parent representatives indicated concerns that, although most statements were now being produced within target timescales, some parents felt that the criteria to qualify for a statement was set too high. *(The Director of Children's Services noted the concerns expressed).*

(Councillor R Harington joined the meeting at 10.20 am during the consideration of this item)

(Ms T Kayani declared a personal interest in this item due to her being a representative of the Leeds Youth Work Partnership)

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the Quarter 3 performance information be noted.
- (b) That the information requested by the Board be forwarded to Members for consideration.

97 Children's Services and the Children and Young People's Plan: Update (3rd Report)

Further to Minute No. 57 of the meeting held on 8th November, 2007, the Board received the 3rd update report in relation to Children's Services and the Children and Young People's Plan. Appended to the report were details of the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) Priorities together with the

Annual Performance Assessment (APA) letter, which summarised the findings of the 2007 APA for Leeds City Council's children's services.

Rosemary Archer, Director of Children's Services and Ashley Wyatt, CAMHS representative, attended the meeting and responded to Members' queries and comments.

The Director of Children's Services advised that the report focused on two specific CYPP priorities, namely:-

- Reducing bullying; and
- Improving services for children, young people and families with additional mental health needs.

The Board was advised that significant progress had been made in relation to the following areas:-

- **The Integrated Strategic Commissioning Board (ISCB)** and the development of a jointly commissioned approach to city centre youth service provision through The Market Place.
- **The Leeds Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)** – It was reported that the Board had employed a Manager, which had resulted in good progress, and that a significant training programme was being provided.
- **The Leadership Challenge** – The Director of Children's Services reported that the Council had undertaken work with the Improvement Development Agency (IDeA) to develop a project called the 'Leadership Challenge'.

The Board was informed that the full review of the CYPP for 2009/10 onwards would take place later in the year, with the aim that early planning would allow services to align future budgets with the new Plan's priorities .

In addition, specific reference was made to the following issues:-

- Members asked about the budget review of transport for children with special educational needs. *(The Director of Children's Services agreed to provide further information on this matter).*
- The Board was briefed as to how the CAMHS service intended to achieve reduced waiting times given the levels of demand for the service.
- One Member requested information in relation to a post that had been created to support the voluntary sector. *(The Director of Children's Services stated that there was an ambition for further investment within the voluntary sector and additional support was required to assist with this).*

- The Board requested that they be kept informed in relation to development at The Market Place, which it was intended would provide extended services for young people.

The Chair thanked Rosemary Archer and Ashley Wyatt for their attendance.

RESOLVED –

(a) That the Children's Services and the Children and Young People's Plan: Update (3rd Report) be noted.

(b) That the information requested by the Board be forwarded to Members for consideration.

98 Recommendation Tracking

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report in relation to the adoption of a new system of recommendation tracking, which had been devised to ensure that scrutiny recommendations were more rigorously followed through. Appended to the report was a recommendation tracking flowchart together with the draft status of recommendations.

The following officers were in attendance:-

- Rodger Walker, Resources Team Leader (Children)
- Elizabeth Shingler, Social Services (Children's Services)
- Maz Asghar, Senior Youth Officer

In brief summary, the main issues highlighted were:

- The Board expressed concern at the delays in completing the review of the Adoption and Fostering service. Officers agreed to provide a short report on the progress of the review in relation to the Scrutiny Board's recommendations from the Adoption in Leeds inquiry.
- Members expressed concern in relation to the need for a more equal distribution of youth services across the city.
- In relation to Youth Services, recommendation 7, Members asked about the annual user survey, which it was noted was due to take place in October 2007. *(Maz Asghar, Senior Youth Officer advised that the delay was due to the restructure of the Youth Service. The Board was informed that the deadline for undertaking the annual user survey was 22nd February, 2008. In addition some focus group work had been commissioned among non users of the service as suggested by the Board. It was agreed that the results of both pieces of research would be reported to Members).*

- A number of further detailed questions were raised regarding youth service provision in specific areas; the capital strategy and staffing structure for the Integrated Youth Support Service; and liaison with the Police. It was agreed that the information requested would be provided to Members.

The Chair thanked Rodger Walker, Elizabeth Shingler and Maz Asghar for their attendance.

(Councillor C Campbell joined the meeting at 11.23 am during the consideration of this item)

(Professor Gosden left the meeting at 11.26 pm during the consideration of this item)

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 within the report.

99 Fountain Primary School Inquiry Report - Formal Response

Further to Minute No. 62 of the meeting held on 8th November, 2007, the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report in relation to the Board's Inquiry into Fountain Primary School. Appended to the report was the Action Plan response to the Board's Inquiry.

Patrick Fletcher, Team Leader, Financial Services and Councillor R Harker Executive Member (Learning), attended the meeting to update the Board and respond to queries and comments.

The main issues discussed were as follows:

- The Board was advised that Education Leeds representatives would continue to attend meetings of the Human Resources and Finance Committee at Fountain Primary School for the time being, as the school worked through its 3 year plan to balance its budget.
- The Team Leader, Financial Services reported that there would be some planned staff reductions over the next 3 years, although it was confirmed that there would be no redundancies.
- The Board was informed that falling rolls would still be an issue as larger key stage 2 year groups left the school over the next few years. However officers confirmed that a robust approach was now being taken by the governing body to management of the budget. It was also confirmed that appropriate measures were now in place for Education Leeds to take action in the case of any school causing similar concerns.

- Members requested information on any extended services activities taking place at the school.

(Councillor K Renshaw declared a personal interest in this item due to her being an LEA Governor of Rodillian High School).

RESOLVED – That the Board be kept informed of progress made by Fountain Primary School.

100 Update on Ofsted Inspections and Schools Causing Concern

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report, which provided details of recent Ofsted Inspection results. Appended to the report was the following information:-

- Annual Standards Report – Primary
- Annex 1: Ofsted inspection summaries
- Annex 2: Primary schools in extended partnerships
- Annual Standards Report – Secondary
- Annex 1: Overview of 2007 performance at KS3 and KS4
- Annex 2: Ofsted inspection summaries
- Annex 3: Secondary schools in extended partnerships.

The following witnesses were in attendance:-

- Christine Halsall, Principal Advisor – Primary and Secondary
- Christine Pollard, Director, National Strategies
- Councillor R Harker, Executive Member (Learning)

Some of the main issues discussed were as follows:

- **Foundation Stage** - The Board was advised that there had been an improvement in outcomes by 2 percentage points compared to 0.5 percentage points nationally.
- **Key Stage 2** - The Board considered improvements at Key Stage 2, although it was noted that performance in Maths had fallen.
- **BME Groups** – It was reported that outcomes for some BME groups had improved, although some groups had fallen below average.
- **School Leadership** - It was reported that a sustainable leadership programme had been established for new headteachers.

In relation to Primary schools, the following points were raised:-

- Members asked about the strategies adopted by Education Leeds in response to children who left primary school unable to read and write to an appropriate standard.
- The Board also expressed concern about the level of turnover among headteachers. It was reported that this was a national problem arising from the age profile of staff. They also noted some of the strategies being adopted in Leeds to encourage new candidates to come forward, or to move to the city.
- The Board discussed the issue of establishing a baseline of children's abilities when they enter the education system. Given the difficulties in defining a suitable measure, the Board agreed to return to this issue in more detail as part of their ongoing work on education standards.

In relation to Secondary schools, the following points were made:-

- The Board was advised that the main areas of concern related to vulnerable groups and improving levels of attendance. *(The Director, National Strategies pointed out that 18 schools reported 10% or more pupils that attended school less than 80% of the time).*
- *The Board was informed that the Gipsy, Roma and Traveller education support service was being realigned to bring it alongside school improvement service. It was intended that this would spread the existing expertise more widely across the education service.*
- Members asked about support to working parents in relation to twilight sessions for excluded pupils. It was agreed that further information would be provided to Members.

(Ms T Kayani left the meeting at 12.30 pm during the consideration of this item)

RESOLVED – That the attached reports and appendices be noted, and that the successes detailed in the reports be welcomed.

101 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 municipal year.

Appended to the report was the current version of the Board's work programme, an extract from the Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 1st February 2008 to 31st May 2008, which related to the Board's remit together with the minutes from the Executive Board meeting held on 23rd January 2008.

RESOLVED – That the attached work programme be approved.

102 Date and Time of Next Meeting

It was proposed that the next two meetings of the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) on 13th March, 2008 and 10th April start at 9.45 am with the pre-meeting starting at 9.15 am. The Principal Scrutiny Advisor agreed to confirm the timings for the meetings in due course.

(The meeting concluded at 12.38 pm)