

SCRUTINY BOARD (CHILDREN'S SERVICES)

THURSDAY, 24TH APRIL, 2008

PRESENT: Councillor W Hyde in the Chair

Councillors J Elliott, R D Feldman, A Lamb, B Lancaster
and T Murray

CO-OPTED MEMBERS (VOTING):

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

CO-OPTED MEMBERS (NON-VOTING):

Ms C Foote	- Teacher Representative
Mrs S Hutchinson	- Early Years Development & Childcare Partnership Representative

129 Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed all in attendance to the final Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) meeting of the municipal year (2007/2008). He also thanked Members and officers for their contribution to the Board's work over the last year.

130 Late Items

In accordance with his powers under Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chair admitted to the agenda the following information:

- Agenda item 9, Draft Inquiry Report – Services for 8-13 year olds.

This information was unavailable at the time of agenda despatch (Min No. 136 refers).

131 Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest made at this point, however declarations of interest were made at later points in the meeting (Min Nos. 134, 135 and 136 refer).

132 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were submitted by Councillors C Campbell, R Harrington, J Langdale and K Renshaw, and by Mr I Falkingham, Mr T Hales, Ms J Morris-Boam and Ms T Kayani.

133 Minutes of Last Meeting

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 10th April, 2008 be approved as a correct record.

134 Draft Inquiry Report - Education Standards

Further to Minute No. 122 of the meeting held on 10th April, 2008, consideration was given to a report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development in relation to the Board's draft Inquiry into education standards.

The Principal Scrutiny Adviser reported that the Board had only completed gathering evidence at the meeting held on 10th April, 2008. It was noted that given the timescales involved it had not been possible to provide the Board with the draft Inquiry report at the meeting. It was suggested that all current Members of the Scrutiny Board could be consulted on the draft report before it was agreed and that any comments would be taken into account.

John Paxton, Head of the Integrated Youth Support Service attended the meeting to update the Board regarding tracking data on those not in education, employment or training (NEET).

(Councillor T Murray declared a personal interest in this item as a Director of igen).

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the draft Inquiry report and recommendations arising from this Inquiry be brought to the Scrutiny Board in the new municipal year for agreement;
- (2) That all current Members of the Scrutiny Board be consulted on the draft report before it is agreed; and
- (3) That the Scrutiny Board is recommended to consider prioritising a further Inquiry on education standards in 2008/09, focusing on early years and primary transition.

135 Draft Statement on Inclusion

Further to Minute No. 125 of the meeting held on 10th April, 2008, the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report in relation to the Board's draft statement on inclusion. It was noted that this item was deferred from the last meeting and the Board was now in a position to report on its conclusions and recommendations resulting from the evidence gathered.

The main highlighted points were:

- The Board agreed an amendment to paragraph 12 to read “Officers also informed the working group that the review of provision as part of this objective acknowledged the need for specialist SEN provision to be available in each area of the city, although in some cases that may not be in the current location(s)”.
- Members expressed concern that parents and professionals were not aware of changes in SILC provision. It was agreed that an additional recommendation after paragraph 12 of the draft statement be included, to emphasise the need for early consultation with parents and professionals.
- Members also agreed an amendment to recommendation 1 to include reference to the school improvement process.

(Mrs S Knights and Councillor B Lancaster declared a personal interest in this item due to being Governors of the North West SILC).

RESOLVED – That, subject to the above amendments, the Board’s draft statement and recommendations be agreed.

136 Draft Inquiry report - Services for 8-13 year olds

Further to Minute No. 85 of the meeting held on 17th January, 2008, The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report in relation to the Board’s draft Inquiry report on services for 8-13 year olds. It was noted that the Board was now in a position to report on its conclusions and recommendations from the evidence gathered.

The Board noted an amendment to paragraph 18 to read “...48 weeks a year”.

It was agreed that Members be provided with a further week to comment on the detail of the narrative contained within the report.

(Councillor T Murray declared a personal interest in this item as Chief Executive of Learning Partnerships).

RESOLVED – That the Board agrees the recommendations in the Inquiry report on services for 8-13 year olds, and delegates authority to the Chair to agree the final wording following any comments received within the next week.

(The meeting concluded at 11.11 am).