

SCRUTINY BOARD (CHILDREN'S SERVICES)

THURSDAY, 10TH JUNE, 2010

PRESENT: Councillor J Chapman in the Chair

Councillors M Coulson, G Driver, K Groves, A Lamb,
P Latty, K Maqsood and B Selby

CO-OPTED MEMBERS (VOTING):

Mr E A Britten	- Church Representative (Catholic)
Ms N Cox	- Parent Governor Representative (Special)
Prof P H J H Gosden	- Church Representative (Church of England)
Mr J Granger	- Parent Governor Representative (Primary)

CO-OPTED MEMBERS (NON-VOTING):

Ms C Foote	- Teacher Representative
Ms C Johnson	- Teacher Representative
Ms J Morris-Boam	- Leeds Voice Children and Young People Services Forum Representative

1 Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed everyone present to the first Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) meeting of the 2010/11 municipal year.

2 Late Items

The Chair admitted to the agenda as supplementary information, the following information to be considered as part of agenda item 9:

- An overview of the key themes of the Children's Services Improvement Plan
- An extract from the annual progress review of the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP).

3 Declaration of Interests

Councillor Chapman declared a personal interest in agenda item 9, Input to the Work Programme 2010/11 and agenda item 10, Determining the Work Programme 2010/11, in her capacity as LEA Governor at Weetwood Primary School.

4 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted by Councillors W Hyde and Lancaster; and Co-opted Members, Mrs Hutchinson, Ms Kayani and Mr Wanyonyi.

5 Minutes - 22nd April 2010

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd April 2010 be confirmed as a correct record.

6 Appointment of Co-opted Members

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which sought Members' approval for the appointment of co-opted members to the Board. Details of current arrangements were contained in the report.

RESOLVED –

(a) That Professor Gosden (Church Representative - Church of England) and Mr Britten (Church Representative - Roman Catholic) be re-appointed as voting co-opted members of the Board for 2010/11;

(b) That the Board confirms the appointment of Mr Granger to replace Mrs Knights (Primary Governor Representative – Primary) as a voting co-opted member of the Board for a four year term of office from 1 June 2010;

(c) That the continued appointment of Mr Wanyonyi (Parent Governor Representative - Secondary) and Ms N Cox (Parent Governor Representative - Special), be noted; and

(d) That Ms Foote and Ms Johnson (Teacher Representatives), Mrs Hutchinson (Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership Representative), Ms Kayani (Youth Work Partnership Representative) and Ms Morris-Boam (Leeds VOICE Children and Young People Services Forum Representative) be appointed as non-voting co-opted members of the Board for 2010/11.

7 Changes to the Council's Constitution in relation to Scrutiny

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which provided the Board with information on recent amendments to the Council's Constitution, as agreed by Council on 27th May 2010, which directly related to and / or made an impact on the work of Scrutiny Boards.

In response to a Member's query, it was advised that the Scrutiny Board (Environment and Neighbourhoods) was the Council's designated Crime and Disorder Committee.

RESOLVED – That the amendments to the Council's Constitution as outlined in the report, be noted.

8 Input to the Work Programme 2010/11 - Sources of Work and establishing the Board's priorities

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which provided information and guidance to assist the Board develop its work programme for 2010/11.

Relevant information from the following key sources was attached to the report to assist Members:

- Leeds Strategic Plan 2008 to 2011 – Executive Summary
- Building Brighter Futures: The Leeds Children and Young People's Plan 2009-14 – immediate priorities and long term ambitions
- List of scrutiny work undertaken in the past six years.

The Chair welcomed to the meeting the following officers to contribute to the discussion about the Board's work programme:

- Eleanor Brazil – Interim Director of Children's Services
- Mariana Pexton, Deputy Director of Children's Services
- Chris Edwards, Chief Executive of Education Leeds.

A general overview of the key issues facing children's services was provided as follows:

- Taking forward the Children's Services Improvement Plan, particularly ensuring that key actions were delivered.
- Developing integrated children's services (contract with Education Leeds ends March 2011)
- Financial and policy context – budget pressures, particularly in relation to Children's Social Care.

The following issues were also highlighted as potential areas for scrutiny:

- The transformation programme for integrated children's services with a specific focus on the work of the Programme Board, which included the following elements:
 - Terminating the contract with Education Leeds.
 - Business support functions, especially around commissioning and making best use of resources.
 - Service re-design and developing work with children and families including the following project teams:
 - The need to improve safeguarding arrangements.
 - Services for looked after children, especially children with disabilities, special educational needs, etc.
 - Developing universal services, early years and work with schools.
 - Wellbeing support services, e.g. family support, behavioural support, etc.

- Budget issues – looking at potential significant overspend in Children’s Social Care largely due to an increase in the number and cost of residential placements.

The Chair then invited questions and the main areas of discussion were:

- Clarification that the rise in social care placements was in line with national trends. (The Interim Director of Children’s Services agreed to provide Members with information highlighting local and national trends.)
- Clarification about the work of CAFCASS, a government funded organisation that looks after the interests of children involved in care proceedings.
- Concern that the good practice developed through Education Leeds and the education Joint Consultative Committee must not be lost in the development of the Integrated Children’s Services, and queries regarding consultation arrangements for the new service. It was reported that the revised Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) was meeting on 21st June.
- Service re-design specifically focussing on “work on the ground” and ensuring a quicker, more co-ordinated approach.
- Developing the work of extended services and locality enablers with specific focus on local leadership teams, children’s themed champions, area inclusion partnerships and 14-19 partnerships.
- Concern about insufficient capacity focussing on out of school activity for 5-12 age group and the need to develop role of the third sector and voluntary sector.

RESOLVED – That the report and contributions made during the discussion be taken into account when the Board is finalising its work programme and deciding its priorities.

9 Determining the Work Programme 2010/11

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which requested Members to determine the work programme for 2010/11. A draft work programme was appended to the report.

Further to earlier discussion, the following key areas were highlighted:

- Review of large school surplus balances.
- Youth services commissioning framework.
- Funding arrangements in relation to Children’s Outdoor Activity Centres, particularly Herd Farm.
- Service re-design (There was a specific request for Transformation Board minutes to be forwarded to Members.)
- The role of the voluntary sector.
- Changes to the education service and issues around the potential establishment of more academies.

- Partnership working, especially in localities.
- A request for further information about key stage 2 assessment.

The Scrutiny Board agreed to conduct its first major inquiry on service re-design, particularly focussing on children with disabilities, special educational needs and additional health needs. The Principal Scrutiny Advisor agreed to produce draft terms of reference to be brought back to the Scrutiny Board meeting in July.

In addition, the Scrutiny Board agreed to establish the following working groups:

Youth Services Commissioning Working Group – Councillors Chapman, Groves, Lamb and Maqsood added to membership of this working group.

Funding arrangements in relation to Children’s Outdoor Activity Centres – Councillor Chapman, Lamb and Latty, Ms Cox, Ms Foote and Ms Johnson volunteered to serve on this working group.

School Balances – Councillors Chapman, Driver, Selby, Professor Gosden and Ms Johnson volunteered to serve on this working group.

The Principal Scrutiny Advisor agreed to e-mail Members with suggested dates of working group meetings.

It was agreed that the Board would decide the remainder of the work programme at a later date.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the report and information appended to the report be noted; and
- (b) That the Principal Scrutiny Adviser produces a draft work programme to be confirmed at the next meeting of the Board.

(Councillor Lamb joined the meeting at 11.00 am during the consideration of this item.)

10 Formal Response to Scrutiny Recommendations - Meadowfield Primary School

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which presented the formal response to the Scrutiny Board’s recommendations in relation to Meadowfield Primary School.

The status of recommendations was agreed as follows:

- Recommendation 1 – continue to monitor
- Recommendation 2 – sign off
- Recommendation 3 – sign off
- Recommendation 4 – continue to monitor to ensure action completed

Recommendation 5 – continue to monitor
Recommendation 6 – continue to monitor at appropriate points.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the report and information appended to the report be noted; and
- (b) That the Scrutiny Board approves the status of recommendations as set out above.

11 Dates and Times of Future Meetings

RESOLVED – That the following dates be noted and approved:

- Friday, 16th July 2010
- Monday, 20th September 2010
- Thursday, 21st October 2010
- Thursday, 18th November 2010
- Thursday, 16th December 2010
- Thursday, 20th January 2011
- Thursday, 17th February 2011
- Thursday, 17th March 2011
- Thursday, 21st April 2011

All meetings at 9.45 am (Pre-Meetings at 9.15 am).

(The meeting concluded at 11.50 am.)