

## **SCRUTINY BOARD (CHILDREN AND FAMILIES)**

**THURSDAY, 21ST JULY, 2011**

**PRESENT:** Councillor J Chapman in the Chair

Councillors D Collins, G Driver, P Ewens,  
B Gettings, P Grahame, A Khan, P Latty,  
K Maqsood, M Rafique and K Renshaw

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

Mr E A Britten – Church Representative (Catholic)  
Professor P H J H Gosden – Church Representative (Church of England)  
Ms J Ward – Parent Governor Representative (Secondary)  
Ms N Cox – Parent Governor Representative (Special)

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

Ms C Foote – Teacher Representative  
Ms C Johnson – Teacher Representative  
Mrs S Hutchinson – Early Years Representative  
Ms T Kayani – Leeds Youth Work Partnership Representative  
Ms A Choudhry – Leeds VOICE Children and Young Peoples Services Forum Representative

#### **11 Chair's Opening Remarks**

The Chair welcomed all in attendance to the July meeting of the Scrutiny Board (Children and Families).

#### **12 Late Items**

In accordance with her powers under Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chair agreed to accept a late report, agenda item 7, Children's Services Update, which was not available at the time of agenda despatch. (Minute No. 16 refers)

The Chair also admitted to the agenda the following supplementary information:

- Agenda item 9 – outstanding recommendation tracking response in relation to Entering the Education System (Minute No. 18 refers)
- Agenda item 10 – draft terms of reference in relation to External Placements. (Minute No. 19 refers)

### **13 Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Ewens declared an interest in agenda item 7, Children's Services Update, as a governor at City of Leeds High School and member of the Open XS cluster. (Minute No. 16 refers)

A further declaration of interest was made at a later stage in the meeting. (Minute No. 16 refers)

### **14 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes**

Apologies for absence were submitted by Councillors Charlwood and Lamb. Notification had been received that Councillor Collins was to substitute for Councillor Lamb and Councillor P Grahame for Councillor Charlwood.

### **15 Minutes - 23rd June 2011**

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2011 be confirmed as a correct record.

### **16 Children's Services Update**

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report which provided an overview of key national policy and local developments.

The following information was appended to the report:

- Outcome notes of the Department for Education review meeting with Leeds City Council held on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2011
- Leeds Children's Trust Board – cluster partnerships standard terms of reference.

The Chair welcomed to the meeting, the following officers to present the report and respond to Members' questions and comments:

- Nigel Richardson, Director of Children's Services
- Ken Morton, Children's Services.

A PowerPoint presentation was provided on the 'Changing Shape of Children's Services in Leeds' focusing on the following key areas:

- The changing context – shifting national policy direction around schools and learning
- Our improvement journey – Leeds still under an improvement notice and reporting to Improvement Board, but evidence of clear improvement
- Key areas of activity with particular emphasis on the Children and Young People's Plan and developing new ways of working
- Improved locality working: A key role for 'clusters' – now an integral part of taking the new structure forward

- Rising to the Education Challenge – a response to government, but also a statement of direction for Leeds.

In brief summary, the key areas of discussion were:

- Information sharing with partners, including the voluntary sector – a summary of the self assessment for the announced inspection would be made available to all partners in September.
- Development of new children's services structure to deliver an integrated children's service. Appointments to senior directorate positions confirmed and next tier commencing in the near future.
- Equipping staff with the skills to use restorative practice approaches in their work, building on existing examples of good practice such as the Youth Offending Service and Family Group Conferences.
- Acknowledgement of complexities around how clusters were linked to Area Committees and Wards and development of area based priorities as part of the 'education challenge'.
- Support for frontline teachers and their working environment.
- Challenges around making best use of resources, particularly development of extended services and partnership arrangements.
- Concern about what additional capacity could be provided at local level to support head teachers to develop effective cluster arrangements.
- The role of governing bodies in contributing to the development of the new cluster arrangements
- The need for Area Committees to have a clear understanding of the changes.

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

(Councillor Renshaw declared a personal interest in this item in her capacity as a Member of Ardsley and Tingley Extended Services Cluster and Rothwell Extended Services Cluster.)

## **17 Formal Response to Scrutiny Recommendations - School Balances**

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which presented the formal response to the Board's recommendations arising from its inquiry on School Balances.

The Scrutiny Board agreed the status of recommendations as follows:

- Recommendation 1 – check situation with regard to the Panel's future role in 6 months
- Recommendation 2 – sign off
- Recommendation 3 – sign off
- Recommendation 4 – sign off
- Recommendation 5 – sign off.

**RESOLVED** – That progress continues to be monitored in the quarterly recommendation tracking report.

## **18 Recommendation Tracking**

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which requested Members to confirm the status of recommendations from previous inquiries.

Appended to the report was the recommendation tracking flowchart and draft recommendation status.

The status of recommendations were agreed as follows:

- Entering the Education System (recommendation 8) – monitor again in 12 months
- Safeguarding Interim Report (recommendation 1) – continue monitoring as transformation programme is implemented
- Attendance Strategy (recommendation 2) – sign off
- Youth Service User Surveys (recommendation 2) – monitor again in 3 months; (recommendation 3) – sign off
- Outdoor Education Centres (recommendation 1) – sign off; (recommendation 2) – monitor again in 3 months; (recommendation 3) – sign off; (recommendation 7) – sign off.

During the discussion Members raised the issue of the future direction of the youth service. It was agreed that the Chair and the Principal Scrutiny Adviser would follow up this matter and report back to the September meeting with a proposal as to how the Board should deal with this matter.

### **RESOLVED –**

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

## **19 Draft Terms of Reference**

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which invited Members to agree terms of reference for the Scrutiny Board's inquiry into reducing the number of looked after children.

The Scrutiny Board was advised of some suggested amendments to the terms of reference as follows:

- Minor grammatical amendments to paragraph 1.3 of the introduction and paragraph 5.2, submission of evidence.
- Further submission of evidence to be considered as follows:
  - Evidence of impact of the early adopter programmes for the cluster based model

- Evidence of the ongoing research by Professor David Thorpe into referral and assessment arrangements.
- The following witnesses to be added under paragraph 6.1:
  - Professor David Thorpe
  - Children and young people (via the children in care council).

Councillors Chapman, Pat Latty and Renshaw and Co-opted Members; Mr Britten, Ms Cox and Ms Ward, volunteered to serve on the working group to undertake visits and activities to support this inquiry.

**RESOLVED** – That subject to the above amendments, the terms of reference for the Scrutiny Board’s inquiry into reducing the number of looked after children, be approved.

## **20 Work Programme**

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

Appended to the report for Members’ information was the current version of the Board’s work programme, minutes of the Executive Board meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2011, an extract from the Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 1<sup>st</sup> July 2011 to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2011, together with a copy of the comments on the Green Paper ‘Support and aspiration: a new approach to special educational needs and disability’ that were submitted by the Scrutiny Board to Children’s Services for incorporation into the corporate response following discussion at the June meeting of the Scrutiny Board.

**RESOLVED** – That the work programme be approved.

## **21 Professor P Gosden**

On behalf of the Scrutiny Board, the Chair thanked Co-opted Member, Professor Gosden, for his hard work and positive contribution to the work of the Scrutiny Board as Church Representative (Church of England) over the previous 11 years.

## **22 Date and Time of Next Meeting**

Thursday, 8<sup>th</sup> September 2011 at 9.45 am with a pre-meeting for Board Members at 9.15 am.

(The meeting concluded at 11.25 pm.)