

SCRUTINY BOARD (CHILDREN AND FAMILIES)

THURSDAY, 25TH APRIL, 2013

PRESENT: Councillor J Chapman in the Chair

Councillors B Gettings, R Grahame,
C Gruen, A Hussain, A Khan, A Lamb,
P Latty, M Rafique, B Urry and N Walshaw

CO-OPTED MEMBERS (VOTING):

Mr E A Britten – Church Representative (Catholic)

Ms J Ward – Parent Governor Representative (Secondary)

CO-OPTED MEMBERS (NON-VOTING):

Ms C Foote – Teacher Representative

Ms C Raftery – Teacher Representative

134 Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed all in attendance to the April Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) Call In meeting.

135 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests.

136 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies for absence were submitted by Councillors K Renshaw and A Sobel and Co-opted Members, Ms A Craven, Mrs S Hutchinson, Ms T Kayani and Ms J Morris-Boam. Notification had been received that Councillor R Grahame was to substitute for Councillor K Renshaw and Councillor N Walshaw for Councillor A Sobel.

137 Call In Briefing Paper

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report in relation to the procedural aspects of the call in process.

Members were advised that the options available to the Scrutiny Board in respect of this particular called in decision were:

Option 1 – Release the decision for implementation – Having reviewed the decision, the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) may decide to release it for implementation. If the Scrutiny Board chooses this option, the decision will be immediately released for implementation and the decision may not be called in again.

Option 2 – Recommend that the decision be reconsidered – The Scrutiny Board may decide to recommend to the decision maker that the decision be reconsidered. If the Scrutiny Board chooses this option a report will be submitted to the decision maker.

RESOLVED – That the report outlining the call in procedures be noted.

138 Call-in - Delegated Decision D39845 - Allocation of Funding to Clusters

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report, together with relevant background papers, in relation to Delegated Decision Notice D39845: Allocation of funding to clusters of schools.

The decision had been called in for review by Councillors A Lamb, B Anderson, C Fox, P Latty and G Latty on the following grounds:

'Members have concerns about the formula model selected by the schools' forum, used to calculate the cluster budgets. Specifically that it will disproportionately affect some areas of the city over others and that the report does not contain an adequate explanation as to why this is the best allocation of resources, and does not provide adequate mitigation for the adverse effect this will have on some communities.

There are specific concerns about the accountability of the schools' forum as a consultative body, particularly as they rejected the recommendations of officers in the department, leading to concerns about the decision making process and the accountability and influence of the schools' forum.

Given the way pupil premium funding is allocated was consideration given to funding following the pupil in the method established by the pupil premium.

Wider concerns about how representative the schools' forum is of schools in the city as a consultative body and as a body that represents all areas of the city.'

The Scrutiny Board considered the following written evidence:

- Copy of completed Call In request form
- The Delegated Decision Notification – D39845
- Report of the Head of Finance – School Services – 19th March 2013
- Agenda and minutes of the Leeds Schools Forum – 17th January 2013
- Report of the Director of Children's Services to the Leeds Schools Forum – 17th January 2013.

The following Members and officers attended the meeting:

- Councillor Lamb, Signatory to the Call In and Scrutiny Board Member
- Councillor Blake, Executive Member (Children and Families)
- Nigel Richardson, Director of Children's Services

- Paul Brennan, Deputy Director of Children's Services (Learning Skills and Universal Services)
- Simon Darby, Head of Finance, Children's Services
- Ken Morton, Head of Service (Young People and Skills)
- Sarah Ruddy, Headteacher, Bankside Primary School.

Councillor Lamb presented the reasons for calling in the decision. These included:

- Concern about the formula model used to calculate the cluster budgets, particularly the impact of families moving across wards and outside of the local authority area.
- Concern that there had been limited opportunity for Members to debate the chosen formula model.
- Suggested remedial action to include funding of clusters for one year. Scrutiny to introduce measures aimed at monitoring performance of clusters and enhancing working arrangements with the Schools Forum.

In response to the concerns raised, the following key points were made:

- Clarification that the schools forum had not rejected the recommendations of officers in the department.
- Clarification about the percentage of funding to clusters that the delegated decision represented.
- The schools forum was a statutory body comprising school and non-school representatives from across Leeds.
- The schools forum had voted strongly in favour of the chosen formula model, 21 votes to 1.
- The election of representatives to the schools forum was not within local authority control.
- The development of a governance and accountability framework.
- The formula model focussed on narrowing the gap, a key focus of the Children's and Young People's Plan (CYPP), endorsed by partners and the Children's Trust Board (CTB).

Other areas of discussion were:

- Concern that the impact of the proposed change to funding arrangements from 3 years to 1 year, undermined wider, longer term plans of clusters.
- Confirmation that the chosen formula model originated from the Secretary of State for Education.

Following questions from the Scrutiny Board, Councillor Lamb was invited to summarise the reasons for calling in the decision. He emphasised that the decision could result in negative outcomes for young people in Leeds. He added that there should also be a greater role for Elected Members and Scrutiny as part of the decision making process. It was proposed that the Scrutiny Board worked directly with the schools forum in the allocation of

cluster funding. The proposal to implement funding for 1 year was again reaffirmed.

RESOLVED – That the report and information provided be noted.

139 Outcome of Call-in

The outcome of the vote by voting Members present was as follows:

Option 1 – 10 in favour, 3 against.

Following the vote it was

RESOLVED –

- (i) To release the decision for implementation as stipulated in the delegated decision
- (ii) That Scrutiny Members be provided with a clearer understanding about the role of the schools forum as part of the 2013/14 work programme.

(The meeting concluded at 1.30 pm.)