

SCRUTINY BOARD (CHILDREN'S SERVICES)

THURSDAY, 21ST APRIL, 2016

PRESENT: Councillor S Bentley in the Chair

Councillors N Dawson, C Dobson, J Elliott,
K Groves, C Gruen, M Harland, P Latty,
K Renshaw and B Urry

CO-OPTED MEMBERS (VOTING)

Mr E A Britten – Church Representative (Catholic)
Mr A Graham – Church Representative (Church of England)
Mrs J Ward – Parent Governor Representative (Secondary)
Ms J Hazelgrave – Parent Governor Representative (SEN)

CO-OPTED MEMBERS (NON-VOTING)

Ms C Foote – Teacher Representative
Ms K Jan – Teacher Representative
Mrs S Hutchinson – Early Years Representative
Ms C Bewsher – Looked After Children and Care Leavers

84 Late Items

The following late and supplementary information was submitted to the Board:

- Agenda item 7 – Leeds Safeguarding Children's Board update
- Agenda item 9 – Information and guidance to support updated Leeds Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Transfer Record.

The above information was not available at the time of agenda despatch, but was subsequently made available on the Council's website.

85 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests declared to the meeting.

86 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies for absence were submitted by Councillors A Ogilvie, A Lamb and F Venner. Notification had been received that Councillor K Groves was to substitute for Councillor A Ogilvie and Councillor M Harland for Councillor F Venner.

87 Minutes - 10 March 2016

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2016 be approved as a correct record.

88 Leeds Safeguarding Children's Board Update

The Independent Chair of Leeds Safeguarding Children Board submitted a report which provided an update following the Scrutiny Board meeting in November 2015.

The following were in attendance:

- Councillor Lucinda Yeadon, Executive Member (Children and Families)
- Councillor Jane Dowson, Deputy Executive Member (Children and Families)
- Nigel Richardson, Director of Children's Services
- Mark Peel, Chair of Leeds Safeguarding Children Board
- Phil Coneron, Assistant Manager (Evaluation and Analysis), Leeds Safeguarding Children Board.

The key areas of discussion were:

- An overview of the work undertaken since the previous safeguarding update in November 2015.
- Concern about safeguarding implications arising from the academy expansion programme. The Board was advised that a national review of safeguarding was currently taking place.
- Developing links with Leeds Safeguarding Adults Board, particularly in relation to training and other joint working opportunities. In the complex situations that involved both children and adults the Board considered that there was room for improvement.
- The important work undertaken by police and health partners.
- An acknowledgement of the positive work in providing safeguarding sessions for taxi services across Leeds.
- The need to develop a clear and consistent approach to campaigning against alcohol in pregnancy.
- Concern about the waiting list regarding CAMHS transitions and associated funding issues and concern about self-harm.

RESOLVED – That the update provided to the Board be noted.

89 Young Carers

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report which provided an update on recommendations made by the Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) in 2013.

The following were in attendance:

- Councillor Lucinda Yeadon, Executive Member (Children and Families)
- Councillor Jane Dowson, Deputy Executive Member (Children and Families)
- Nigel Richardson, Director of Children's Services
- Andrea Richardson, Head of Service (Learning for Life)

- Sylvia Shatwell, Barnardo's Willow Young Carers.

The key areas of discussion were:

- The need to be provided with more up to date information and data regarding the number of young carers in Leeds. The Board was advised information was from census information which was probably an underestimation of the number of young carers.
- The need for development of more sophisticated systems to identify support needs.
- The challenges faced in terms of available resources and the importance of partnership working, particularly in terms of information sharing.
- The importance of developing work with schools and clusters to support young carers. The Board emphasised the need to develop a more consistent approach across all schools in Leeds. The suggested approach was that similar to LAC. It was also suggested that the School Improvement team could progress this.
- Building on the positive work undertaken with schools regarding safeguarding and looked after children.
- An update on the types of work and initiatives that had been undertaken, including various pop-up events and the involvement of children and young people on recruitment panels and service reviews.
- The difficulties associated with defining the role of a young carer.
- Concern that this was a national issue that needed greater focus.

RESOLVED – That the progress made following the Scrutiny Board report in January 2013, be noted.

90 Early Years Update

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report in response to specific questions raised by Members at the March Board meeting.

The following were in attendance:

- Councillor Jane Dowson, Deputy Executive Member (Children and Families)
- Nigel Richardson, Director of Children's Services
- Andrea Richardson, Head of Service (Learning for Life).

The key areas of discussion were:

- Concern about the low take-up of early years provision in more deprived areas.
- The impact of changes to funding principles in relation to early years provision, particularly recruitment.
- Narrowing the gap and providing places to those most in need in of children's centres.

- The positive work undertaken by children’s centres and family support services serving people in deprived communities.
- Concern that the method of assessment for measuring the numbers of “good” level of development at Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) was misleading. It was agreed to provide the Board with further information and context about progress which gave a clearer picture.
- ‘Academisation’ and the potential impact on attached children’s centres.
- The challenges in recruiting adequately qualified and experienced staff.
- The potential impact regarding the introduction of 30 free hours free childcare.
- An update on future plans for the management of children’s centres with increasingly challenging budgets.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the contents of the report and the submission of supplementary information be noted.
- (b) That further information and context be provided regarding the method of assessment for measuring the numbers of “good” level of development at Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

91 Work Schedule

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which invited Members to consider the Board’s work schedule for the 2015/16 municipal year.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the work schedule be approved.
- (b) That the reconstituted Scrutiny Board (Children’s Services) considers the inclusion of a comprehensive progress report in its 2016/17 work programme regarding the request for scrutiny from the Governing Body of Gledhow Primary School.

(The meeting concluded at 12.15pm)