

## **SCRUTINY BOARD (CHILDREN'S SERVICES)**

**THURSDAY, 30TH MARCH, 2017**

**PRESENT:** Councillor S Bentley in the Chair

Councillors J Akhtar, D Cohen, N Dawson,  
C Dobson, J Elliott, C Gruen, J Jarosz,  
P Latty, D Ragan and K Renshaw

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

Mr E A Britten – Church Representative (Catholic)

Mrs J Ward – Parent Governor Representative (Secondary)

Ms J Hazelgrave – Parent Governor Representative (Special)

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

Ms C Foote – Teacher Representative

Ms C Hopkins – Young Lives Leeds

Ms C Bewsher – Looked After Children and Care Leavers

#### **65 Chair's Opening Remarks**

The Chair welcomed all in attendance to the March Board meeting, particularly Councillor Jarosz to her first Board meeting since her recent appointment at Council.

#### **66 Late Items**

The following late information was submitted to the Board:

- Agenda item 7 – Report of the Director of Children's Services 'Response to Scrutiny Board Inquiry – Aspire, Empower, Accomplish – Supporting Young People with SEND in Leeds'

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

#### **67 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests declared to the meeting.

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

Apologies for absence were submitted by Councillor M Iqbal and Co-opted Members, Mrs S Hutchinson, Mr A Graham and Ms K Jan.

Notification had been received that Councillor D Ragan was substituting for Councillor M Iqbal.

**69 Minutes - 23 February 2017**

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2017 be approved as a correct record.

**70 Directors Response to Scrutiny Inquiry - Aspire, Empower, Accomplish - Supporting Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities in Leeds & Joint local area SEND inspection in Leeds**

The Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support submitted a report which presented the response from Children's Services in relation to the Scrutiny Board Inquiry 'Aspire, Empower, Accomplish – Supporting Young People with SEND in Leeds'.

The following were in attendance:

- Councillor Lisa Mulherin, Executive Member, Children and Families
- Councillor Jane Dowson, Deputy Executive Member, Children and Families
- Steve Walker, Director of Children's Services
- Sue Rumbold, Chief Officer, Partnership Development and Business Support
- Barbara Newton, Head of Service, Complex Needs.

The key areas of discussion were:

- Recognition of similar findings within both the Scrutiny SEND Inquiry report and the Ofsted Joint local area SEND inspection.
- The need to raise awareness about the local offer and the services that were available. It was acknowledged that some improvements were needed to the terminology used. In addition, the Board raised concern that parents were only able to access web based information.
- Concern about the lack of support for children and young people with dyslexia. It was acknowledged that more work was needed in terms of identifying children and young people with dyslexia. Concern was also expressed that parents were increasingly seeking diagnosis privately due to the lack of alternative support. The Board discussed the role of governing bodies in holding schools to account, particularly in terms of the funding available to provide support.
- The need to develop SEND learning programme for teachers as part of their continuous professional development.
- Clarification sought regarding the timescale for producing an action plan to track progress. The Board was advised that a multi-agency steering group had been established to develop a plan. It was requested that the plan be presented to a future meeting of the Scrutiny Board for consideration.
- Concern about hearing tests during primary education.
- Confirmation that school nursing was to be commissioned by Public Health. It was anticipated that due to funding cuts that the service was to be delivered on a reduced budget.

- Acknowledgement of the positive progress made in relation to children and young people with SEND in Leeds, however the gap in educational attainment and progress remained a concern.

## **RESOLVED –**

- (a) That subject to the above comments, the Board notes the responses to the recommendations and endorses the approach being taken.
- (b) That the Board receives a further update on progress at a future meeting of the Scrutiny Board.

## **71 Learning for Leeds Overview**

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report which summarised the work undertaken to ensure that the statutory duty to provide learning places was being met and outlined the challenges to meet in future.

The following information was appended to the report:

- Briefing note for all elected members (1 March 2017) – Secondary 2017 allocations
- Learning Places – Dashboard report – 7 February 2017
- Finance reporting to end of period 10 – 2 February 2017.

The following were in attendance:

- Councillor Lisa Mulherin, Executive Member, Children and Families
- Councillor Jane Dowson, Deputy Executive Member, Children and Families
- Steve Walker, Director of Children's Services
- Viv Buckland, Head of Service, Learning Systems
- Richard Amos, Partnership Team Senior Manager 14-19
- Jill Gough, Head of Programme, PPPU.

The key areas of discussion were:

- The positive work undertaken by officers in relation to the allocation of school places.
- The challenges regarding free school expansion in Roundhay, planning and development of suitable sites.
- Clarification sought in relation to the new funding deal for schools. The Board was advised that the outcome regarding the development of a national formula for school funding was not yet known. The Board was advised that LCC had responded to the initial consultation and highlighted the financial challenges faced.
- Clarification sought regarding the sufficiency of primary places for 2017/18 to meet the needs of communities across Leeds. The Board was advised that this information was not yet available, therefore this remained a concern.

- Clarification regarding future projections, utilising housing and planning information and information gathered from partners. The Board was advised that education provision was a consideration for the Site Allocations Plan for Leeds.
- Clarification sought regarding the appeal process for free schools. The Board was advised that consultation on the new admissions code was anticipated in approx. 12 months.
- Clarification sought regarding the social implications of school places not being met.
- Clarification regarding the potential impact of Brexit on the provision of school places in the short and medium term.

**RESOLVED** – That the contents of the report and appendices be noted.

(Councillors D Cohen and K Renshaw left the meeting at 12 noon during the consideration of this item.)

## **72 Innovation Funding**

The Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support submitted a report which presented the three year investment of initiative funding in the city's services for children and families and how this investment will be utilised.

The following were in attendance:

- Councillor Lisa Mulherin, Executive Member, Children and Families
- Steve Walker, Director of Children's Services.

The key areas of discussion were:

- Clarification regarding the proposed use of the fund, the levels of funding to be provided over the next 3 years and allocated within the Children's Services budget.
- An update on development of restorative programmes aimed at supporting vulnerable teenagers.
- The need to ensure that programmes were sustainable in the longer term.

**RESOLVED** –

- a) That the contents of the report be noted.
- b) That an update report be provided to the Board at a future date that identifies outcomes and impact as a result of the initiative funding investment.

## **73 Work Schedule**

The Head of Governance Services and Scrutiny Support submitted a report which invited Members to consider the Board's work schedule for the 2016/17 municipal year.

**RESOLVED** – That subject to any on-going discussions and scheduling decisions, the Board's outline work schedule be approved.

(Councillor J Akhtar and Mrs C Foote left the meeting at 12.20pm during the consideration of this item.)

**74 Date and Time of Next Meeting**

Thursday, 27 April 2017 at 9.45am (pre-meeting for all Board Members at 9.15am)

(The meeting concluded at 12.25pm)