

SCRUTINY BOARD (CHILDREN AND FAMILIES)

THURSDAY, 25TH JANUARY, 2018

PRESENT: Councillor S Bentley in the Chair

Councillors J Akhtar, D Cohen, J Elliott,
C Gruen, M Iqbal, P Latty, A Ogilvie,
K Renshaw and B Selby

CO-OPTED MEMBERS (VOTING)

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

CO-OPTED MEMBERS (NON-VOTING)

Ms C Foote – Teacher Representative
Ms M Owen – Teacher Representative
Mrs S Hutchinson – Early Years Representative
Ms C Hopkins – Young Lives Leeds

58 Late Items

There were no late items as such. A revised version of the Leeds 2018-23 Children and Young People's Plan was distributed prior to the meeting.

59 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests.

60 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Neil Dawson.

61 Minutes - 14 December 2017

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 December 2017 be confirmed as a correct record.

62 Support for Children and Young People with Dyslexia and Dyspraxia

The report of the Director of Children and Families updated the Board on actions to date in terms of the identification of pupils with dyslexia and the support and provision offered by the Complex Needs Service to schools. It also considered how children with dyspraxia are identified and supported.

The following information was appended to the report:

- Guidelines for Specific Literacy Difficulties: Dyslexia

The following were in attendance:

- Steve Walker – Director of Children and Families
- Councillor Lisa Mulherin – Executive Board Member
- Barbara Newton – Head of Service, Complex Needs
- Joan Kavanagh – SEN Support and Inclusion Team Leader
- Karen Worton – NHS
- Sam Prince – Leeds Community Healthcare NHS Trust

It was reported that the report had been requested following the discussion following the SEND Inquiry and Ofsted SEND Inspection. It had been highlighted that Leeds was below the national average for identifying children with Dyslexia and there was a need to increase the ability to achieve this. The Board received a presentation which highlighted issues that included the following:

- Role of Care Quality Commission and Ofsted.
- Understanding of Dyslexia and Dyspraxia
- Responsibility of Schools
- Assessment of children's needs and access to and development of pathways.
- Resources available for supporting children with Dyslexia and Dyspraxia.

Key areas of discussion included the following:

- Concern that parents were being asked to contribute towards the cost of assessments. The board were advised that children do not have to be diagnosed with dyslexia to receive additional educational support.
- The need for early identification and intervention.
- The need to improve capacity in all schools for identification and support including training for staff
- The importance of quality first teaching and high expectations of teachers.
- Role of SENCOs being central to the supporting children and education practitioners in schools, and that this role is becoming more challenging due to administrative demands.
- Self-referral for parents – how to make information and resources for self-referral more widely known.
- The move to formula funding – this would provide more resources but was currently capped and there was still a significant shortfall.
- Role and responsibility of Governing Bodies, particularly school governors with responsibility for special educational needs.

RESOLVED – that the report and discussion with regard to support for children and young people with dyslexia and dyspraxia be noted.

63 Refresh of The Children and Young Peoples Plan

The report of the Director of Children and Families was being refreshed. The report provided the latest draft of the refresh, set out the proposed changes, with rationale, and sought comments from Scrutiny. The approval process would continue throughout January and February, culminating with final approval at Council in March 2018.

A copy of the Leeds 2018-23 Children and Young People's Plan was appended to the report (revised version distributed prior to the meeting).

The following were in attendance:

- Steve Walker – Director of Children's Services
- Councillor Lisa Mulherin – Executive Board Member – Children and Families
- Sue Rumbold – Chief Officer, Partnerships
- Peter Storrie – Head of Performance Management and Improvement
- Chris Hudson – Policy Planning and Procedures Leader

Issues highlighted from the report included the following:

- There had been wide consultation and this had included children and young people and their families.
- Significant changes included moving to a focus on improvement for vulnerable learners and the inclusion of transport.
- Challenging child poverty is now at the centre of the plan.
- The three obsessions remained, with the inclusion of improvement to attainment and achievement.
- The review gave an opportunity to re-visit priorities.
- Links to other strategies including the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and a focus on social and mental health.
- The need to ensure that performance indicators lined up with priorities.
- Opportunity to reflect on changes to the curriculum and assessment.

Key areas of discussion included the following:

- Safe and affordable transport had been highlighted as a priority by young people. There needed to be work on how the Council could be an influence on this. Work was ongoing with the West Yorkshire Combined Authority with regards to transport and meetings had been arranged with the involvement of young people and public transport providers.
- The importance of working with partners including housing, schools and clusters to pick up issues that require early intervention, particularly challenging child poverty.
- Raising standards and the intention to link to other strategies with regards to tackling child poverty including the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Inclusive Growth Strategy ensuring that there is a child focus.

- The intention to re-establish the Child Poverty Outcomes Group.
- Physical activity, cultural activities– provision of affordable sports and leisure activities particularly for those on low incomes or larger families.
- The need for children and young people to be supported to have strong, positive, sustained relationships and whilst this may be implied it was suggested this to be reflected.
- The need to close the gap for vulnerable learners whilst raising attainment for all and ensure vulnerable children get the best from their education. The Board requested that rate of improvement in educational outcomes for vulnerable children and young people be prominent in future performance reports.
- The need for clarity of in the wording of part 3, parents having a child removed for a second or successive time ‘How we’ll know if we have made a difference’.
- The suggestion that obesity levels are measured at age 5 and age 11. (part 14 ‘ How we’ll know if we have made a difference.’)

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the report and discussion be noted.
- (2) That subject to the recommendations outlined in the key areas the Scrutiny Board endorsed the proposed changes to the CYPP, which will ensure that the plan remains relevant and focussed on the children and young people who require most support, particularly those who are ‘vulnerable learners’ be acknowledged.
- (3) That the conclusions and recommendations of the Scrutiny Board be referred to the Executive Board to support decision making with regard to the Children and Young Peoples plan refresh.

(Councillor D Cohen left the meeting at 11.45 a.m. and Councillor K Renshaw at 11.55 a.m. during the consideration of this item.)

(Ms C Hopkins and Mr T Britten left the meeting at 12:35 p.m. at the conclusion of this item.)

64 Directors Response to the Scrutiny Inquiry Report - Children's Centres

The report of the Director of Children’s and Family Services set out the formal response to the recommendations from the Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) inquiry into Children’s Centres.

The following were in attendance:

- Steve Walker – Director of Children and Families
- Councillor Lisa Mulherin – Executive Board Member – Children and Families
- Andrea Richardson – Head of Service Learning for Life
- Amanda Ashe – Children’s Centres and Early Start Lead

It was reported that Leeds was going against the national trend in retaining Children's Centres. The centres played a fundamental role and had valued links to health and education to give children and young people a best start. The recommendations of the Board were welcomed and work would be carried out to respond to the recommendations. Reference was made to work that had already started including that with health partners. Following the inquiry there had been 6 Ofsted inspections of childcare provision within children's centres all of which gave positive outcomes.

RESOLVED – That the Scrutiny Board notes the responses to the recommendations based on their findings and endorses the approach being taken.

65 Work Schedule

The Head of Governance and Scrutiny submitted a report which invited Members to consider the Board's Work Schedule for the remainder of the current municipal year.

In relation to the schedule for March and April 2018 it was suggested that the Learning for Leeds – Basic Need Update and School Allocation, be considered at the April meeting and that the feedback from the recently announced Ofsted inspection be considered at the March meeting.

The Board had also requested an update from the Safeguarding Board Chair and had stated that Regional Adoption and Support for Foster Carers be scheduled for consideration in March 2018.

The Director of Children and Families suggested that the Board may wish to consider future safeguarding arrangements in Leeds following the decision to end local Safeguarding Boards. There had been an agreement with local partners to continue the Safeguarding Board in its current format for the next year.

RESOLVED – That the work schedule be amended as discussed.

66 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Thursday, 15 February 2018 at 9.45 a.m.

(Pre-meeting for all Board Members at 9.15 a.m.)