

SCRUTINY BOARD (CHILDREN AND FAMILIES)

THURSDAY, 24TH JULY, 2014

PRESENT: Councillor J Chapman in the Chair

Councillors D Collins, J Elliott, K Groves,
C Gruen, A Lamb, K Mitchell, M Rafique,
K Renshaw, A Sobel and F Venner

CO-OPTED MEMBERS (VOTING)

Mr E A Britten – Church Representative (Catholic)

Ms A Craven – Parent Governor Representative (Primary)

Mrs J Ward – Parent Governor Representative (Secondary)

CO-OPTED MEMBERS (NON-VOTING)

Ms C Foote – Teacher Representative

Ms S Hutchinson – Early Years Representative

9 Late Items

In accordance with her powers under Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chair agreed to accept the following late information:

- Agenda item 10, Scrutiny Inquiry Report into Cluster Partnerships.
(Minute No. 16 refers)

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

10 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests.

11 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies for absence were submitted by Councillors P Latty and B Urry and Co-opted Members, Mr A Graham, Ms K Jan and Ms T Kayani. Notification had been received that Councillor D Collins was to substitute for Councillor P Latty and Councillor K Groves for Councillor B Urry.

12 Minutes - 19 June 2014

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2014 be approved as a correct record.

13 Children's Services Budget Update and Out-turn for 2013/14

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which provided information submitted by the Director of Children's Services in order to facilitate the Financial Health Monitoring of Children's Services.

The following information was appended to the report:

- Leeds City Council 2014/15 Budget Report
- Financial Dashboard – 2014/15 Financial Year – Month 2
- Financial Dashboard – 2013/14 Financial Year – Outturn.

The following representatives were in attendance and responded to Members' queries and comments:

- Councillor Judith Blake, Executive Member, Children and Families
- Councillor Jane Dowson, Deputy Executive Member, Children and Families
- Steve Walker, Deputy Director, Safeguarding, Specialist & Targeted Services
- Paul Brennan, Deputy Director, Learning
- Neil Warren, Head of Finance, Children's Services
- Charlotte Foley, Lead Officer for the Built Environment.

The key areas of discussion were:

- The long term strategy for investing in early intervention to reduce the number of looked after children.
- Maximising income through trading.
- Reduction in the numbers of looked after children and the co-ordination of services to support looked after children.
- Social worker vacancies and the impact of service provision.
- £200m national reduction in Education Support Grant announced by the Government.
- The proposed savings identified for the Therapeutic Social Work Team and the intention to provide a more co-ordinated and efficient service. There will not be a reduction in services to children.
- Youth services and the delegated funding to Community Committees. The Scrutiny Board will revisit this in more detail in October 2014.
- Shift in funding sources for the Duke of Edinburgh scheme and the need for the scheme to be self-sustaining.
- Resourcing of adoption function and the achievement of being the 2nd best in terms of performance in the country.

RESOLVED –

The Scrutiny Board (Children and Families):

- a) noted the financial report for 2014/15
- b) noted the outturn summary for 2013/14.

(Councillor M Rafique arrived at 9.55 am during the consideration of this item.)

14 Children's Services Performance Report

The Deputy Chief Executive and the Director of Children's Services submitted a report which provided a summary of recent performance information. The report also provided proposals for how performance information relating to Children's Services will be shared with the Scrutiny Board over 2014/15.

The following information was appended to the report:

- Indicator Performance for the CYPP indicators as at the end of the most recent financial year
- Children and Young People's Plan Key Indicator Dashboard – City Level May 2014
- Children and Young People's Plan Key Indicator Dashboard – Cluster Level May 2014
- Children's Services Inspections Dashboard May 2014
- June Safeguarding Specialist and Targeted Services Monthly Practice and Improvement Report.

The following representatives were in attendance and responded to Members' queries and comments:

- Councillor Judith Blake, Executive Member, Children and Families
- Councillor Jane Dowson, Deputy Executive Member, Children and Families
- Steve Walker, Deputy Director, Safeguarding, Specialist & Targeted Services
- Paul Brennan, Deputy Director, Learning
- Peter Storrie, Head of Performance & Improvement, Children's Services
- Becky Lawrence, Performance Programme Manager, Children's Services.

The key areas of discussion were:

- The improved NEET figures for Leeds and the need to consider data collated in relation to successful destinations for young people. Also, the need to look at NEET by geographical area to identify which parts of the city require focus.
- The need to raise the profile of the merits and benefits of apprenticeships and recognition that the academic route is not always the best for all young people.
- The success of 'social contracts' with companies in local areas to employ and train young people.

- The level of re-referrals of children and young people to the Children's Social Work service and the significant reduction from 40% to 25% over the past 2 years.
- Powers to challenge schools in order to improve attainment for children.
- Sufficiency of school places in the city. This will be put into the work programme for further debate.
- The format of the report, which the Scrutiny Board agreed is sufficient and welcome.

RESOLVED –

The Scrutiny Board (Children and Families):

- a) noted the most recent performance information.
- b) agreed the format of information is sufficient for future meetings with additional focus on performance issues relevant at that time.

(Councillor A Lamb left the meeting at 11.00 am during the consideration of this item.)

15 Recommendation Tracking - Private Fostering

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report to facilitate the tracking of recommendations made in the Scrutiny Boards inquiry report into Private Fostering.

The following information was appended to the report:

- Recommendation Tracking Flowchart
- Review of Private Fostering Inquiry.

The following representatives were in attendance and responded to Members' queries and comments:

- Councillor Judith Blake, Executive Member, Children and Families
- Councillor Jane Dowson, Deputy Executive Member, Children and Families
- Steve Walker, Deputy Director, Safeguarding, Specialist & Targeted Services
- Sandra Pentelow, Principal Scrutiny Adviser.

The key areas of discussion were:

- The LSCB statement with regard to recommendation 1 – assigned a status of 4.
- The number of reported cases are still low and this is the case nationally. However there has been a significant increase in the number of cases reported in Leeds which demonstrates that the

communication strategy is having an effect. (52 new cases reported in comparison to 14 last year.)

RESOLVED –

The Scrutiny Board (Children and Families):

- a) Acknowledged the significant progress made since last year
- b) Assigned the following statuses:
 - Recommendation 1 – 4
 - Recommendation 2 – 4
 - Recommendation 3 – 4
 - Recommendation 4 – 2

16 Scrutiny Inquiry into Cluster Partnerships

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted the draft scrutiny inquiry report into Cluster Partnerships for consideration by the Scrutiny Board.

The following representatives were in attendance and responded to Members' queries and comments:

- Councillor Judith Blake, Executive Member, Children and Families
- Councillor Jane Dowson, Deputy Executive Member, Children and Families
- Steve Walker, Deputy Director, Safeguarding, Specialist & Targeted Services
- Jim Hopkinson, Head of Service, Targeted Services
- Sandra Pentelow, Principal Scrutiny Adviser.

The key areas of discussion were:

- Recommendation 6, the inconsistency of the type of Cluster representation and communication at Community Committee meetings and that the mechanism for cluster feedback to Community Committee is very much defined by the committee itself.
- The structure of the director's response and the grouping of recommendations.
- Recommendation 11, the Board was advised that to support succession planning and ensure sufficient expertise it was felt that the LAP role should remain a children's services officer. Alternative suggestions relating to this recommendation were made. The Board highlighted the importance of this recommendation and stated that this role is fundamentally important which needs to be strengthened. Cross council representation will provide cross service focus, break-down silo working and promote thinking about children and families across all departments. Also that the current system, in addition to what is stated in the report, is not sufficiently robust with regard to links and

consistency. The Board voted that the wording of the recommendation remains as drafted as it calls for a review and gives an example of the seniority of officer. There is therefore flexibility and should in the Board's view be fully considered.

RESOLVED –

The Scrutiny Board (Children and Families):

- a) Agreed the Scrutiny inquiry report into Cluster Partnerships
- b) Requested that the director's response be scheduled for October 2014
- c) Requested that progress on recommendations be reported to the Scrutiny Board in April 2015.

17 Work Schedule

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.

The draft Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) work schedule for 2014/2015 was appended to the report.

Sandra Pentelow, Principal Scrutiny Adviser, presented the report and responded to Members' queries and comments.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the contents of the report and appendices be noted.
- (b) That a working group look at Kinship Care in August 2014 if possible.
- (c) That a working group look at SILCs and their relationship with mainstream educational establishments in the New Year if possible.
- (d) That an inquiry into narrowing the attainment gap in early years be scheduled into the work programme in the New Year if possible.

18 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Thursday, 11 September 2014 at 9.45am in the Civic Hall, Leeds
(Pre meeting for Board Members at 9.15am)

(The meeting concluded at 12.15pm)