

Report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development

Report to Scrutiny Board (Children and Families)

Date: 11th September 2014

Subject: Draft Terms of Reference – Raising Educational Standards in Leeds-Learning Improvement

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

1. Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 Leeds City Council has an ambition to be the best council in the UK: fair, open and welcoming with an economy that is both prosperous and sustainable so all our communities are successful. The vision encompasses the aim to be a Child Friendly City by 2030. The methodology for delivering this vision is defined in The Children and Young Peoples Plan which details five headline outcomes one of which is that Children and Young People will do well at all levels of learning and have the skills for life.
- 1.2 At its meeting on the 24th April 2014, the Scrutiny Board was presented with the Annual Standards Report (Early Years Foundation Stage, Primary & Secondary Schools). The report summarised the achievement of learners in Leeds at all Key Stages, including Early Years Foundation Stage in 2013. It also outlined the action taken by the Council to fulfil its responsibilities to support, monitor, challenge and intervene as necessary.
- 1.3 Debate at this meeting highlighted that:
 - Across all key stages of learning, standards are improving year on year but they are not as high as desired. Rates of improvement in the city were described as strong, but gaps between Leeds and the national position still need to be closed. The pace of improvement also needs to be accelerated.
 - There has been an improvement in the number of good and outstanding schools and early years settings, but there are still some that fall below the floor standards or are vulnerable in terms of inconsistent results. The Board

questioned the level of challenge to schools and was advised that the council is taking strong action to provide the appropriate support, challenge and intervention.

- The number of vulnerable learners is proportionately higher either due to deprivation, special educational needs, because they have recently arrived from overseas or have English as an additional language.
- At Early Years Foundation Stage, overall attainment is closely in line with national performance and above or in line with many statistical neighbour authorities, however in Leeds, the attainment gap between the lowest achievers and the average is a major challenge, which the Scrutiny Board agreed needs to be addressed. The Board felt that the timescales for the roll out of narrowing the gap programmes needed to be further clarified.

- 1.4 Prior to the report being presented to Scrutiny, Executive Board had stated that the Director of Children's Services is required to produce a report regarding the challenge which exists in respect of the attainment gap between the lowest achievers and the average at the Early Years Foundation Stage, the actions which are currently being taken and further actions which could be taken to address the gap. This is yet to be submitted to a future meeting of the Executive Board.

2. Scope of the Inquiry

- 2.1 Considering the information presented in April 2014, the Scrutiny Board at its meeting on the 19th of June 2014 resolved to undertake an inquiry looking at the Learning Improvement Service and the impact, influence and value of this service in raising educational standard in the city and narrowing the attainment gap, particularly in early years.

- 2.2 The purpose of the inquiry is to make an assessment of and, where appropriate, make recommendations on the following areas:

- Strategies and systems in place to secure learning improvement with Learning Providers for children and young people from the age of 2 years.
- Improving outcomes for Children and Young People by identifying:
 - a) the quality of service provided by and the performance of the Learning Improvement Service
 - b) the impact the Learning Improvement Service is having on learning providers across the city to improve educational standards
 - c) the effectiveness of the Learning Improvement Service in narrowing the gap in attainment and progress and ensuring children and young people are ready for learning.
 - d) if Learning Improvement Service intervention and operation in Leeds is providing good value for money and is sustainable going forward
- The extent of collaborative, supportive and productive relationships between the Learning Improvement Service and Learning Providers.

- 2.3 During 2012/2013 the Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) conducted an inquiry into Raising Attainment in Maths and English. The scope of the inquiry covered:

- The approach of educational establishments to teaching maths and English
- Leadership, strategies and systems for improvement

- Teaching methods, skills and capacity
- Targeted maths and English support for children and young people, monitoring progress, tracking improvement and target setting
- Assisting parents and carers to support children and young people in maths and English education

Elements of this inquiry considered raising educational standards and recommendations relating to improvement were made by the Scrutiny Board. Progress against these recommendations is still under review by the Board. The recommendations from this inquiry are attached as appendix 1 in order to minimise duplication of effort in undertaking the inquiry into of Learning Improvement.

- 2.4 Additional guidance has been sought from the Deputy Director, Learning Skills and Universal Services and the Head of Learning Improvement in order to recommend areas of focus for the inquiry.

3. Desired Outcomes and Measures of Success

- 3.1 In conducting the Inquiry the Board wishes to reflect on the value and impact of the Learning Improvement Service and identify what positive outcomes the service provides for families, children and young people. The Scrutiny Board will endeavour to establish if robust strategies are in place and sufficient challenge and intervention measures are implemented which have resulted in clearly improved educational standards in the city. In addition the Scrutiny Board will seek to establish what targeted measures are put into place to support Learning Providers who are operating in challenging circumstances and also to narrow the gap in attainment and progress.
- 3.2 It is important to consider how the Scrutiny Board will deem if their inquiry has been successful in making a difference to local people. Some measures of success may be obvious at the initial stages of an inquiry and can be included in these terms of reference. Other measures of success may become apparent as the inquiry progresses and discussions take place.
- 3.3 Following the inquiry the Scrutiny Board will publish its report which will identify clear desired outcomes. These will be reflected in the recommendations made. The director or organisation to whom the recommendations have been made will be responsible for monitoring the impact of each recommendation and for advising the Scrutiny Board accordingly as the Board reviews progress.

4. Comments of the relevant Director and Executive Member

- 4.1 In line with Scrutiny Board Procedure Rule 12.1 where a Scrutiny Board undertakes an Inquiry the Scrutiny Board shall consult with any relevant Director and Executive Member on the terms of reference.

5. Timetable for the inquiry

- 5.1 It is anticipated that the inquiry will take place over three sessions. The length of the inquiry and range of evidence to be collected is however subject to change by agreement of the Board.

- 5.2 In relation to this inquiry, it is suggested that the Board follow a similar approach to that successfully adopted for its inquiry into Cluster Partnerships where the Board could visit 'case study' areas in place of, or in addition to, a formal Scrutiny Board meeting. This would provide the opportunity for Board Members to visit schools who have engaged with, or sought the assistance of, the Learning Improvement Service to speak to education practitioners, governors and parents before reconvening for a round table discussion about their findings. The schools to be visited are yet to be determined by the Scrutiny Board.

6. Submission of evidence

6.1 Session 1 – November 2014

Improving educational outcomes

- Statutory requirements for Leeds City Council regarding improving standards of education, including non-maintained schools.
- Strategic plan for learning improvement (including partnership arrangements, commissioning, brokerage)
- School Improvement Ofsted Framework (including previous Learning Improvement Service Ofsted inspection reports for Leeds, (if any))
- Schools and Learning Provider data and how this is used.
- Arrangements for monitoring, challenge, intervention and support
- Identification of underperforming Learning Providers and reacting to this.
- Learning Improvement Service relationships with Learning Providers and Supporting Leadership and management in schools (reference Maths and English Inquiry)
- Learning Improvement Service relationship with school governors to ensure there is strong governance and challenge in schools.
- Learning Improvement Service relationship with Clusters and Community Committees to drive improvement in target areas

6.2 Session 2 - February 2015

Narrowing the Gap

- Annual performance report 2014
- Data sets and analysis for Leeds and the presentation of particular challenges including narrowing the gap in attainment and levels of progress
- Learning Improvement Service role in promoting 'Ready for learning' from Early Years and supporting attainment, language, behaviour and communication skills
- The role of the Learning Improvement Service in:
 - a) narrowing the gap in educational attainment and progress from early years onwards.
 - b) increasing opportunities and removing barriers for vulnerable learners from early year onwards
- Narrowing the Gap delivery of programs, results and/or anticipated impact

6.3 Session 3 - March 2015

Sustainability and Value of the Learning Improvement Service

- Value of the Learning Improvement Service to Learning Providers, Partners, and Leeds City Council.(referring also to visits to schools)
- Identification of the alternative resources utilised by Learning Providers to evaluate where performance can be improved.(referring also to visits to schools)
- Alternative School Improvement delivery models in other authorities, how effective are they and what can we learn?
- Targeted school improvement work and how improvement services are deployed in schools– case studies and impact.
- The use of available funding and how this is used to maximise impact and focus on areas of greatest need.
- Measuring and assessing the impact of the Learning Improvement Service – methodology and current evaluation.
- Sustainability, the continuation strategy in an environment of reducing resource.

7. Witnesses

7.1 The following witnesses have been identified as possible contributors to the Inquiry:

- Education Practitioners and School Governors
- Members of the Children's Trust Board
- Elected Members
- Early years providers and representatives
- Head of Learning Improvement
- Closing the Gap Lead
- Learning Improvement Advisors and Lead officers
- Stakeholders and Partners
- Contractors
- Other Local Authority Representatives
- Deputy Director of Children's Services(Learning Skills and Universal Services)
- Director of Children's Services
- Parents
- Children and Young People

7.2 The Board will always seek to include the views of children and young people and their parents and carers as evidence to its inquiries wherever possible and practicable.

8 Corporate Considerations

8.1 Consultation and Engagement

Where the board deems it appropriate to undertake in consultation in order to conduct the inquiry or gather necessary evidence consultation could be undertaken.

8.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration.

- 8.2.1 The Equality Improvement Priorities 2011 to 2015 have been developed to ensure our legal duties are met under the Equality Act 2010. The priorities will help the council to achieve its ambition to be the best City in the UK and ensure that as a city work takes place to reduce disadvantage, discrimination and inequalities of opportunity.
- 8.2.2 Equality and diversity will be a consideration throughout the Scrutiny Inquiry and due regard will be given to equality through the use of evidence, written and verbal, outcomes from consultation and engagement activities.
- 8.2.3 The Scrutiny Board may engage and involve interested groups and individuals (both internal and external to the council) to inform recommendations.
- 8.2.4 Where an impact has been identified this will be reflected in the final inquiry report, post inquiry. Where a Scrutiny Board recommendation is agreed the individual, organisation or group responsible for implementation or delivery should give due regard to equality and diversity, conducting impact assessments where it is deemed appropriate.

8.3 Council Policies and City Priorities

This inquiry will assist in achieving outcomes and priorities as defined in the Children and Young Peoples Plan 2011-2015 and the Child Friendly City Priority Plan.

8.4 Resources and Value for Money

There is no resource or value for money implications relating to this report. At the conclusion of the inquiry any identified impact will be reported in the final inquiry report.

8.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

None

8.6 Risk Management

There are no risk implications relating to this report. At the conclusion of the inquiry any identified risk will be reported in the final inquiry report.

8.7 Recommendations

The Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) is recommended to:

- 8.7.1 Note the information contained within this report, make further recommendation to update the terms of reference where necessary and agree the terms of reference for the inquiry.
- 8.7.2 Note that the terms of reference may incorporate additional information during the inquiry should the Scrutiny Board identify any further scope for inquiry or request further witness or evidence.

8.8 Background documents¹

None

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¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.