

SCRUTINY BOARD (CHILDREN'S SERVICES)

THURSDAY, 23RD JULY, 2015

PRESENT: Councillor S Bentley in the Chair

Councillors N Dawson, J Elliott, C Gruen,
P Latty, A Ogilvie, J Pryor, K Renshaw,
B Urry and F Venner

CO-OPTED MEMBERS (VOTING)

Mr E A Britten – Church Representative (Catholic)

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 S Hutchinson – Early Years Representative

9 Late Items

The Board received the following supplementary information in relation to agenda item 7, public request for scrutiny:

- E-mail correspondence from Tom Riordan, Chief Executive, Leeds City Council to Friends of Gledhow Field, dated 20 July 2015
- Response to the document produced by Friends of Gledhow Field (15 July 2015) from Dr John Willot, Chair of Governors, Gledhow Primary School
- Results and findings of a survey, petition, research and community engagement campaign by the Friends of Gledhow Field
- Briefing note from Leeds City Council, Built Environment Team regarding Gledhow Primary 3FE expansion land issues, dated 24 June 2015
- Gledhow Primary School expansion – Consultation timeline and summary
- Report to Executive Board dated 17 December 2014 – Outcomes of statutory notices to increase primary school provision in Roundhay
- Further report from Friends of Gledhow Field in response to school's views.

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 disclosable pecuniary interests declared to the meeting.

11 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies for absence were submitted by Councillors C Dobson and A Lamb, and Co-opted Members, Mr A Graham, Ms K Jan and Ms T Kayani. Notification was received that Councillor J Pryor was to substitute for Councillor C Dobson.

12 Minutes - 18 June 2015

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2015 be approved as a correct record.

13 Public Request for Scrutiny

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which presented a request for scrutiny received from Paul Sellars, representing Friends of Gledhow Field.

The following information was appended to the report:

- A copy of the request for scrutiny, including the reasons for the request
- A copy of the letter issued to parents and carers by Dr Willott, Chair of Governors at Gledhow Primary School, regarding the use of Gledhow Field in the expansion of Gledhow Primary School.

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

- Paul Sellars, Chair, Friends of Gledhow Field
- Stephanie Crossland, Friends of Gledhow Field
- Councillor Lucinda Yeadon, Executive Member (Children and Families)
- Councillor Jane Dowson, Deputy Executive Member (Children and Families)
- Nigel Richardson, Director of Children's Services
- Paul Brennan, Deputy Director of Children's Services (Learning)
- Viv Buckland, Head of Service (Learning Outcomes), Children's Services
- Jane Walne, Principal Regeneration Officer, City Development
- Nigel Wilson, Built Environment Programme Manager, City Development
- Sarah Blenkin, Team Leader (Commercial Property), Legal Services.

Paul Sellars presented the request for scrutiny and made the following key points:

- The field had not been used by the school in approximately 20 years.
- The field served as a focal point for the local community.
- There were concerns about the consultation process, particularly that not everyone was aware about the proposal to 'fence in' the field.

- A survey had been undertaken by Friends of Gledhow Field which supported the field remaining open to the public. In addition, a petition against the proposal had been signed by nearly 450 people.

In response, Viv Buckland, Head of Service (Learning Outcomes) reported on the public consultation process, which included meetings with governors, staff, children, residents and parents. In addition, drop in sessions had taken place for parents and residents to find out more about the proposals. These were advertised via a leaflet drop in the area, banners on the school fence, LCC website and Wordpress. Parents also received a letter about the proposals.

Ward Councillor Bill Urry added that the land had been part of the school grounds since 1945 and had been maintained by the school. The area had to find 90 more school places including 30 places at Gledhow School.

The Chair then invited questions and comments and the main areas of discussion were:

- The ownership and maintenance of the land.
- Future access to local community groups under the lettings policy.
- The school moving from 2 to 3 form entry in 2015, resulting in the need for additional space and for the school to expand into land in their ownership.
- Other locally available green and amenity space, e.g. Gledhow woods and Chapel Allerton park.
- Concern about information presented on the Friends of Gledhow Field website and that not all of the signatories on the petition were from the local area. The Board was advised by Paul Sellars that at least 127 signatories were from the local area.
- Evidence of anti-social behaviour and dog fouling on the field and the need to safeguard children.
- The consultation process regarding school expansion and the fencing in of the field.
- The need to work more effectively with local organisations and groups when undertaking school expansion.

RESOLVED – The Board considered all information and resolved that no further scrutiny of the matter would be undertaken.

14 Learning for Leeds Overview

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report which provided an overview of Learning Places for Leeds, which included a summary of the work undertaken over the last 12 months and an outline of challenges in the future.

A copy of the Basic Need Programme Dashboard and Dashboard report was appended to the report for Members' information.

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

- Councillor Lucinda Yeadon, Executive Member (Children and Families)
- Councillor Jane Dowson, Deputy Executive Member (Children and Families)
- Nigel Richardson, Director of Children's Services
- Paul Brennan, Deputy Director of Children's Services (Learning)
- Viv Buckland, Head of Service (Learning Outcomes), Children's Services
- Barbara Robinson, Family Intervention Service Manager, Children's Services
- Jane Walne, Principal Regeneration Officer, City Development
- Chris Gomersall, Head of Land and Property, City Development
- Lois Pickering, Team Leader (Forward Planning and Sustainable Development), City Development.

The key areas of discussion were:

- Concern in relation to the delivery of school expansions that were still in the planning and costing stages before 7 September 2015. The Board was reassured that no issues were anticipated at this stage. It was also highlighted that there was a cross-council responsibility to deliver school places.
- Clarification regarding the responsibility of academies, trusts and free schools to provide school places in areas of demand and avoiding fragmentation and holding an integrated education system together.
- The important role of governing bodies and schools to facilitate school expansion.
- Gaps in before and after-school provision across the city. The Board was advised that a review of provision was currently underway over the summer period. It was suggested that the outcome of this work be presented to the Board.
- Parental preferencing of schools and cases where preferred schools had not been allocated. The lack of surplus places which had an impact on first preference rate and the need to build in surplus capacity. Avoiding school catchment and placement 'black holes' for 2016/17.
- Managing future projections and longer term planning of school places beyond the next academic year, including consideration of the Site Allocation Plan for the city and future housing development.
- The impact on the highways network.
- Development of a communication strategy and a protocol for elected member engagement.
- Expansion of specialist provision and the quality of partnerships between the SILCs and mainstream schools.

RESOLVED – That the Board receives a further update on Basic Need in December 2015, which also includes details of the review undertaken on before and after-school provision.

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting
to be held on Thursday, 10th September, 2015

15 Financial Health Monitoring Children's Services - Budget Update

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which presented a financial update in relation to Children's Services for the financial year 2015/16.

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

- Councillor Lucinda Yeadon, Executive Member (Children and Families)
- Councillor Jane Dowson, Deputy Executive Member (Children and Families)
- Nigel Richardson, Director of Children's Services
- Neil Warren, Head of Corporate Finance.

The main areas of discussion were:

- Clarification sought regarding the reduction in full-time equivalent posts across the directorate, vacancies and agency staff and the impact on the budget and front line services.
- An update on the budget reduction which had led to some difficult decisions regarding services whilst protecting mainstream services.
- Managed budget pressures in relation to looked after children and transport.
- The financial pressure created by the success of the 'staying put' initiative.
- Turning the curve and the positive work undertaken in relation to family based kinship care, in-house fostering arrangements, remodelling of children's homes and investment in family group conferencing.
- Remodelling of the youth work strategy and development of a more targeted approach to youth work.
- Narrowing the gap and learning improvement and providing services to schools to support children.

RESOLVED – That the Board notes the contents of the report.

(Ms J Ward left the meeting at 12 noon, Councillor N Dawson at 12.15pm and Councillor J Pryor at 12.20pm, during the consideration of this item.)

16 Performance Update

The Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Children's Services submitted a joint report which provided a summary of performance information in relation to the Children and Young People's Plan, the recent Ofsted inspection, and the children's social work service.

The following information was appended to the report:

- Indicator performance for the CYPP indicators up to the end of March 2015 (some figures at the end of May 2015)
- CYPP key indicator dashboard – city level (May 2015)
- CYPP key indicator dashboard – cluster level (May 2015)
- Safeguarding specialist and targeted services – monthly practice improvement report (April 2015)
- Post-Ofsted areas for improvement and agreed actions
- Children’s settings services inspections dashboard (May 2015).

The following were in attendance and responded to Members’ questions and comments:

- Councillor Lucinda Yeadon, Executive Member (Children and Families)
- Councillor Jane Dowson, Deputy Executive Member (Children and Families)
- Nigel Richardson, Director of Children’s Services
- Peter Storrie, Head of Service (Performance Management and Improvement)
- Chris Hudson, Principal Performance Officer.

The key areas of discussion were:

- Prevention of placement re-referrals and the development of a multi-agency focus when a case was re-referred.
- Improving the use of pupil premium in schools.
- Clarification regarding work with the voluntary sector to improve access and waiting times for CAMHS.
- The benefits of utilising localised data by postcode to identify specific problems in small communities and to undertake targeted specific projects. The Board was advised that the standard offer of information to Clusters was subject to a review which may include information by postcode.
- The provision of performance information to Community Committees to facilitate priorities in each area.

RESOLVED –

- a) That the Board notes the contents of the report and appendices.
- b) That an update be provided on the provision of more localised performance information for Community Committees, Clusters and partners in December 2015.

17 Department of Education funded Innovations Programme - 'Family Valued'

The Chief Officer (Partnership Development and Business Support) submitted a report which provided an overview of the DfE funded ‘Family Valued’ Innovations Programme.

The following information was appended to the report:

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting
to be held on Thursday, 10th September, 2015

- Family Valued: the Leeds Innovation Programme – An overview of the three key areas of work
- Restorative Practice Training Framework.

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
- Sue Rumbold, Chief Officer (Partnership Development and Business Support).

The main areas of discussion were:

- Restorative practice for children with more challenging behaviour.
- Sustainability of the initiative once funding had finished

RESOLVED –

- a) That the Board notes the contents of the report and appendices.
- b) That a further update be provided to the Scrutiny Board in approximately 6 months.

(Councillor C Gruen and Councillor B Urry left the meeting at 12.55pm during the consideration of this item.)

18 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 – That the work schedule be approved, subject to further consideration of work priorities to be undertaken for this municipal year.

(Ms C Foote left the meeting at 1.00pm during the consideration of this item.)

19 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Thursday, 10 September 2015 at 9.45am (pre-meeting for all Board Members at 9.15am.

(The meeting concluded at 1.05pm)