

SCRUTINY BOARD (CHILDREN'S SERVICES)

THURSDAY, 10TH SEPTEMBER, 2015

PRESENT: Councillor S Bentley in the Chair

Councillors N Dawson, C Dobson, J Elliott,
C Gruen, J Jarosz, A Lamb, P Latty,
A Ogilvie, B Urry and F Venner

CO-OPTED MEMBERS (VOTING)

Mr E A Britten – Church Representative (Catholic)
Mr A Graham – Church Representative (Church of England)
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

20 Late Items

The Board received the following late / supplementary information:

- Agenda item 7 – School attendance by Special Educational Needs and Disabled (SEND) children and young people in the 2014/15 academic year (Minute no. 24 refers)
- Agenda item 9 – Draft terms of reference for the Board's inquiry into Preparing for the Future, Supporting Special Educational Needs and Disabled Young People. (Minute no. 26 refers)

The above information was subsequently made available on the Council's website.

21 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests declared to the meeting.

22 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies for absence were submitted by Councillor K Renshaw and Co-opted Members; Ms C Bewsher, Ms K Jan and Ms T Kayani. Notification was received that Councillor J Jarosz was substituting for Councillor K Renshaw.

23 Minutes - 23 July 2015

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2015 be approved as a correct record.

24 Review of the School Attendance Inquiry Actions (2014) and General Progress Update on School Attendance

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report which provided the Board with an update on the outstanding actions arising from the School Attendance Inquiry.

The following information was appended to the report:

- Review of Improving School Attendance Inquiry (September 2015)
- Details of changes to national attendance legislation (September 2013)

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
- Paul Brennan, Deputy Director of Children's Services (Learning)
- Gillian Mayfield, Targeted Services Area Lead
- Martyn Stenton, Targeted Services Area Lead
- Becky Lawrence, Performance Programme Manager

The key areas of discussion were:

- The role of head teachers and governing bodies to challenge suspected term time holidays recorded as illness.
- Potential difficulties arising from schools operating different holiday arrangements.
- Persistent regular unauthorised absences.
- The positive work undertaken by clusters to improve school attendance and the need to share good practice.
- An acknowledgement of some complex issues regarding unauthorised absence linked to behaviour and disability.
- Concern regarding attendance at secondary school and the need for children to form good attendance habits at an early age.
- Exploring best practice across local authorities.
- Clarification that different arrangements existed for data collection at SILCs and a request that data regarding this be reported back to the Board.
- Cultural attitudes to school attendance and the need to work with families new to the UK.
- The rationale behind the potential increase from one penalty notice per year to two. The Board also sought confirmation regarding how many cases had resulted in court proceedings.

The status of recommendations for the Board's inquiry into Improving School Attendance were agreed as follows:

- Recommendation 2 – Achieved
- Recommendation 6 – Achieved
- Recommendation 11 – Stop monitoring
- Recommendation 12 – Stop monitoring.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the above requests for information be provided.
- (b) That the Board approves the status of recommendations as set out above and the inquiry actions be closed as progress has either been made or the actions are no longer relevant due to changes in legislation or practice.
- (c) That the Board supports the proposal to change the number of penalty notices that can be issued per year for unauthorised school attendance from one per year to two per year.

25 Increasing the Number of Young People in Employment Education or Training

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which presented information in relation to increasing the number of young people in employment, education or training.

The following information was appended to the report:

- Recommendation tracking flowchart
- Review of increasing the number of young people in employment, education or training
- Report submitted by Children's Services providing a detailed update on key areas of activity to increase the number of young people in employment, education or training
- Performance information containing city-wide and cluster level data
- A plan of the journey to sustained employment
- Employability support work plan
- Details of post 16 infrastructure collaboration
- Success and progression for young people on devolved youth contract (June 2015)
- Data flow into and out of the Local Authority for 16-18 year olds.

The following were in attendance:

- Councillor Lucinda Yeadon, Executive Board 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)
- Barbara Newton, Head of Complex Needs

- Richard Amos, Partnership Team Senior Manager 14-19
- Sally Lowe, Partnership Manager 14-19.

The key areas of discussion were:

- Concern regarding the quality of independent careers advice and guidance for young people due to the reduction in Aspire, IGEN and Connexions service.
- Concern regarding a number of funding streams that had been reduced or due to end.
- An update on the network arrangements in place across schools in Leeds, including details of a survey being undertaken in relation to independent careers advice and guidance. The Board requested to be updated on the outcome of this survey.
- Development of the Leeds pathways website and online prospectus.
- The perceived benefits of starting careers advice at an earlier age, in year 7 and 8.
- Transition from education to training, including an update on development of the Leeds Universal Technical College (UTC) specialising in advanced manufacturing and engineering (opening September 2016)
- The role of the Leeds Apprenticeship Training Agency (ATA), particularly in terms of supporting young people into small and medium sized businesses.
- The provision of short courses and other study programmes aimed at the 16-19 year group.
- An update on work undertaken by Voluntary Action Leeds (VAL) and Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to support long term NEETs. The Board asked to receive an update on this.
- Breaking the cycle of worklessness in families to reduce the risk of NEET and the need to focus on supporting young people to develop 'soft' skills such as communication and presentation.
- Development of supported internships for special educational needs (SEN) group. Details of a pilot being undertaken later in the year to be included as part of a future reporting update.

The status of recommendations for the Board's inquiry into Increasing the Number of Young People in Education, Employment or Training were agreed as follows:

- Recommendation 1 – Stop monitoring
- Recommendation 2 – Achieved
- Recommendation 5 – Achieved
- Recommendation 6 – Not achieved (Progress made acceptable. Continue monitoring.)
- Recommendation 7 – Not achieved (Progress made acceptable. Continue monitoring.)
- Recommendation 8 – Achieved
- Recommendation 9 – Stop monitoring

- Recommendation 10 – Not achieved (Progress made acceptable. Continue monitoring.)
- Recommendation 11 – Not achieved (Progress made acceptable. Continue monitoring.)
- Recommendation 12 – Achieved.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the Board approves the status of recommendations as set out above.
- (b) That the above requests for information be provided.

26 Draft Terms of Reference - Scrutiny Inquiry

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which presented draft terms of reference for the Board's inquiry into 'Preparing for the Future, Supporting Special Educational Needs and Disabled Young People.

The following were in attendance:

- Councillor Lucinda Yeadon, Executive Board Member (Children and Families)
- Jane Dowson, Deputy Executive Member (Children and Families)
- Nigel Richardson, Director of Children's Services
- Paul Brennan, Deputy Director of Children's Services (Learning)
- Barbara Newton, Head of Complex Needs.

RESOLVED – That the Board approves the terms of reference for the inquiry, subject to the inclusion of adult social services representatives under the list of witnesses.

27 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.

The following updates were provided:

- A joint working group proposal to consider safeguarding arrangements in relation to taxis.
- Potential involvement for the Board in relation to school transport following a report to October Executive Board.

RESOLVED – That subject to the above comments, the work schedule be approved.

28 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Thursday, 15 October 2015 at 9.45am. (Pre meeting for all Board Members at 9.15am)

(The meeting concluded at 12.24pm)