

## **SCRUTINY BOARD (CHILDREN'S SERVICES)**

**THURSDAY, 21ST JULY, 2016**

**PRESENT:** Councillor S Bentley in the Chair

Councillors B Anderson, N Dawson,  
C Dobson, J Elliott, S Field, B Flynn,  
C Gruen, M Iqbal and K Renshaw

### **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 C Bewsher – Looked After Children and Care Leavers

#### **12 Late Items**

There were no late items.

#### **13 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests declared to the meeting.

#### **14 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes**

Apologies for absence were submitted by Councillors A Lamb, P Latty and Co-opted Member, Ms K Jan. Notification had been received that Councillor B Flynn was to substitute for Councillor A Lamb and Councillor B Anderson for Councillor P Latty.

#### **15 Minutes - 16 June 2016**

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2016 be approved as a correct record.

#### **16 Children's Centres**

The Head of Scrutiny submitted a report which presented an overview of Children's Centres in Leeds.

The following were in attendance:

- Councillor Lisa Mulherin, Executive Member of Children and Families
- Nigel Richardson, Director of Children's Services
- Andrea Richardson, Head of Service, Learning for Life.

The key areas of discussion were:

- An overview of children's centres in Leeds, particularly support for vulnerable families and development of an integrated approach through joint working with health partners.
- Concern from some parents, carers and clusters about the future sustainability of children's centres. The Executive Member of Children and Families undertook to write a letter to all children's centres to provide an update on the current position and highlight the positive impact that they had. It was requested that this letter reflected the support of the Scrutiny Board.
- An update on funding arrangements, particularly Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) funding, which had been used to support early intervention programmes across Leeds.
- The need to review fees and charges of some services provided by children's centres.
- The complexities associated with children's centres attached to academies (26 in total) and clarification sought regarding the current legal position.
- An update on efficiencies across children's centres and changes to management structures.
- Development of intervention practices in relation to vulnerable and hard to reach families.
- Acknowledgement of the different approaches used by children's centres in responding to the needs of local communities.

#### **RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the Executive Member (Children and Families) writes to all children's centres providing an update on the current position and highlighting the positive impact that they had.
- (b) That the Board undertakes a Scrutiny Inquiry into Children's Centres
- (c) That the Chair and Principal Scrutiny Adviser consults with the relevant Director and Executive Board Members regarding terms of reference and reports back to the next Board meeting with draft terms of reference for agreement.
- (d) That the Board notes that the terms of reference may incorporate additional information during the inquiry should the Board identify any further scope for inquiry or request further witnesses or evidence.

(Councillor M Iqbal joined the meeting at 10.00am during the consideration of this item.)

#### **17 Ofsted - Areas for Improvement**

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report which provided an update on progress against the areas for improvement identified by Ofsted.

The following were in attendance:

- Councillor Lisa Mulherin, Executive Member of Children and Families
- Nigel Richardson, Director of Children's Services
- Steve Walker, Deputy Director of Safeguarding Specialist and Targeted Services
- Jancis Andrew, Virtual Headteacher, Looked After Children.

The following updates were provided:

- Leeds was the only core city to be rated 'good' overall.
- Considerable work had been undertaken in driving forward improvements, particularly in relation to care planning.
- There had been investment in IT infrastructure framework-i which had resulted in improvements to reporting of information and data.
- Less than 5% of social workers were now employed by agencies, previously 21%. In addition, 84% of staff had more than 2 years post-qualification experience.
- Improved attendance by agencies at child protection meetings.
- An update on investment in therapeutic services and joint working with health partners.
- Greater resources in relation to missing children and improvements to reporting arrangements.
- An update on looked after children and pupil premium.

The key areas of discussion were:

- Clarification sought regarding Child Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) provision across academies. The Directorate undertook to provide the Board with a response regarding current provision. The Board was advised about early intervention measures and development of the Leeds and West Yorkshire Transformation Plan to address issues.
- The positive impact of clusters, particularly in terms of improving outcomes. Board members expressed concern regarding the future funding model for clusters.
- Changes to Ofsted assessment criteria.
- Learning outcomes for looked after children and personal education plans.
- A request that the next update reflected outcomes and impact.
- Support for schools to develop range of training provision.

## **RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the Board notes the progress made on the Ofsted areas for improvement.
- (b) That the Directorate provides a response regarding access to CAMHS and TAMHS provision by academies.

## **18 The Implications of Academies for the Leeds Children's Services and Education in General**

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report which presented information on academies, the role of the local authority, the financial implications of academisation and the number of academies within Leeds.

The following information was appended to the report:

- Overview of academy conversions (as at 21 June 2016)
- Education Services Grant – General and Retained Statutory Duties
- Summary of the Department of Education White Paper 'Educational Excellence Everywhere'.

The following were in attendance:

- Councillor Lisa Mulherin, Executive Member of Children and Families
- Nigel Richardson, Director of Children's Services
- Andrew Eastwood, Head of Service, Learning Improvement.

The key areas of discussion were:

- The aim to maintain a coherent learning community.
- Concern about the formula used for the allocation of pupil premium funding. The Board was advised that a statement from the new secretary of state for education was anticipated to address issues in relation to funding and the role of local authorities.
- An update on publication of a Government White Paper which set out a review of the core functions of local authorities in relation to academisation.
- The role of multi-academy trusts in addressing standards of attainment.
- The different approaches to leadership and decision-making across schools and academies.
- An update on developments at Springwell Academy.

**RESOLVED** – That the Board notes the contents of the report and appendices.

(Mr A Graham left the meeting at 12.05pm and Councillor B Flynn at 12.30pm during the consideration of this item.)

## **19 Work Schedule**

The Head of Scrutiny submitted a report which invited Members to consider the Board's work schedule for the 2016/17 municipal year.

**RESOLVED** –

- (a) That the Board's work schedule be approved

(b) That the Principal Scrutiny Adviser provides clarification regarding the Board's recommendations in relation to universal youth activity to the Chief Officer for the area support teams and obtains clarification regarding the treatment of the wellbeing and youth activity funding budgets.

**20 Date and Time of Next Meeting**

Thursday, 15 September 2016 at 9.45am (pre-meeting for all Board Members at 9.15am)

(The meeting concluded at 12.40pm)