

SCRUTINY BOARD (CHILDREN'S SERVICES)

THURSDAY, 15TH DECEMBER, 2016

PRESENT: Councillor S Bentley in the Chair

Councillors J Akhtar, N Dawson, C Dobson,
S Field, C Gruen, M Iqbal, P Latty and
K Renshaw

CO-OPTED MEMBERS (VOTING)

Mr E A Britten – Church Representative (Catholic)
Ms L Nichols – Parent Governor Representative (Primary)
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

47 Late Items

There were no late items.

48 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests declared to the meeting.

49 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies for absence were submitted by Councillors J Elliott and A Lamb and Co-opted Members, Mr A Graham, Ms C Hopkins, Ms S Hutchinson and Ms K Jan.

50 Minutes - 10 November 2016

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2016 be approved as a correct record.

51 How to make Corporate parenting everyone's business

The Head of Service, Looked After Children submitted a report which updated the Board on the purpose and progress made by the Corporate Parenting Board.

The following information was appended to the report:

- Corporate Carer guidance for elected members in Leeds (Summer 2016)
- Governance arrangements for the Corporate Parenting Board.

The following were in attendance:

- Councillor Lisa Mulherin, Executive Board Member, Children and Families
- Councillor Jane Dowson, Deputy Executive Board Member, Children and Families
- Councillor Helen Hayden, Chair of Corporate Parenting Board
- Steve Walker, Interim Director of Children's Services
- Rob Murray, Head of Service, Looked after Children
- Jancis Andrew, Head of Virtual School (Looked After Children).

The key areas of discussion were:

- The potential development of a thematic approach at Corporate Parenting Board.
- Concern about inconsistent attendance at Corporate Parenting Board. The Board emphasised the need for a clear pattern of meeting dates to be agreed at the start of the municipal year to avoid clashes with other Council meetings. The Board also highlighted the importance of a representative at a strategic level from each of the directorates.
- The need for mandatory training in relation to corporate parenting. The Board also discussed the need to increase opportunities for Elected Members to attend training events.
- Engagement with young people through a range of initiatives. The Board also acknowledged the positive work undertaken by the Voice and Influence Team.
- A suggestion that the Scrutiny Board received an annual report from the Corporate Parenting Board.
- The key role of Ward Members and Community Committees providing a focus on corporate parenting responsibilities and Looked After Children.
- Raising awareness at school governing bodies and at cluster level.
- The need to develop engagement with support groups, foster carers and volunteers.
- An acknowledgement regarding the important role of the business community and the third sector.

RESOLVED –

- a) That the Director of Children's Services recommends making training on corporate parenting mandatory for elected members and appropriate officers through submission of a report to the Council's Member Management Committee.
- b) That the Corporate Parenting Board updates the Scrutiny Board on an annual basis on:
 - The Corporate Parenting Board vision and plan outlining areas of focus for the next 12 months;
 - Outcomes and achievements for the previous 12 months; and

- Attendance and support at meetings from elected members and Directors so that commitment to children in care and care leavers can be evidenced.
- c) That Scrutiny Board members be invited to meet with Have a Voice Council (HAV) / Care Leavers Council once a year through the children and young people takeover day of the Corporate Parenting Board.
- d) That the Corporate Parenting Board ensure that all relevant individuals, including all Councillors are aware of the Corporate Parenting strategy, their responsibilities as a Corporate Parent and that the strategy is fully adhered to.
- e) That a deputy be identified for each elected member who sits on the Corporate Parenting Board to represent them if they are unable to attend, to improve attendance.
- f) That all Directors nominate an officer of seniority to represent the directorate at the Corporate Parenting Board.
- g) That members of the Corporate Parenting Board be given the lead for certain areas in relation to Looked After Children and Care Leavers for example, Education, Health, Leaving Care, Residential Care, Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children, etc.
- h) That Community Committees receive regular reports about how the promises developed with looked after children on the HAV Council have been fulfilled.
- i) That consideration be given to potential takeover of the Scrutiny Board by HAV / Care Leavers Council, subject to corporate governance approval.

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

52 Financial Health Monitoring Children's Services- Budget Update Period 7 2016/17 and Budget Proposals for 2017/18

The Head of Governance Services and Scrutiny Support submitted a report which provided the Board with information regarding the financial health of Children's Services for period 7 and the outline budget proposals for 2017/18.

The following information was appended to the report:

- Report to Executive Board on 14 December 2016, Financial Health Monitoring 2016/17 – Month 7
- Report to Executive Board on 14 December 2016, Initial Budget Proposals for 2017/18.

The following were in attendance:

- Councillor Lisa Mulherin, Executive Board Member, Children and Families
- Councillor Jane Dowson, Deputy Executive Board Member, Children and Families

- Steve Walker, Interim Director of Children's Services
- Simon Criddle, Head of Finance, Children's Services.

The key areas of discussion were:

- An update on budget pressures linked to external placements. The Board considered development of a strategy to support children and young people with complex needs.
- The key work of clusters, particularly in terms of improving social and educational outcomes for children and young people. The Board also considered the challenges in maintaining cluster provision in future.
- An update on staffing costs, particularly a reduction in spending on agency staff. The Board was advised that only 5% of social workers were employed by an agency compared to 20% national average.
- Review of current management structures with an emphasis on maintaining frontline services.
- An update sought regarding the Innovations Bid. The Board was advised that an announcement regarding this was anticipated in the near future. Concern was expressed that £2.5m of income had been included in the budget for this bid which was a risk.
- Concern about reduction in learning improvement funding. The Board was advised about the Council's commitment to learning improvement through a range of measures, particularly children centres provision.
- The reduction in funding to children centres under the public health budget and concern that this could negatively impact on early intervention.
- Clarification provided regarding potential additional income generated at Adel Beck.
- Confirmation that the approach to this budget had been carefully considered with a focus on efficiency savings without a negative impact on children or strategy. The Board considered that staff welfare was also a key consideration if efficiency savings resulted in increased responsibilities and workload.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the Board notes the financial position of Children's Services for period 7, 2016/17
- (b) That subject to the above comments, the Board notes the initial 2017/18 budget proposals in relation to Children's Services.

(Councillor K Renshaw left the meeting at 12.10pm during the consideration of this item.)

53 Performance update for April 2016 to September 2016

The Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Children's Services submitted a report which provided a summary of performance information in relation to outcomes for Leeds children and young people.

The following information was appended to the report:

- Indicator performance for the CYPP indicators as at the end of September 2016
- Voice and Influence of Children and Young People Report Card (April 2016 – September 2016)
- Children’s Social Work Services – Voice and Influence of Children and Young People Report Card (April 2016 – September 2016)
- CYPP key indicator dashboard – city level (September 2016)
- CYPP key indicator dashboard – cluster level (September 2016)
- Safeguarding specialist and targeted services (September 2016) monthly practice improvement report
- Children’s services settings inspections dashboard (September 2016)
- Ward level data (based on home postcode) extracted from autumn 2016 community committee dataset
- Selected learning outcomes dashboards: academic year 2015/16.

The following were in attendance:

- Councillor Lisa Mulherin, Executive Board Member, Children and Families
- Councillor Jane Dowson, Deputy Executive Board Member, Children and Families
- Steve Walker, Interim Director of Children’s Services
- Sue Rumbold, Chief Officer, Partnership Development and Business Support
- Peter Storrie, Head of Performance Management and Improvement
- Chris Hudson, Policy, Planning and Procedures Leader
- Hannah Lampugh, Voice and Influence Lead.

The key areas of discussion were:

- Attainment and improving standards in school through targeted services, school to school support and utilising data to identify issues.
- The data regarding voice and influence in schools. Also, engagement events and raising awareness in schools regarding voice and influence.
- Raising awareness about the nutritional benefits of free school meals, particularly in terms of improving take-up.
- Development of supported internships for young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
- Concern about an increase in secondary school exclusions. The Board was advised about work undertaken with schools which had a high exclusion rate.
- In relation to looked after children numbers, an update was provided on the provision of support for children who were refugees or unaccompanied asylum seekers was provided.

RESOLVED – That the contents of the report and appendices be noted.

(Councillor J Akhtar left the meeting at 12.30pm, Ms C Bewsher at 12.45pm and Councillor M Iqbal at 12.55pm during the consideration of this item.)

54 Work Schedule

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

RESOLVED – That subject to any on-going discussions and scheduling decisions, the Board's outline work schedule be approved.

55 Date and Time of Next Meeting

It was advised that the January Board meeting (Thursday, 26 January 2017) had been replaced by site visits to various Children Centres as part of the Board's ongoing scrutiny inquiry work.

(The meeting concluded at 12.55pm)