

SCRUTINY BOARD (CHILDREN'S SERVICES)

THURSDAY, 23RD FEBRUARY, 2017

PRESENT: Councillor S Bentley in the Chair

Councillors J Akhtar, D Cohen, N Dawson,
C Dobson, J Elliott, C Gruen, M Iqbal,
P Latty and K Renshaw

CO-OPTED MEMBERS (VOTING)

Mr E A Britten – Church Representative (Catholic)
Mr A Graham – Church Representative (Church of England)
Ms L Nichols – Parent Governor Representative (Primary)
Mrs J Ward – Parent Governor Representative (Secondary)

CO-OPTED MEMBERS (NON-VOTING)

Ms C Foote – Teacher Representative
Ms K Jan – Teacher Representative
Mrs S Hutchinson – Early Years Representative
Ms C Hopkins – Young Lives Leeds

56 Late Items

There were no late items.

57 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests declared to the meeting, however the following matters were brought to the attention of the Scrutiny Board for information:

- Councillors S Bentley, P Latty and L Mulherin advised that they were members of a Children's Centre Advisory Board.

The above Members remained present for the duration of the meeting.

58 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

An apology for absence was submitted by Councillor S Field.

59 Minutes - 15 December 2016

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2016 be approved as a correct record.

60 Scrutiny Inquiry - Children's Centres

The Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support submitted a report which presented information as part of the Board's inquiry into Children's Centres.

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting
to be held on Thursday, 30th March, 2017

The following information was appended to the report:

- Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) Leeds CCGs briefing.

The following were in attendance:

- Councillor Lisa Mulherin, Executive Board Member, Children and Families
- Councillor Jane Dowson, Deputy Executive Board Member, Children and Families
- Sue Rumbold, Chief Officer, Partnership Development and Business Support
- Andrea Richardson, Head of Service, Learning for Life
- Sharon Yellin, Consultant in Public Health
- Amanda Ashe, Children's Centres and Early Help Lead
- Clare Slaney, Service Delivery Manager, Children's Services
- Sarah Lovell, Associate Director of Commissioning, Leeds South and East CCG.

The key areas of discussion were:

- Feedback and key issues arising from scrutiny visits to children's centres in January.
- Concern about the poor quality accommodation of some children's centres.
- Concern about the reported poor standards of private rented housing.
- The need to support families living in rural settings that were isolated.
- The positive difference that staff at children's centres had made to the lives of children and families.
- The positive integration of Bankside Primary School and Bankside Children's Centre.
- Clarification regarding the potential to expand New Bewerley EYFS provision into the former library located within the Dewsbury Road One Stop Centre.
- The need for an improved online communication and marketing strategy to provide easily accessible information regarding city-wide children's centre provision and the relevant services provided.
- The demand for speech and language support at children's centres in relation to the Best Start Plan, particularly in areas with high EAL levels. The Board expressed concern regarding a reduction in health services resources.
- The need to ensure that families were supported to implement positive child development practice outside of educational settings.
- Development of a partnership approach and the key involvement of clusters.
- Enhanced CCG funding in the south and east and clarification regarding funding from the north and west CCG's.

- Targeting investment in areas of greatest need, particularly in terms of reducing health inequalities.
- The extent to which CCG's felt they received a return on their investment into services provided through children's centres.
- The types of support for children and families with mental health difficulties.
- Concern about the impact of public health funding reduction and the impact on service delivery, particularly early intervention programmes.
- Concern about the change in structure of some clusters and the impact on targeted provision in children's centres.
- Clarification sought regarding the benefits of children's centres attached to schools and the extent to which seamless transition between children's centres and schools were consistent city-wide.
- The link and essential relationship between children's centres and children's social services, and the developing model in the JESS cluster.

RESOLVED – That the issues raised as part of the Board's inquiry into Children's Centres, be noted.

(Mr T Britten and Mrs S Hutchinson left the meeting at 11.45am, Ms K Jan at 11.50am and Councillor K Renshaw at 12 noon, during the consideration of this item.)

61 Youth Activity Funding

The Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) submitted a report which provided an update on the delivery of the Youth Activity Fund with a particular focus on the progress with the recommendations made by the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) on 25 February 2016.

The following information was appended to the report:

- Youth Activity Fund Steering Group – Terms of Reference
- Communities Team – Summer Peer Inspections of Youth Activity Fund Activities 2016
- Proposed Best Practice Youth Activities Fund Model
- Community Committee Children and Families Sub Group – Draft Terms of Reference
- Youth Activity Fund Attendance Data and Budget Allocation.

The following were in attendance:

- Councillor Lisa Mulherin, Executive Board Member, Children and Families
- Councillor Jane Dowson, Deputy Executive Board Member, Children and Families
- Sue Rumbold, Chief Officer, Partnership Development and Business Support
- Andrea Richardson, Head of Service, Learning for Life

- Martin Dean, Area Leader (South East Leeds)
- Aretha Hanson, Area Officer (South East Leeds).

The key areas of discussion were:

- Progress regarding the recommendations made at the February 2016 Board meeting.
- Clarification sought regarding some of the financial information contained in the report, particularly the level of underspend. It was suggested that further, more detailed information be presented to the Board, to include clarification regarding the formula for allocating funding to community committees.
- Clarification regarding the spending of wellbeing funding on youth activities in areas where YAF was considered to be underspent.
- The need to ensure that activities were publicised to all groups, particularly children and young people with SEND and BME groups.
- Support for the development of an 'app' to publicise activities.
- Confirmation that the process for bringing together the application for youth activity funding and community committee wellbeing funding had been completed. In addition, the Breeze Card requirements to access events had also been reviewed and simplified.
- Clarification sought regarding the quality of information gathered from youth activity consultations and peer inspections.
- Concern about the consistency of high-quality feedback across the city, particularly within the inner west area, which should be utilised to inform the commissioning / funding of future schemes.
- The need to implement a city-wide steering group to monitor the quality of planned activities and feedback and ensure the attainment of city-wide value for money.
- A request that future financial detail concerning YAF was scheduled for discussion after the end of the financial year to assess total underspend for each community committee.

RESOLVED – That the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services):

- (a) Continues to endorse the establishment of a steering group to further improve and develop quality, practice and outcomes relating to community committees funding and support of youth activities.
- (b) Recommends continued work to ensure city-wide best practice regarding the engagement of children and young people in the decision making processes of committees.
- (c) Recommends that the full peer inspection activities report be provided to the Board.
- (d) Requests that a further update report be brought to the Board for consideration of:
 - Investment made in youth activities and the total annual YAF spend 2016/17 by community committees.
 - The inclusion of SEND and BME groups in youth activities and how activities were promoted in relation to hard to reach groups.

- A progress update regarding the recommendations made by the Board.

(Councillor M Iqbal left the meeting at 12.25pm and Mr A Graham at 12.35pm, during the consideration of this item.)

62 Scrutiny Inquiry Report - Aspire, Empower, Accomplish - Supporting Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities in Leeds

The Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support submitted a report which presented for approval the draft scrutiny inquiry report 'Aspire, Empower, Accomplish – Supporting Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities in Leeds'.

The following were in attendance:

- Barbara Newton, Head of Service, Complex Needs.

RESOLVED – That the Board approves the draft scrutiny inquiry report 'Aspire, Empower, Accomplish – Supporting Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities in Leeds'.

63 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.

The Board discussed potential scrutiny of behaviour management (currently an unscheduled item) at the April meeting.

It was also requested that an overview of the cluster model and associated structures be provided to a future Board meeting.

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

(Councillor J Akhtar left the meeting at 1.00pm during the consideration of this item.)

64 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Thursday, 30 March 2017 at 9.45am (pre-meeting for all Board Members at 9.15am)

(The meeting concluded at 1.05pm)