

SCRUTINY BOARD (CHILDREN AND FAMILIES)

THURSDAY, 19TH OCTOBER, 2017

PRESENT: Councillor S Bentley in the Chair

Councillors J Akhtar, D Cohen, J Elliott,
C Gruen, M Iqbal, P Latty, K Renshaw and
B Selby

CO-OPTED MEMBERS (VOTING)

Mr E A Britten – Church Representative (Catholic)

Mrs J Ward – Parent Governor Representative (Secondary)

Ms J Hazelgrave – Parent Governor Representative (Special)

CO-OPTED MEMBERS (NON-VOTING)

Ms C Foote – Teacher Representative

Ms M Owen – Teacher Representative

Mrs S Hutchinson – Early Years Representative

Ms C Hopkins (Young Lives Leeds)

30 Late Items

There was no late information.

31 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests declared to the meeting.

32 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies for absence were submitted by Councillors C Dobson and N Dawson and Co-opted Member, Mr A Graham.

33 Minutes - 7 September 2017

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2017 be approved as a correct record.

34 Children's Centres - Draft Scrutiny Inquiry Report

The Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support submitted a report which presented the draft scrutiny inquiry report into children's centres.

The following were in attendance:

- Councillor Jonathan Pryor, Deputy Executive Member, Children and Families
- Andrew Eastwood, Chief Officer, Learning Improvement
- Andrea Richardson, Head of Service, Learning for Life

- Amanda Ashe, Children's Centres and Early Start Lead.

The Board was advised that following advice received from Children and Families, it had been requested that recommendation 5 of the draft scrutiny inquiry report be amended as follows:

That the Director of Children and Families:

- a) Investigates the level of needs led demand for communication and language development support, including the support required at each children's centre, and works in collaboration with health partners to address the deficits in support identified
- b) Investigates the possibility of commissioning and provision of adult learning courses in Makaton in children's centres, to aid parents who wish to support the development of their child's communication skills.

The key areas of discussion were:

- An update that due to changes to the framework, Ofsted inspections in relation to children's centres were on hold. The Board noted that at the last inspection in August 2015, 73% of children's centres in Leeds were rated good or outstanding, against a national comparison of 49%.
- An acknowledgement regarding the important role of health partners and concern regarding the ongoing sustainability of integrated working with health partners in general due to the trend of reducing investment/resourcing. The Board requested that this matter be referred to the Scrutiny Board (Adults and Health) for possible inclusion in their work programme.

RESOLVED –

- a) That subject to the above amendment to recommendation 5, the draft scrutiny inquiry report into children's centres, be approved.
- b) That the issue regarding the impact of reducing health funding and resources on integrated working be referred to the Scrutiny Board (Adults and Health) for consideration.
- c) That a formal response from the Director of Children's Services be scheduled into the work programme for consideration within the next 3 months.

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

35 Scrutiny Inquiry - The impact of Child Poverty on Attainment, Achievement and Attendance

The Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support and the Director Children and Families submitted a joint report which presented information as part of the Board's inquiry into the impact of child poverty on attainment, achievement and attendance.

The following information was appended to the report:

- Primary school free school meal eligibility and index of multiple deprivation average by cluster
- Pupil premium governor – Guidance document in relation to governors' specific roles (Updated September 2017)
- Pupil attendance governor – Guidance document in relation to governors' specific roles (Updated November 2016)
- Draft notice of pupil support committee meeting.

The following were in attendance:

- Councillor Jonathan Pryor, Deputy Executive Member, Children and Families
- Andrew Eastwood, Chief Officer, Learning Improvement
- David Roberts, Financial Inclusion Manager
- Diane Gill, Senior Policy Development Officer.

The key areas of discussion were:

- An update on issues arising from the LSCB Education Reference Group meeting in October, including transport to schools to improve attendance.
- The interventions in place to address social, emotional and mental health needs, particularly work with health partners and development of the MindMate programme.
- Clarification provided regarding free school meals funding for schools.
- The barriers to take-up of free school meals, particularly the need to improve the dining experience at schools.
- The variation in uptake of free school meals across the city, and the significant role schools had in terms of encouraging uptake.
- The positive development of work with the third sector and businesses to provide breakfast clubs to children, and to provide meals over the school holidays in parts of the city. It was suggested that clusters be contacted about the possibility of developing schemes in other parts of the city.
- The changes in the application process for access to free school meals following the introduction of universal credit. It was requested that the Board be kept updated regarding changes to universal credit, particularly in relation to free school meals.
- More information needed about the positive impact of pupil premium funding.
- Concern that cuts to school funding had resulted in some schools asking parents to pay for items, which schools had previously funded. In addition that some schools implemented policies which sited specific outlets for expensive school uniforms. The Board was advised that this was an issue for individual schools and governing bodies.
- That housing deprivation had a negative impact on learning.

- School allocations and how this presented issues for parents living in poverty.
- A request that the Board be provided with a clear and coherent overview of the delivery and impact of Leeds City Council's implied approach regarding child poverty reduction initiatives. It was requested that this information be submitted to the December Scrutiny Board meeting.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the issues raised as part of the Board's inquiry into the impact of child poverty on attainment, achievement and attendance, be noted.
- (b) That the requests for information be provided.

(Councillor K Renshaw left the meeting at 11.45am, during the consideration of this item.)

36 Cluster Sustainability - Position Statement Update

The Director of Children and Families submitted a report which presented an update on developments with the cluster model since the previous update to the Board in April 2017.

The following information was appended to the report:

- Map of current cluster arrangements and proposed changes.

The following were in attendance:

- Councillor Jonathan Pryor, Deputy Executive Member, Children and Families
- Andrew Eastwood, Chief Officer, Learning Improvement
- Nicola Engel, Partnership Development and Business Support Lead.

The key areas of discussion were:

- Confirmation that many schools were still investing in cluster partnerships on a year by year basis.
- The involvement of the local authority in the Lantern Trust.
- Concern regarding the uncertainty of the SILC Cluster, particularly following the SEND scrutiny inquiry.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (b) That further updates be provided to the Scrutiny Board.

37 Work Schedule

The Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support submitted a report which invited Members to consider the Board's work schedule for the 2017/18 municipal year.

The following updates were noted:

- A request that Viv Buckland, Head of Service, Learning Systems, be invited to attend the December Board meeting to provide an update on issues associated with school allocations and how this impacted on families living in poverty.
- Further research information to be circulated to the Board as part of its ongoing inquiry into attainment, achievement and attendance.
- A request that the Board be provided with an update on the schools consultation process that was underway in Roundhay should the Board wish to present its views as part of the consultation process. The Principle Scrutiny Advisor was requested to identify a suitable date for consideration based on the consultation deadline.

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

38 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Thursday, 16 November 2017 at 9.45am (pre-meeting for all Board Members at 9.15am)

(The meeting concluded at 12.30pm)