

SCRUTINY BOARD (CHILDREN'S SERVICES)

THURSDAY, 2ND NOVEMBER, 2006

PRESENT: Councillor J Bale in the Chair

Councillors J Chapman, R D Feldman, V Kendall,
L Mulherin, K Renshaw and B Selby

CO-OPTED MEMBERS: (VOTING)	Mr E A Britten	- Church Representative (Catholic)
	Prof P H J H Gosden	- Church Representative (Church of England)
	Mrs S Knights	- Parent Governor Representative (Primary)
CO-OPTED MEMBERS: (NON-VOTING)	Mr T Hales	- Teacher Representative
	Ms C Foote	- Teacher Representative
	Mrs S Hutchinson	- Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership Representative
	Ms T Kayani	- Leeds Youth Work Partnership Representative

54 Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed all in attendance to an additional meeting of the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services), which had been scheduled to undertake the first two formal sessions of the Board's inquiry into Youth Services.

55 Declarations of Interest

The following Members declared personal interests in relation to agenda items 6 and 7, due to their respective positions as either school or college governors. (Minute Nos 57 and 58 refer):-

Councillors Bale, Chapman, R D Feldman, Kendall, Mulherin, Renshaw, Selby, Mr E A Britten and Mrs S Knights.

Councillor Selby declared a personal interest in relation to agenda items 6 and 7, due to being a Director of Leeds East Homes ALMO. (Minute Nos 57 and 58 refer).

Ms T Kayani declared a personal interest in relation to agenda items 6 and 7 due to being the Chief Executive of Burley Lodge Centre, which had received funding from the Youth Service. (Minute Nos 57 and 58 refer).

Councillor Chapman declared a personal interest in relation to agenda items 6 and 7 due to being a Director of Leeds North West Homes ALMO. (Minute Nos 57 and 58 refer).

Councillor R D Feldman declared a personal interest in relation to agenda items 6 and 7 due to being a Director of Leeds North East Homes ALMO. (Minute Nos 57 and 58 refer).

A further declaration of interest was made at a later point in the meeting. (Minute No 57 refers).

(Councillor J Chapman and Ms T Kayani joined the meeting at 10.05 a.m. during the consideration of this item).

56 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received on behalf of Councillors Cleasby, Harrison, Murray, Mr P Gathercole, Mr R Greaves and Mr C Macpherson.

57 Youth Services Inquiry - Session One

The Board received a report from the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development which detailed the information to be considered as part of the first formal session of the Board's inquiry into Youth Services.

Appended to the report for Members' information was the agreed terms of reference for the inquiry, in addition to a report from the Head of Youth Service detailing the information requested for this session, which included an update on the Youth Service Ofsted Action Plan.

Rosemary Archer, Director of Children's Services and John Paxton, Head of Youth Service were both in attendance to answer Members' queries and questions.

Following a brief overview of the main points highlighted within the documents, a question and answer session ensued. The main areas of discussion were as follows:-

- The approach taken by the Youth Service when delivering services to young people in Leeds and the extent to which such an approach reflected the current national position;
- The impact that the greater emphasis now being placed upon extended schools provision was having in Leeds;
- The levels of service provided to young people with disabilities, whether such service provision maintained an inclusive approach and the procedures in place to ensure that young people with learning difficulties were consulted about the services they received;
- Members raised concerns about the national targets set in relation to engagement with young people and questioned whether such targets were linked to levels of need or deprivation in a particular area;
- The extent to which the services provided by schools were being affected by the extensive PFI programme in Leeds. Members then requested a position statement relating to the impact of the PFI programme in Leeds for the next session of the inquiry;

- Members questioned how the Youth Service, in co-ordination with other agencies, would develop their services in accordance with the 'Youth Matters: Next Steps' document;
- Whether there was any intention for the Youth Service to provide additional resources in areas which experienced high levels of anti-social behaviour;
- Following Members' enquiries, the Head of Youth Service undertook to provide the Board with further Ward based information on those young people who had engaged with the Youth Service in Leeds disaggregated by age group;
- The ways in which the commissioning of youth services from the voluntary and community sectors was being rolled out across Leeds, and the resources that organisations from such sectors were being allocated;
- The areas which had received mobile youth provision in Leeds, the reasons why such areas had been chosen and the frequency of the visits by the mobile units to these areas;
- The extent to which young people were given the opportunity to influence youth service provision in the city, with particular reference being made to those young people who currently did not use the service;
- Questions were also raised about the age range of the respondents to the Youth Service user survey and how representative they were of young people in Leeds. In response, the Head of Youth Service undertook to provide the Board with further information on the responses to the survey;
- The extent to which the Youth Service used its resources to engage with young people aged 11 and 12 years;
- Having made reference to a recently published report concerning the behaviour of young people throughout Europe, Members enquired whether the Youth Service had observed the ways in which other countries delivered services to young people and suggested that the cities twinned with Leeds could be contacted in order to obtain such information;
- The effect that the implementation of the 2006 Childcare Act would have on the provision of services to young people in Leeds.

RESOLVED –

- (a). That the report and information appended to the report be noted;
- (b). That the issues raised be incorporated into the Board's inquiry on youth services;
- (c). That the additional information requested be provided to the next session of the Board's inquiry in December.

(Following the conclusion of this item, Councillor Chapman declared a personal and prejudicial interest in relation to agenda item 7 entitled, 'Youth Service Inquiry – Session Two', due to being a Lead Member for Neighbourhoods and Housing, the portfolio for which specifically related to Area Committees. Councillor Chapman left the meeting at 11.10 a.m. at the conclusion of this item)

58 Youth Services Inquiry - Session Two

Members received a report from the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development which detailed the information to be considered as part of the second formal session of the Board's inquiry into Youth Services.

Appended to the report for Members' consideration was an overview of the Leeds Youth Work Partnership, a summary of the Local Youth Network in Morley and a report from the Director of Neighbourhoods and Housing entitled, 'The Impact of Area Management upon the Youth Service'.

Rosemary Archer, Director of Children's Services, John Paxton, Head of Youth Service, Satbinder Soor, Senior Youth Officer, Dave Richmond, South Leeds Area Manager, Councillor Finnigan, Chair of the South (Outer) Area Committee and Dave Ashwell and Mark Law, both of Leeds Youth Work Partnership, were all in attendance to answer Members' queries and questions.

Following a brief summary of the information within the report concerning the Leeds Youth Work Partnership, a question and answer session ensued. The main areas of debate were as follows:-

- The objectives of the Leeds Youth Work Partnership in bringing the youth service and voluntary sector organisations together in a positive partnership to jointly acknowledge and address issues which had previously created tensions between parties;
- The role played by the Partnership when considering the children's trust arrangements in Leeds;
- The number of voluntary organisations and faith groups which were involved in the Partnership;
- Issues relating to the funding arrangements associated with the Partnership;
- The extent to which funding from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) was available for youth activities;
- The extent to which the level of service provided by the Partnership varied throughout Leeds;
- The actions being taken to promote the Partnership, in order to attract a more diverse group of organisations;
- The differing roles of the Partnership operating at a strategic level, and youth networks providing support at a local operational level.

A brief overview of the work undertaken by the Local Youth Network in Morley was followed by a question and answer session. The main areas of debate were:-

- The support provided by local networks to local groups delivering services to young people;
- With regard to the procedures in place to administer individual Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks, Members questioned whether the system had been problematic and enquired whether anything could be done to simplify the process. In response, it was proposed that a summary of

evidence which related to the current position of CRB checks in Leeds could be submitted to Members for their information;

- The extent to which the recorded outcomes procedure used was viewed as cumbersome;
- The difference that the establishment of the Network had made to young people in Morley when considering the accessibility of services;
- The effectiveness of a pilot scheme which had been established to train voluntary youth workers in certain parts of Leeds and whether it was intended to roll the initiative out across the city.

Following a summary of the issues raised within the report from the Director of Neighbourhoods and Housing, a discussion ensued which related to the impact that the Area Management Teams had upon the operation of the Youth Service. The main areas of debate were as follows:-

- With regard to the work undertaken to address the issue of cohesion in South Leeds, Members enquired about the success of the initiative and questioned whether South Leeds High School had been involved;
- Following Members' requests for further information on those organisations who had received support to assist their delivery of services to young people, the Board was advised that although details of those organisations assisted by the Area Committee were appended to the report, information on those bodies covered by Local Youth Networks could be provided;
- The formula currently used to allocate the city wide Youth Service budget on a Ward by Ward basis, whether the formula was still fit for purpose given the developments in service provision and the potential impact that any change in the allocation system could have on a particular area;
- The need for more detailed information to be submitted to Area Committees in the future, in order to maximise the effectiveness of any funding allocated;
- Issues relating to the perceived success of local working arrangements in West Leeds.

The Chair concluded by thanking all the witnesses present for their contribution and attendance.

RESOLVED –

- (a). That the report and information appended to the report be noted;
- (b). That the issues raised be incorporated into the Board's inquiry on youth services;
- (c). That the additional information requested be provided to the next session of the Board's inquiry in December.

(Professor PHJH Gosden, Councillor Renshaw and Councillor R D Feldman left the meeting at 12.10 p.m., 12.15 p.m. and 12.25 p.m. respectively during the consideration of this item).

59 Date and Time of Next Meeting
Thursday, 16th November 2006 at 9.30 a.m.
(Pre-Meeting scheduled for 9.00 a.m.)

(Meeting concluded at 12.40 p.m.)