

SCRUTINY BOARD (CHILDREN'S SERVICES)

FRIDAY, 16TH JULY, 2010

PRESENT: Councillor J Chapman in the Chair

Councillors G Driver, B Gettings, J Hardy, W Hyde,
A Lamb, B Lancaster, P Latty, K Maqsood and B Selby

CO-OPTED MEMBERS (VOTING):

Mr E A Britten	- Church Representative (Catholic)
Ms N Cox	- Parent Governor Representative (Special)

CO-OPTED MEMBERS (NON-VOTING):

Ms C Foote	- Teacher Representative
Mrs S Hutchinson	- Early Years Development & Childcare Partnership Representative
Ms C Johnson	- Teacher Representative
Ms J Morris-Boam	- Leeds Voice Children and Young People Services Forum Representative

12 Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed all in attendance to the July meeting of the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services).

It was reported that Sue Knights (former Parent Governor Representative) had recently suffered a minor stroke. Members passed on their best wishes for a speedy recovery.

13 Late Items

The Chair admitted to the agenda as supplementary information, the draft terms of reference for the Board's inquiry into service redesign – services for children with disabilities, special educational needs and additional health needs, to be considered under agenda item 12. (Minute No. 18 refers)

14 Declaration of Interests

Councillor Chapman declared a personal interest in agenda item 7, Performance Report Year End 2009/10, and agenda item 8, Children's Services Improvement Plan – Monitoring Report, in her capacity as LEA Governor at Weetwood Primary School. (Minute No. 17 refers)

Councillor Lancaster declared a personal interest in agenda item 7, Performance Report Year End 2009/10, agenda item 8, Children's Services Improvement Plan – Monitoring Report, agenda item 9, Formal Response to Scrutiny Recommendations – Attendance, and agenda item 11, Formal Response to Scrutiny Recommendations – Youth Service Surveys, in her capacity as LEA Governor at Carr Manor High School. (Minute Nos. 17, 19 and 21 refer)

A further declaration of interest was made at a later point in the meeting. (Minute No. 17 refers)

15 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted by Councillors Coulson and Co-opted Members; Professor Gosden and Ms Kayani. Notification had been received that Councillor Hardy was substituting for Councillor Coulson.

16 Minutes - 10th June 2010

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 10th June 2010 be confirmed as a correct record.

17 Performance Report Year End 2009/10 and Children's Services Improvement Plan - Monitoring Report

At the request of the Chair, the Scrutiny Board agreed to jointly consider agenda item 7, Performance Report Year End 2009/10, and agenda item 8, Children's Services Improvement Plan – Monitoring Report.

The Chair welcomed to the meeting, Councillor Blake, Executive Member (Children's Services) and the following officers:

- Eleanor Brazil, Interim Director of Children's Services
- Chris Edwards, Chief Executive of Education Leeds
- Nicola Engel, Head of Policy and Performance, Children's Services
- Paul Bollom, Priority Outcome Commissioner, Children's Services.

It was reported that Bill McCarthy, Independent Chair of the Improvement Board, had submitted his apologies for absence to the meeting.

A brief update on the Improvement Plan and other key areas was provided as follows:

Eleanor Brazil, Interim Director of Children's Services

- Progress against Improvement Plan targets, particularly in relation to safeguarding indicators and support for frontline social workers and good progress meeting with DfE officials.
- Development of transformation programme as part of integrated children's services.

- Newly appointed Director of Children’s Services, Nigel Richardson, starting in September 2010.
- New Chair of Local Safeguarding Children Board, Jane Held, appointed.

Councillor Blake, Executive Member (Children’s Services)

- Challenges around increases in teenage pregnancy and childhood obesity.
- Concern about future statutory status of Children’s Trust Board – ongoing debate at Parliament. Important that appropriate accountability arrangements remained in place.

The Chair then invited questions and comments from the Board and the key areas of discussion were:

- The impact of free swimming for under 16s on obesity.
- Actions in place to address childhood obesity, e.g. Health, Exercise, and Nutrition for the Really Young (HENRY) programme.
- Scope to work more creatively with schools to improve uptake of free school meals - acknowledgement of positive work undertaken by Education Leeds as part of piloting training programme for extended services as champions for free school meals.
- Making best use of available resources, development of breeze card and links with schools.
- Concern about the assessment of childhood obesity.
- Further work needed on exploring the root causes of childhood obesity and focussing on young people’s aspirations.
- Healthy eating on a budget – Sustainability and Green Day taking place aimed at encouraging young people, parents, etc, to grow their own.
- Development of safeguarding arrangements as follows:
 - Improvements to social work practices and involvement of key agencies
 - Mock inspection undertaken highlighting some inconsistencies across the city
 - Plans to re-align how social workers were organised.
- Child poverty work programme – Interim Director of Children’s Services to provide further information.
- Concern about support arrangements for young mothers.

RESOLVED – That subject to the above comments, the performance management report and the Improvement Plan monitoring report be received and noted.

(Councillor Selby joined the meeting at 9.55 am during the consideration of this item.)

(Councillor Lamb declared a personal interest in this item in his capacity as a Member of the Children's Trust Board.)

18 Draft Terms of Reference

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which invited the Board to agree terms of reference for the Board's inquiry into service redesign – services for children with disabilities, special educational needs and additional health needs.

It was agreed that the terms of reference included appropriate focus on the transition from primary to secondary school. In addition, that Leisure Services be included as one of the key witnesses to the inquiry.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the report and information appended to the report be noted; and
- (b) That subject to the above comments, the terms of reference for the inquiry be approved.

19 Formal Response to Scrutiny Recommendations - Attendance

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which presented the formal response to the Scrutiny Board's recommendations arising from its inquiry on Attendance.

The status of recommendations were agreed as follows:

Recommendation 1 – continue to monitor until targets set

Recommendation 2 – continue to monitor pending completion of updated extended leave policy

Recommendation 3 – sign off

Recommendation 4 – continue to monitor pending confirmation that all schools have a named governor for attendance

Recommendation 5 – report circulated in April 2010 – sign off

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the report and information appended to the report be noted; and
- (b) That the Scrutiny Board approves the status of recommendations as set out above.

20 Formal Response to Scrutiny Recommendations - School Organisation Consultations

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which presented the formal response to the Scrutiny Board's recommendations arising from its inquiry on School Organisation Consultations.

The Chair welcomed to the meeting, Dee Reid, Head of Communications, Education Leeds.

The status of recommendations were agreed as follows:

Recommendation 1 – sign off

Recommendation 2 – sign off

Recommendation 3 – sign off

Recommendation 4 – sign off, subject to the Scrutiny Board receiving an update in 6 months on how Education Leeds could play a role in ensuring stakeholders were consulted under any new arrangements.)

Two amendments to the proposed strategy for communicating with a wider stakeholder group were agreed as follows:

- Include reference to information in community languages in the section on communication with parents
- 'Education Leeds will inform school-based staff that trade union representation will be invited to briefings.'

RESOLVED –

(a) That, subject to the above amendments, the report and information appended to the report be noted; and

(b) That the Scrutiny Board approves the status of recommendations as set out above.

21 Formal Response to Scrutiny Recommendations - Youth Service Surveys

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which presented the formal response to the Scrutiny Board's recommendations arising from its inquiry on youth service surveys.

The status of recommendations were agreed as follows:

Recommendation 1 – sign off

Recommendation 2 – continue monitoring – review in 6 months

Recommendation 3 – continue monitoring – review in 6 months.

RESOLVED –

(a) That the report and information appended to the report be noted; and

(b) That the Scrutiny Board approves the status of recommendations as set out above.

22 Work Programme

A report was submitted by the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development which detailed the Scrutiny Board's work programme for the remainder of the current municipal year.

Appended to the report for Members' information was the current version of the Board's work programme, an extract from the Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 1st July 2010 to 31st October 2010, which related to the Board's remit, together with the minutes from the Executive Board meeting held on 22nd June 2010.

In brief summary, the main highlighted points were:

- The work of young carers to be added as an unscheduled item on the work programme.
- Councillor Bob Gettings added to membership of the Children's Outdoor Activity Centres working group.
- The Principal Scrutiny Adviser agreed to circulate the full inquiry reports from last year on Attendance, Youth Service Surveys and School Organisation Consultations, for the benefit of all Board Members to see the detailed work undertaken last year on these topics.

RESOLVED – That subject to the above comments, the work programme be approved.

23 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Monday 20th September 2010 at 9.45 am with a pre-meeting for Board Members at 9.15 am.

(The meeting concluded at 11.52 am.)