

Appendix B

Background

1. The Scrutiny Board Procedure Rules state that all Scrutiny Boards will act as a “critical friend” to the relevant Strategic Partnership Board and consider and report on the following areas:
 - What contribution the Partnership Board is making to tackle poverty and inequality, and the progress being made against this
 - How successfully the Board’s partnership arrangements are working
 - To what extent are significant benefits being seen from partnership working? How has partnership working ensured increased pace of change to address the issue in hand?
2. A common approach was adopted by Scrutiny Boards in exercising their “critical friend” role, in order that outcomes could be compared and contrasted between Partnership Boards. However, it was also acknowledged that each Strategic Partnership Board is at a different stage in its development and maturity.
3. During March and April 2013, Scrutiny Boards received reports from the relevant Strategic Partnership Board and had the opportunity to question the chair and members of the Partnership Board and support officers.
4. It was agreed that, following the scrutiny sessions, each Scrutiny Board would produce a summary report of its findings. The Scrutiny Support Unit would then prepare a cover report drawing out any common threads and best practice emerging from the individual inquiry sessions. The full report will be presented to Council, as the commissioning body for this piece of scrutiny inquiry work. Each Strategic Partnership Board will also receive their respective individual report, and will be requested to respond to any scrutiny recommendations in the normal manner.
5. The Scrutiny Board received a report on the history and development of the Children’s Trust Board (CTB) and the subsidiary groups, committees, partnerships, boards and forums which support the CTB. Members were also presented with information to assist them in assessing strengths and areas for development for the CTB in respect of the three key questions set out above.
6. The following representatives attended the Scrutiny Board’s meeting on 14th March 2013:
 - Councillor Blake, Chair of the Children’s Trust Board
 - Nigel Richardson, Director of Children’s Services
 - Sue Rumbold, Chief Officer (Partnership Development and Business Support)
 - Jane Mischenko, NHS Airedale, Bradford and Leeds
 - Dr Sharon Yelin, NHS Airedale, Bradford and Leeds
 - Keith Gilert, Superintendent, West Yorkshire Police.

The Scrutiny Board's observations and recommendations

Partnerships, Structure and Governance

7. Of the Partnership Boards the CTB is one of the most mature. Established in April 2010, the Children's Trust Board was a statutory requirement at that time. This is no longer the case, however the CTB was recognised locally as an effective strategic body and therefore it remains operational. The Board was advised that the remit of the CTB is as follows:
 - Improving outcomes for children and young people
 - Bringing together statutory partners to strengthen co-operation arrangements
 - Having a local vision for children, young people and families.
 - Overseeing the development and implementation of a Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) as the single, shared citywide strategy for improving outcomes
8. Through the CYPP the CTB is maintaining a focus on the three core obsessions:
 - Helping children to live in safe and supportive families thereby reducing the number of looked after children
 - Improving school attendance and both primary and secondary level
 - Increasing the number of young people in education, employment and training.
9. The Scrutiny Board were advised of the examples of improvement in service which collectively help to 'Turn the Curve' on the obsessions and priorities in the CYPP. A new and clear report to aid the communication and tracking performance was also presented. The Board acknowledged the considerable progress made since 2010 and welcomed the assurances of the CTB to strive for continued improvement despite challenging financial circumstances.
10. A core part of the CYPP is developing the voice and influence of Children and Young People. The Scrutiny Board welcomed the valuable contribution of the Youth Council and Youth Parliament in reviewing the effectiveness of the CTB. The Scrutiny Board re-affirmed the importance of the CTB having strong communication networks with the children and young people in the city that also facilitates their contribution to inform the work of the CTB.
11. Partner representatives from West Yorkshire Police and NHS Airedale, Bradford and Leeds advised the Scrutiny Board of the key role the CTB has in providing an overview around ambitions and key processes. This provides clear strategic aims which all organisations can work towards collectively across the city. The Scrutiny Board was advised that the city wide strategy for Children and Young People is clearly articulated and is meaningful for partners. Plans and policies can be closely aligned and training of staff can be organised to provide focus. Partner representatives stated their appreciation of the networks and linkages to key people in Children's Services which have evolved into strong working relationships.
12. With regard to membership of the CTB the Scrutiny Board were reassured to note that it has already been recognised that there needs to be a business

partner representative on the CTB. This representation should be effective from May 2013.

13. The Scrutiny Board expressed concern about the absence of Adult Social Services representation on the CTB and the limited representation from non council Early Years Services. The Scrutiny Board was advised that representation on the CTB is currently under review.

Recommendation 1 – That the CTB further extends membership of the board to incorporate representation from Adult Social Services and private/voluntary sector Early Years Services.

14. The Scrutiny Board was presented with a structure diagram which specified the additional citywide and local groups and sub – boards that report to the CTB. These manage shared priorities are all multi-agency, bringing together partners from across all aspects of children’s services within the city. In addition to these citywide groups there are joint working arrangements with 25 ‘Clusters’ of schools and services that are accountable to the CTB.
15. The Scrutiny Board expressed concern about the complexity around the CTB with no fewer than 30 boards and sub groups engaging. Advised that this represents a smaller structure to that previously in place, the Scrutiny Board requested clarity about how effectively the resulting complex structure is functioning and recommended the need for continual review and challenge of the effectiveness and purpose of the sub-boards. Further, the CTB needs to ensure that the mechanisms for communication, operational processes and terms of reference of the sub-groups are not repetitive, cumbersome and counter productive to the implementation of effective change.

Recommendation 2 – That the CTB undertake to regularly review the effectiveness and purpose of its sub-groups, boards, partnerships and forums to ensure that they are operationally effective, fit for purpose and contribute to producing significant benefits and outcomes for the children and young people of Leeds.

16. The Scrutiny Board recognises the importance of Cluster working in order to strengthen targeted and universal support on a local level whilst providing a strong connection to the community, and is wholly supportive of this methodology. The Scrutiny Board perceives that there are inconsistencies in the operational effectiveness of Clusters across the city, with some working more progressively than others. The Scrutiny Board also feels it is essential to identify if Cluster working is delivering the best possible outcomes and providing value for money.
17. A significant amount of funding has been invested to support Cluster working including £5.2 million of funding from Schools Forum. The Scrutiny Board consider that to ensure the best outcomes for children and young people across the city work needs to be undertaken to:
 - Ensure robust governance arrangements are in place with good representation and participation from partner organisations at a local level.
 - improve the performance of those Clusters who are not currently working effectively,

- ensure full accountability via the production of coherent performance and financial data which is reported to those bodies who have invested resources to support Clusters.
- Monitor outcomes for Children and Young People as a result of Cluster working to ensure that this investment is making a difference.

Recommendation 3 – That the CTB undertake to improve Cluster performance, accountability and governance arrangements across the city in order to provide the best possible support for children and young people in the city.

Recommendation 4 – That the CTB ensure value for money by monitoring the performance of clusters in order to identify if the investment in this methodology is making a difference and effectively meeting the needs of children and young people in the City.

18. The Scrutiny Board have stated the intention to consider the performance of Clusters during 2013/14 and review recommendations 3 and 4 above to ensure that significant progress is made.

Poverty and Inequality

19. Information presented to the Scrutiny Board advised that the CTB has set up a subgroup, the Child Poverty Outcomes Group which regularly reports progress against the Leeds Child Poverty Strategy. The Scrutiny Board commended the key successes achieved so far and recognised the major challenge that lies ahead as welfare reform impacts on families.
20. The Scrutiny Board emphasized that the work done in Clusters to support families, although valuable, will impact on a fraction of the 40,000 children in Leeds that are living in poverty. The Scrutiny Board sought clarification about the monitoring of effort and the impact this has on reducing the number of children living in poverty. Overall are we making a difference?
21. At the February and April 2013 meetings the Scrutiny Board considered Child Poverty and Welfare Reform. This will continue to remain on the Scrutiny Boards work programme throughout 2013/14.

Recommendation 5 – That the CTB reports back to the Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) in 2013/14 on the mechanisms for monitoring and reporting child poverty in the city. This report should also identify how the impact of initiatives put into place to reduce child poverty is measured.

Conclusion

22. The Scrutiny Board recognises the considerable amount of effort undertaken by Council Employees, Partners and Young People in the preparation and presentation of information and would like to thank those who have participated in this inquiry.
23. The Scrutiny Board has made a number of recommendations which seek to aid the aims and vision of the CTB. The Scrutiny Board fully supports the priorities of the CTB based on the CYPP, the 'Three Obsessions' and 'Child Friendly Leeds' and recognises that robust partnership arrangements are essential to the delivery of successful outcomes. The Scrutiny Board was reassured that the CTB have identified significant areas that require development and have communicated their commitment to drive forward change and improvement.
24. We will continue to support the CTB by acting as a critical friend to assist in our common objective to improve the lives of Children and Young People.