

SCRUTINY BOARD (CHILDREN AND FAMILIES)

WEDNESDAY, 8TH JUNE, 2022

PRESENT: Councillor A Lamb in the Chair

Councillors H Bithell, J Bowden, E Bromley,
A Forsaith, J Heselwood, Z Hussain, S Lay,
D Ragan, K Renshaw, L Richards,
R. Stephenson and J Tudor

CO-OPTED MEMBER (VOTING)

Mr E A Britten - Church Representative (Catholic)

CO-OPTED MEMBERS (NON-VOTING)

Ms C Foote – School Staff Representative
Ms H Bellamy – School Staff Representative
Ms L Whitaker - Young Lives Leeds

1 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

There were no appeals against the refusal of inspection of documents.

2 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There were no exempt items.

3 Late Items

There were no late items.

4 Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

5 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Howley, Councillor Martin, Councillor Senior and Co-opted Members Kate Blacker, Jackie Ward and Andrew Graham.

Councillor Lay attended as substitute for Councillor Howley and Councillor Tudor attended as substitute for Councillor Martin.

6 Minutes - 11th May 2022

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 11th May 2022 be approved as an accurate record.

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting
to be held on Wednesday, 6th July, 2022

7 Co-opted Members

The Head of Democratic Services submitted a report which sought the Board's consideration for the appointment of co-opted members.

The Board noted that the following nominations for statutory voting co-opted members had been received:

One Church of England diocese representative – Mr A Graham
One Roman Catholic diocese representative – Mr E A Britten

Parent governor representatives were noted as follows:

Parent Governor (Primary) representative – Kate Blacker
Parent Governor (Secondary) representative – Jacqueline Ward

In addition to the statutory voting co-opted members, the Board also acknowledged the nominations for non-voting co-opted members.

RESOLVED – That in addition to the above statutory voting co-opted members, the following be appointed as non-voting co-opted members to the Scrutiny Board for 2022/23:

- School Staff Representative – Helen Bellamy
- School Staff Representative – Celia Foote
- Young Lives Leeds – Laura Whitaker

8 Scrutiny Board Terms of Reference

The Head of Democratic Services submitted a report that presented the Board's terms of reference for information.

RESOLVED – That the Board's terms of reference be noted.

9 Sources of work for the Scrutiny Board

The Head of Democratic Services submitted a report on potential sources of work and areas of priority within the Board's terms of reference.

The following information was appended to the report:

- The Best City Ambition
- Leeds Children and Young People's Plan 2018-2023
- A summary of the Council's 2022/23 budget proposals relevant to the remit of the Children and Families Scrutiny Board.

The following were in attendance:

- Councillor David Jenkins, Deputy Executive Member

- Councillor Jane Dowson, Deputy Executive Member
- Sal Tariq, Director of Children and Families
- Shaheen Myers, Deputy Director of Learning
- Tim Pouncey, Chief Officer Resources and Strategy
- Ruth Terry, Chief Officer for Social Work
- Val Waite, Head of Service Learning Inclusion
- Dave Clark, Head of Service Learning Improvement

The Chair invited views from Officers, Executive Members and Board Members around potential areas of work for the Scrutiny Board to undertake this year. In summary, the following key areas were highlighted:

- Early scrutiny engagement surrounding the refresh of the Children and Young People's Plan;
- The implications of recommendations arising from the recently published national independent review of Children's Social Care by Josh MacAlister;
- Recruitment and Retention of Teachers and Social Work Staff;
- The Schools Bill 2022-23 and the impact on Leeds;
- Review of Ofsted ratings of schools in the city;
- The implications of proposals set out within the green paper on the future of the SEND and alternative provision system in England.
- Exam results within the context of Covid impact and fairness;
- A continued focus around Elective Home Education;
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs of young people, with links to the My Health, My School survey and the Future In Mind Strategy;
- Support provided to Ukrainian and Afghan refugee children and their families.
- Young offenders and the support provided in tackling youth re-offending;
- Review of extracurricular activities available outside of school;
- The impacts of poverty on children and their families;
- The provision and quality of Education, Health and Care Plans.

RESOLVED – That the contents of the report and the suggested areas of work, as set out above, be noted.

10 Performance Update

The Director of Children and Families submitted a report which provided a summary of performance information relating to outcomes for Leeds children and young people.

The following were in attendance:

- Councillor David Jenkins, Deputy Executive Member
- Councillor Jane Dowson, Deputy Executive Member
- Sal Tariq, Director of Children and Families
- Shaheen Myers, Deputy Director of Learning
- Tim Pouncey, Chief Officer Resources and Strategy
- Ruth Terry, Chief Officer for Social Work
- Val Waite, Head of Service Learning Inclusion

- Dave Clark, Head of Service Learning Improvement
- Chris Hudson, Policy, Planning and Procedures Leader

The Policy, Planning and Procedures Leader introduced the report and gave a brief update surrounding the three obsessions set out in the Children and Young People's Plan.

In consideration of the report, the Board discussed the following issues:

- *School attendance rates* – the Board sought clarity in terms of differences in attendance rates between the lowest and highest ranked local authorities.
- *Young Offenders* – particular focus was given to the proportion of young offenders who re-offend.
- *Initial child protection conferences (ICPCs)* – the Board discussed ICPC timelines and acknowledged the work undertaken to build the capacity of the Child Protection Team back to required levels, particularly to help address increasing demands across the safeguarding system.
- *NEET and Not Known* – while acknowledging that the Not Known figure had marginally improved from last year, the Board acknowledged the commitment to increase workforce capacity and to continue to work closely with the Youth Service to achieve further improvement.
- *Education, Health and Care Plans* – the Board acknowledged the workload demands placed upon existing staff and welcomed plans to increase workforce capacity and other efficiency measures to also help improve communications with families.
- *Providing support to families living outside of a cluster area* – the Board discussed the importance of all families, including those living outside of identified cluster areas, being given opportunity to access support services and how this will link to the work being undertaken around becoming a Marmot City.

RESOLVED – That the contents of the report be noted.

11 Inquiry into Exclusions, Elective Home Education and Off-rolling - Statement of Progress

The Head of Democratic Services submitted a report relating to the scrutiny Inquiry into Exclusions, Elective Home Education (EHE) and Off-rolling. Appended to this report was a Statement of Progress document which summarised the progress made in relation to the Board's Inquiry work, including a brief overview of the preliminary findings stemming from the evidence to-date and highlighting key considerations to help inform the next steps of the Scrutiny Board's work.

The following were in attendance:

- Sal Tariq, Director of Children and Families
- Shaheen Myers, Deputy Director of Learning

- Val Waite, Head of Service Learning Inclusion

In consideration of the Statement, the following issues were raised:

- *Other independent review work around EHE* - the Board acknowledged that other independent review work featuring Elective Home Education had also been undertaken by the Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership and through the recent Ofsted inspection of children's services in Leeds, both of which had complemented the inquiry work already undertaken by Scrutiny.
- *Consideration of forthcoming legislative changes* – it was noted that forthcoming legislative changes, particularly in relation to the Schools Bill, the Children Not In School government response and SEND green paper proposals, would have significant implications that would warrant more detailed and timely consideration by the Scrutiny Board.
- *Work with Leeds Trinity University* – the Board was informed of a piece of national research involving work being undertaken with Leeds Trinity University around learners that may be in a vulnerable context and looking at the level of provision available in ensuring they are not missing out from an appropriate education offer. Such work will involve looking at particular cohorts and also profiling data across schools which will involve looking at EHE rates, the number of permanent and fixed term exclusions, and EHCP figures that would help to prompt any further investigatory work with those schools and to offer any support.
- *Tackling off-rolling* – the Board discussed existing mechanisms in place that aim to potentially identify and tackle the practice of off-rolling, including a more rigorous approach adopted as part of the Ofsted inspection framework, the role of Governors in monitoring their own school exclusion patterns; opportunities to raise issues as part of regular monthly meetings held between the Council and Ofsted; as well as the opportunity to explore potential indicators as part of the research work being undertaken with Leeds Trinity University.
- *Behavioural policies* – in terms of issues already reflected within the Statement document around behavioural policies, it was noted that a revised Behaviour in Schools Guidance and Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Guidance was expected to be published shortly and put in place for the school year 2022/23.

In conclusion, the Chair acknowledged that further work was still warranted by the Scrutiny Board, particularly in terms of understanding the implications of relevant forthcoming legislative changes, and that the timeliness of undertaking such further work be considered as the Board develops its future work schedule.

RESOLVED – That the report and Statement of Progress document be noted and that consideration be given to the timeliness of further work being undertaken by the Board as it develops its future work schedule.

12 Work Schedule

The Head of Democratic Services submitted a report that presented the draft work schedule for the forthcoming municipal year. Reflected in the work schedule were known items of scrutiny activity, such as performance and budget monitoring, as well as other areas of work recommended by the former Scrutiny Board to be pursued in the 2022/23 municipal year.

The Chair reminded the Board of the commitment made by the Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership Executive last month in terms of coming back to a future meeting to share the report on the outcome of their notifications review. It was therefore noted that this is to be incorporated into the work schedule once the review work has concluded.

Linked to the Board's earlier discussion, it was highlighted that an item on the refresh of the Children and Young People's Plan would be scheduled for the Board's July meeting.

With regard to the other potential areas of work identified during the Board's discussions, the Chair explained that he would liaise with the Principal Scrutiny Adviser and the Director of Children and Families to consider how best to prioritise and incorporate these into the work schedule with a view to bringing an updated version to the Board's next meeting for consideration and approval.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That an item on the refresh of the Children and Young People's Plan is scheduled for the Board's July meeting.
- (b) That the Chair liaises with the Principal Scrutiny Adviser and the Director of Children and Families to consider how best to prioritise and incorporate the other identified areas of work into the work schedule with a view to bringing an updated version to the Board's next meeting for consideration and approval.

13 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Wednesday, 6th July at 10.00 am (pre-meeting for Board Members at 9.45 am)