

SCRUTINY BOARD (CHILDREN'S SERVICES)

THURSDAY, 16TH OCTOBER, 2008

PRESENT: Councillor W Hyde in the Chair

Councillors B Cleasby, G Driver, J Elliott, R D Feldman,
J McKenna, V Morgan, K Renshaw and E Taylor

CO-OPTED MEMBERS (VOTING):

Mr E A Britten	- Church Representative (Catholic)
Mr I Falkingham	- Parent Governor Representative (Special)
Prof P H J H Gosden	- Church Representative (Church of England)

CO-OPTED MEMBERS (NON-VOTING):

Mrs S Hutchinson	- Early Years Development & Childcare Partnership Representative
Ms T Kayani	- Leeds Youth Work Partnership

32 Chair's Opening Remarks

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

33 Late Items

In accordance with his powers under Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chair admitted to the agenda additional information which updated the Board on progress to date regarding the **Leeds Inclusive Learning Strategy**. The information was unavailable at the time of agenda despatch and needed to be considered as part of agenda item 10 (Minute No. 40 refers).

34 Declaration of Interests

Councillors Driver and Renshaw declared a personal interest in relation to agenda item 9, The Leadership Challenge, due to their attendance at various extended services cluster meetings (Minute No. 39 refers).

Councillor Cleasby declared a personal interest in relation to agenda item 10, recommendation tracking, due to being a Member of South Leeds Fostering Board (Minute No. 40 refers).

Further declarations of interest were made at later points in the meeting (Minute Nos. 37 and 40 refer).

35 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted by Councillors B Lancaster and C Townsley and by Ms C Foote, Mrs S Knights and Ms J Morris-Boam.

36 **Minutes - 18th September 2008 and Matters Arising**

The Chair reported that in relation to Minute No. 31, Claire Johnson had been appointed by the **Joint Consultative Committee (JCC)** to replace Tim Hales as teacher representative on the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services).

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 18th September, 2008 be confirmed as a correct record.

37 **Children's Services and the Children and Young People's Plan**

Further to Minute No. 97 of the meeting held on 14th February, 2008, the Board received an update report on Children's Services and the Children and Young People's Plan.

The following officers attended the meeting and responded to Members' queries and comments:-

- Rosemary Archer, Director of Children's Services;
- Jim Hopkinson, Head of Service (Youth Offending);
- John Freeman, Education Leeds, School Improvement Adviser; and
- Janice Burberry, Leeds PCT.

The Board was provided with an overview of key developments across Children's Services, together with details of progress against specific priorities contained within the **Children and Young People's Plan (CYP Plan)**: reducing anti-social behaviour and offending; and reducing obesity and improving activity.

In brief summary, the main areas of discussion were:-

Reducing anti-social behaviour and offending

- It was reported that Leeds had recorded a reduction in first time offences for the last 3 years. There had also been a reduction in the number of **Anti-Social Behaviour Orders** issued.
- Success with early intervention work, particularly **acceptable behaviour contracts**.
- Work undertaken by the **Safer School Partnerships**. It was reported that the police had delivered sessions on knife crime to various schools.
- Ongoing challenges to reduce the number of **looked after children**, who were over-represented in the youth justice system.

Reducing obesity and raising activity

- The Board was advised that treatment was provided on a self-referral basis. Programmes were designed to work with parents and children.
- Reference was made to different types of support programmes, particularly, **HENRY (Health Exercise Nutrition for the Really Young)** and the **Change for Life Campaign**, commissioned by **Department of Health** to encourage healthy living.

The Board also made the following points:-

- Some Members made the link between **attainment**, which was one of the three priorities outstanding from the 2007 CYP Plan, and issues such as offending and health. The Chair commented that attainment would also be considered as part of the Board's forthcoming inquiry into **education standards**.
- It was suggested that future overview reports include a particular focus on services for looked after children in relation to the featured priorities, in line with members' role as corporate parents.
- Members of the Board emphasised the importance of receiving specific information as figures rather than percentages.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

(Councillor Cleasby declared a personal interest in this item, due to visiting schools to give healthy heart talks on behalf of Heart Research UK).

(Councillor Elliott arrived at 9.45 am and Councillor E. Taylor at 10.01 am, during the consideration of this item).

(Councillor Driver left the meeting at 10.36 am, during the consideration of this item).

38 Accountability Arrangements for 2008/09 and Quarter 1 Performance Report

The Assistant Chief Executive (Planning Policy and Improvement), submitted a report which outlined the new approach to performance reporting and accountability. The Board was also provided with the quarter one performance results for Children's Services in this new format.

The following information was appended to the report:-

- Appendix 1 – List of indicators to be reported to the Board in 2008-09; and
- Appendix 2 – Children and Young People Performance Report, Quarter 1 - 2008-09, and Corporate Balanced Scorecard 2008/09.

The Chair welcomed to the meeting, Steve Clough, Head of Policy, Performance and Improvement.

The Head of Policy, Performance and Improvement referred to key performance issues and areas of concern.

The main highlighted points were:

- Members expressed their concern that data on youth participation, which was due to be reported only from quarter 3, needed to be accurate by this point in time.
- There was another request that the information be provided as figures, not percentages. It was advised that where appropriate, in line with national statutory reporting requirements, figures could be provided.
- One Member expressed concern that the remarks in the data quality comments column were unclear. The Head of Performance, Policy and Improvement reported that the information would be addressed differently in the future, in order to avoid any unintended implication that there were no concerns about services that were not meeting targets.

RESOLVED – That the report and information appended to the report be noted.

39 The Leadership Challenge

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report which provided the Board with information on the Leadership Challenge, a collaborative action learning project between Leeds City Council, Children Leeds and the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA).

Shaid Mahmood, Locality Enabler, Children's Services, presented the report and responded to Members' queries and comments.

The main areas of discussion were:-

- The impact of the Leadership Challenge project, especially on **NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training)** figures locally. It was reported that despite a recent city-wide reduction in NEET figures, locally agreed targets and solutions were also needed to ensure a further reduction in the figures.
- The need for greater publicity to raise awareness of the project. One Member suggested **Area Committees** could play an important role.
- Improvements to joined up thinking and links with local agenda actions, and particularly the voluntary, community and faith sector organisations.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the report be noted; and
- (2) That a further report be provided to the Board on the work to develop elected member roles around children's services aspects, the work to develop local children's trust arrangements and associated commissioning

developments, and the products developed from the leadership challenge and their dissemination.

(Councillor Driver re-joined the meeting at 11.21 am, during the consideration of this item).

40 Recommendation Tracking

Further to Minute No. 14 of the meeting held on 17th July, 2008, the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report, which requested Members to confirm the status of scrutiny recommendations (Children's Services).

Appended to the report was the recommendation tracking flowchart and draft status of recommendations. Also appended to the report as additional information was a report that updated the Board on progress to date regarding the **Leeds Inclusive Learning Strategy**.

The following officers were in attendance:-

- Rosemary Archer, Director of Children's Services;
- Rodger Walker, Resources Team Manager (Children);
- Carol Jordan, Education Leeds, Strategy Manager, Integrated Children's Services;
- Gary Nixon, Education Leeds, Head of Service - Special Educational Needs, Statutory Assessment and Provision; and
- John Fryett, Education Leeds, Project Director, North West Area Management Board
- Michael Purches, Principal, North West SILC.

The Board considered the draft status of recommendations and the main highlighted points were:-

- The Resources Team Manager (Children), reported that Leeds had invested in 2.5 additional **adoption officers**.
- Members discussed development of the **Breeze Youth Promise**. It was reported that the young people were planning a launch event and Board Members would be invited to attend. The Board agreed to receive a further update once the Breeze Youth Promise had been finalised.
- In relation to Catching the Bus, it was suggested that the '**get around for a pound**' promotion could be made available throughout the year and not just during the summer months. It was reported that work with the transport providers and **Metro** was still ongoing.
- In relation to inclusion and the establishment of **academies**, (recommendation 5), the Board was advised that there had been a commitment nationally to ensure that for future academies, funding would follow an excluded pupil.

The Chair thanked the officers for their attendance.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the report and information appended to the report be noted; and
- (2) That the Board agrees the status of recommendations, subject to recommendation 3 on adoption and recommendation 7 on youth services continuing to be monitored, and recommendations 2 and 4 on inclusion being referred back to the Board to determine appropriate action and continue monitoring as progress was judged not to be acceptable.

(Mr I Falkingham declared a personal interest in this item, as Parent Governor at North West SILC).

(Councillor J McKenna declared a personal interest in this item, due to his daughter being Chair and Secretary of Leeds Youth Council. He also declared a personal interest as LEA Governor at West Leeds SILC).

(Councillor R D Feldman left the meeting at 11.50 am, Councillor Renshaw at 11.58 am, Councillor Elliott at 12.02 pm and Ms T Kayani at 12.15 pm, during the consideration of this item).

41 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, and an extract from the Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 1st October, 2008 to 31st January, 2009, which related to the Board's remit.

It was pointed out that there was no reference in the work programme to agreeing the final report arising from the Board's inquiries into 14-19 education, and education standards. It was agreed that reference to agreeing the final reports would be added to the work programme.

The Principal Scrutiny Adviser reported that she had received a good response from Members to serve on the working group on involving young people in scrutiny. It was also reported that the **Youth Council** had recently established a **scrutiny sub-group**, which would be the appropriate group to meet with the working group.

It was noted that Mr E Britten, Mr I Falkingham and Prof. P Gosden would be willing to serve on the working group on **attendance**. It was agreed that the Principal Scrutiny Adviser would e-mail the Board to establish if there was any further interest from Members wishing to serve on the group.

42 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Thursday 13th November, 2008 at 9.45 am, with a pre-meeting for Board Members at 9.15 am.

(The meeting concluded at 12.25 pm).