

SCRUTINY BOARD (CHILDREN'S SERVICES)

THURSDAY, 7TH MAY, 2009

PRESENT: Councillor W Hyde in the Chair

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

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)
Mr B Wanyonyi	- Parent Governor Representative (Secondary)

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
Ms T Kayani	- Leeds Youth Work Partnership

118 Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed all in attendance to the final Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) meeting of the municipal year (2008/2009). He also thanked Members and officers for their contribution to the Board's work over the last year.

119 Late Items

The Chair admitted to the agenda the notes of the working group visits on attendance and 14-19 education, which were to be considered under agenda items 10 and 11, as supplementary information. The working group visits had only recently been completed and the notes were not available at the time of agenda despatch (Minute Nos. 126 and 127 refer).

120 Declaration of Interests

Councillor W Hyde declared a personal interest in relation to agenda item 7, Formal Response to Scrutiny Recommendations – Multi-Agency Support

Team (MAST), due to one of his relatives being a Governor at a school in East Leeds (Minute No. 123 refers).

Councillor Morgan declared a personal interest in relation to agenda item 7, Formal Response to Scrutiny Recommendations – Multi-Agency Support Team (MAST), in her capacity as LEA Governor at Our Lady Of Good Counsel Primary School and Grange Farm Primary School. (Minute No. 123 refers).

Ms Foote declared a personal interest in relation to agenda item 7, Formal Response to Scrutiny Recommendations – Multi-Agency Support Team (MAST), due to her involvement with the MAST team as an officer of NASUWT. (Minute No. 123 refers).

A further declaration of interest was made at a later point in the meeting (Minute No. 124 refers).

121 Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Cleasby.

122 Minutes - 1st April 2009

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 1st April 2009 be confirmed as a correct record.

123 Formal Response to Scrutiny Recommendations - Multi-Agency Support Team (MAST)

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report, attaching the Board's final scrutiny report on action taken by children's services around the MAST (appendix 1 refers).

The following information was appended to the report:-

- Report of the Director of Children's Services on MAST – Response to the Recommendations and Position Update;
- MAST Scrutiny Inquiry Report;
- Summary table of activity relevant to each of the recommendations; and
- Key Features of the Re'new Project in East Leeds.

The Chair welcomed the following officers to the meeting to present the report and respond to Members' questions and comments:-

- Rosemary Archer, Director of Children's Services; and
- Ken Morton, Locality Enabler, Children's Services.

The Board was informed that all recommendations contained within the Scrutiny Inquiry Report had been accepted by the Board. An update on progress against the recommendations was provided.

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

- The need for Elected Members to be involved at all stages of the process.
- The need to ensure that HR processes were being dealt with.
- Clarification about funding arrangements. It was reported that an overall resource for East Leeds was now in place.
- The benefits of rolling out the MAST provision. It was advised that integrated services were being developed to support all individual needs.
- The need to develop the Leadership Challenge approach across Leeds.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the draft inquiry report and recommendations arising from this inquiry be approved; and
- (b) That progress continues to be monitored in the quarterly recommendation tracking report.

(Councillor J McKenna joined the meeting at 9.58 am, during the consideration of this item).

124 Building Brighter Futures: The Leeds Children and Young People's Plan 2009-14

Further to Minute No. 110 of the meeting held on 1st April 2009, the Director of Children's Services submitted a report which provided the Board with an opportunity to comment on the near final version of the CYPP prior to its submission to the Council's Executive Board and full Council in June 2009.

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

- Rosemary Archer, Director of Children's Services; and
- Barbara Newton, Strategic Leader – Partnership and Participation.

The key areas of discussion were:-

- Members welcomed the responses to their comments on the previous draft.
- The need to focus on 14-19 provision. Members referred to learning from the scrutiny working group's recent visit to Sheffield Council.
- Issues around narrowing the gap and the need for greater acknowledgement of the significance of the impact of child poverty.
- Concern about the changing financial environment testing the capacity to deliver targets.

- Concern that reducing exclusions was not a worthwhile target - it was felt that there was a greater need to focus on reducing the causes of exclusion.
- Maintaining an overview of key performance areas through the work of the Integrated Strategic Commissioning Board (ISCB).
- Developing young people's skills, particularly through mentoring programmes.
- Extending the use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF), and the role and responsibilities of the lead professional.
- Democratic involvement and the need for greater emphasis on Member involvement at an early stage, including policy development. It was advised that work was being undertaken at a local level through Area Committees and establishing Children's Champions.

RESOLVED – That subject to comments raised at the meeting, the CYPP 2009-14, be approved by the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) prior to its final submission to Executive Board and full Council.

(Councillor Lancaster declared a personal interest in this item, in her capacity as LEA Governor (Vice Chair) at Carr Manor High School).

(Ms C Johnson joined the meeting at 10.34 am, during the consideration of this item).

125 Youth Service user and non-user surveys 2009

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report which updated the Board on user consultation with young people.

The Chair welcomed to the meeting, John Paxton, Head of Integrated Youth Support Services to update the Board on consultation with users and non-users of youth service provision. It was reported that the national target for young people using the service for 2008/09 was 25%, which equated to 18,108 young people in Leeds. The actual figure achieved was 22,025, which the Board acknowledged was a positive achievement.

In response to Members' questions and comments, the main areas of discussion were:-

- Recruitment of Youth Workers - it was reported that all entry-level youth worker posts had been filled.
- Concern about the perceived lack of youth service provision in some areas. It was acknowledged that more needed to be done to publicise the work of the youth service to Elected Members.
- Concern that youth service volunteers had to fund the administrative fee for their own CRB checks. It was agreed to discuss the issue at the Leeds Youth Work Partnership.
- Concern about the number of young people not using the service. It was advised that the new performance management system recorded young people's involvement year on year.

RESOLVED – That the results of the two surveys be received at a future Board meeting.

126 Scrutiny Inquiry - Attendance

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which requested the Board to consider the working group's conclusions on school attendance.

The notes of the working group meeting held on 21st April 2009 were circulated at the meeting for the Board's consideration.

Kate Arscott, Principal Scrutiny Adviser, presented the report and responded to Members' questions and comments. It was agreed that confirmation of the figures contained within the working group notes would be forwarded to Scrutiny Board Members for their information.

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

- Concern about the percentage of pupils that had an absence rate of at least 20%.
- The raising of the school leaving age and the subsequent need to monitor the attendance of the post 16 age group.

RESOLVED – That the working groups' conclusions, be noted.

127 Scrutiny Inquiry - 14-19 Education Review

Further to Minute No. 49 of the meeting held on 13th November 2008, the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which requested the Board to consider the working group's conclusions to date on the 14-19 education review.

The notes of the working group meeting held on 21st April 2009 were circulated at the meeting for the Board's consideration.

Kate Arscott, Principal Scrutiny Adviser, presented the report and responded to Members' questions and comments. It was reported that a working group meeting with employers' representatives was being organised and the final session of the Inquiry would take place in the new municipal year.

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

- Members reported on the recent visit to Sheffield Council to find out about their approach to 14-19 provision. One Member commented that Sheffield had benefited from being able to develop a centralised approach.
- In relation to the working group meeting, one Member expressed concern about the different funding arrangements for schools and colleges.
- One Member highlighted the need to develop closer links with the city's universities in terms of predicting future employment and skills needs.

- Members reported on the need to develop young people's basic employability skills.
- Members discussed inviting a range of employers' representatives to the working group meeting.

RESOLVED – That the working groups' conclusions to date be noted.

(Councillor Elliott left the meeting at 12.02 pm, during the consideration of this item).

128 Annual Report 2008/2009

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report presenting the Board's contribution to the Annual Scrutiny Report 2008/09. Members were advised that subject to the draft early years report and recommendations together with some additional photos to be inserted, the Annual Scrutiny Report 2008/09 was complete.

RESOLVED – That the Board's contribution to the Annual Scrutiny Report 2008/09 be approved.

129 Work Programme

A report was submitted by the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development, attaching the Board's work programme for Members' consideration. The Principal Scrutiny Adviser reported that the work programme reflected work that it had not been possible to complete yet, some of which would roll forward into the new municipal year 2009/10.

Also appended to the report for Members' information was an extract from the Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 1st May to 31st August 2009, which related to the Board's remit, together with the minutes from the Executive Board meeting held on 1st April 2009.

RESOLVED – That the current position with regard to the work programme, which will be forwarded to the new Board for the 2009/10 municipal year, be noted.

130 Chair's Closing Remarks

The Chair thanked Members and officers for their attendance throughout the year and the meeting concluded at 12.15 pm.