

## **SCRUTINY BOARD (CHILDREN AND FAMILIES)**

**WEDNESDAY, 12TH JUNE, 2019**

**PRESENT:** Councillor A Lamb in the Chair

Councillors B Anderson, H Bithell, P Carlill,  
B Flynn, A Forsaith, M Harland, C Howley,  
A Hussain, J Illingworth, J Lennox,  
A Marshall-Katung and K Renshaw

### **CO-OPTED MEMBERS (VOTING)**

Mr E A Britten – Church Representative (Catholic)  
Mr A Graham – Church Representative (Church of England)  
Mrs K Blacker – Parent Governor Representative (Primary)  
Ms J Ward – Parent Governor Representative (Secondary)

### **CO-OPTED MEMBERS (NON-VOTING)**

Ms C Foote – Teacher Representative  
Mrs A Kearsley – Early Years Representative  
Ms H Bellamy – Teacher Representative  
Ms D Reilly – Looked After Children/Care Leavers Representative

#### **1 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents**

There were no appeals.

#### **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 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests.

#### **5 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes**

Apologies for absence were submitted by Councillors Drinkwater, C Gruen, Stephenson and Kidger. Councillors Harland, Carlill and B Anderson were in attendance as substitutes.

## 6 Minutes - 24th April 2019

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the Scrutiny Board (Children & Families) meeting held on 24 April 2019 be approved as a correct record, subject to the inclusion of the following (Minute 96):

‘There were a number of requests from young people for more low cost / no cost events across the City.’

## 7 Co-opted Members

The Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support submitted a report which sought the Board’s formal 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
- Parent Governor (Special Educational Needs) representative – Vacancy

Members were informed that there had not been a nomination for the SEN Parent Governor Representative to the Board. The Chair suggested that an exercise to promote the role be undertaken again.

In addition to the statutory voting co-opted members, the Board also acknowledged the nominations for non-voting co-opted members. Members were informed that a Young Lives Leeds Representative nomination was expected to be submitted before the next meeting of the Board.

**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 2019/20:

- Teacher Representative – Helen Bellamy
- Teacher Representative – Celia Foote
- Looked After Children and Care Leavers – Debbie Reilly
- Young Lives Leeds – Awaiting nomination
- Early Years Representative – Anne Kearsley

## 8 Scrutiny Board Terms of Reference

The Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support submitted a report which 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 Governance and Scrutiny Support 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:

- Vision for Scrutiny at Leeds
- Best Council Plan 2019-21
- Leeds Children and Young People's Plan Refresh 2018-23
- Leeds City Council 2019/20 Budget Report (Children & Families)

The following were in attendance:

- Councillor Fiona Venner, Executive Member for Children and Families
- Councillor Jonathan Pryor, Executive Member for Learning, Skills and Employment
- Phil Mellen, Deputy Director for Learning
- Sue Rumbold, Chief Officer for Partnerships and Health
- Tim Pouncey, Chief Officer for Resources and Strategy

Suggestions for future areas of work from Members included:

- *Social and Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) Provision.* Members were keen to understand the progress of the Wellspring Academy Trust, in order to establish best practice to be shared with non-specialist schools, and to explore the outcomes of pupils and the impact on the number of NEET young people with SEMH needs.
- *CAMHS provision.* Particular concerns were raised regarding the waiting times for CAMHS in Leeds.
- *Exclusions.* A key area of concern for Members was the prevalence of both internal and fixed term exclusions in secondary schools. The Executive Member welcomed the input of the Board in this area. Whilst it was acknowledged that the forthcoming 3 As Strategy would include data surrounding exclusion rates, the Chair made a separate request for the Board to be provided with a breakdown of fixed term exclusion figures across the city for individual schools, including the number of exclusions of children looked after and children with SEND and SEMH.
- *PFI Schools.* There was some discussion around the upcoming challenge around PFI funding and maintaining PFI schools.
- *Healthy Eating and the HENRY Programme.* Members discussed the role of the Council in promoting healthy eating and lifestyles to children and families, particularly in relation to the HENRY programme that operates in Children's Centres across the city.

- *Apprenticeships.* Members noted the need for a more flexible approach to further education that does not categorise pupils by academic/non-academic. Linked to this, Members acknowledged the previous Scrutiny Inquiry around Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) provision and the development of an IAG Charter. It was noted that the recommendations arising from this Inquiry continued to be tracked.

**RESOLVED** - That the contents of the report and suggestions from Members 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 Fiona Venner, Executive Member for Children and Families
- Councillor Jonathan Pryor, Executive Member for Learning, Skills and Employment
- Phil Mellen, Deputy Director for Learning
- Sue Rumbold, Chief Officer for Partnerships and Health
- Tim Pouncey, Chief Officer for Resources and Strategy
- Peter Storrie, Head of Performance Management and Improvement

The Executive Member for Children and Families noted that there was an error at paragraph 3.2 of the report, which should read that the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) was refreshed in Autumn 2018.

Members discussed a number of matters, including:

- *Mental Health.* Members expressed concern regarding the increasing demands for mental health services and the high thresholds for children and young people to meet in order to access specialised psychological therapies. In response, the Executive Member referenced the developments across the Future in Mind programme of work that aim to try and address such pressures.
- *Use of language in the report in regards to children looked after.* Members noted that some of the language used with regard to children looked after did not focus on resilience and other more positive attributes and that moving forward, a different approach should be considered. In addition, Members reiterated the importance of ensuring that the narrative within data reports is reflective of the role played by both parents and not just the mother.
- *Teenage conceptions.* Reference was made to the level of teenage conceptions in Leeds compared to the other statistical neighbours set out in the report. However, it was highlighted that the downward trend in local conception rates over the last decade had been encouraging.

**RESOLVED** - That the contents of the report be noted.

## **11 School Organisation Proposals and Objections Procedure**

The Director of Children and Families submitted a report that set out the process followed in opening, closing and making prescribed alterations to schools and academies in Leeds.

The following was appended to the report:

- Making significant changes to an open academy and closure by mutual agreement - Departmental advice for all types of academy trust, October 2018
- Stages of decision making guidance
- School Organisation Advisory Board (SOAB) – history of objections (anonymised)

The following were in attendance:

- Councillor Fiona Venner, Executive Member for Learning, Skills and Employment
- Phil Mellen, Deputy Director for Learning
- Sue Rumbold, Chief Officer for Partnerships and Health
- Tim Pouncey, Chief Officer for Resources and Strategy

The Chief Officer for Resources and Strategy introduced the report and provided some of the historical context along with an overview of the four stated options set out in the report for the Board to consider in terms of the role of Scrutiny when decisions regarding prescribed alterations to community and voluntarily controlled schools are being made.

In consideration of the four options presented within the report, the following key points were discussed:

- In principle, Members felt that it would be beneficial for Scrutiny to have a role during the informal consultation period to investigate any initial concerns being raised at that stage. However, it was highlighted that as concerns are invariably raised as part of any consultation process, this approach could potentially place significant resource pressures on the Scrutiny Board.
- Linked to this, it was noted that the first report to Executive Board will summarise the informal consultation phase, including responses made to concerns expressed at this stage, and following due consideration may seek approval to progress to the formal stage of consultation, where a statutory notice is published. It was also acknowledged that the Executive Board decision at this stage would be eligible for Call-In.
- The Board received details of the actual formal objections previously received that had triggered a meeting of the former School Organisation Advisory Board (SOAB). Linked to these, it was highlighted that the formal

objections received had been similar, or identical, to those received in the first consultation phase.

- There was some discussion around the implications of undertaking pre-decision scrutiny on the same basis that SOAB would have been convened. It was noted that if Members were to choose Option 1 or 2 as set out in the report, then the Executive Board would be advised to declare the decision as being exempt from Call-In on the basis of the decision being urgent as any further delay would be deemed as seriously prejudicing the Council's or the public's interests (i.e. any decision not made within the two month statutory deadline must be passed to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator for a decision).
- Discussion ensued around Options 3 and 4 within the report. In particular, it was highlighted that the current arrangement (Option 4) still enabled two opportunities for Elected Members to Call-In a decision of the Executive Board with regard to proposals being made, which was in contrast to the decision-making processes in place for Academies and Free Schools.
- In consideration of both Options 3 and 4, the Board agreed (by majority vote) to put in place Option 3 as follows:

*The Executive Member for Learning discuss with the Chair of Scrutiny any objections received to gauge the level of the objections and identify situations that would benefit from greater scrutiny ahead of a final decision.*

- However, the Board also expressed a wish to stipulate as part of this option that the full Scrutiny Board be notified of any discussion being held with the Scrutiny Board Chair and that the outcome of that discussion is conveyed to all Board Members to enable a final decision to be taken.
- It was noted that if following those discussions, the Scrutiny Board was convened to consider objections, a recommendation would be made in the final report to Executive Board to exempt the decision from call-in to ensure that a decision was made within 2 months of the end of the Statutory Notice period.
- It was noted that objections relating to planning or highways issues would not normally need additional scrutiny as these would be addressed through the planning process if the proposals were to progress.
- Linked to the above, the Chair requested that a report summarising the Board's deliberations and proposed way forward be brought back to the next meeting for formal approval.

**RESOLVED** – That a report summarising the Scrutiny Board's deliberations and proposed way forward be brought back to the next meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2019 for formal approval.

## **12 Scrutiny Inquiry 'Is Leeds a Child Friendly City?' - Draft Report**

The Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support submitted a report which referenced the recent inquiry undertaken by the Scrutiny Board based around the question 'Is Leeds a Child Friendly City?'

However, the Chair requested that this agenda item be deferred until the next meeting of the Board (due to take place 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2019) to allow for a longer consultation period on the Board's draft inquiry report prior to it being approved.

**RESOLVED** - That the item be deferred to the meeting due to take place 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2019.

### **13 Work Schedule**

The report of the Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support presented the draft work schedule for the forthcoming municipal year. This included the traditional items of Scrutiny work which involves performance monitoring, recommendation tracking and Budget and Policy Framework Plans.

Whilst reflecting on the Board's discussions during today's meeting, the Chair highlighted that the areas of work to be undertaken by the Board this municipal year are to be formally approved at the next meeting.

**RESOLVED** – That the draft work schedule be noted.

### **14 Date and Time of Next Meeting**

Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2019 at 10.00 am (pre-meeting for all Board Members at 9.45 am)