

SCRUTINY BOARD (CHILDREN AND FAMILIES)

WEDNESDAY, 3RD JULY, 2019

PRESENT: Councillor A Lamb in the Chair

Councillors H Bithell, P Drinkwater,
B Flynn, J Goddard, C Howley, A Hussain,
J Illingworth, D Jenkins, J Lennox,
A Marshall-Katung and R. Stephenson

CO-OPTED MEMBERS (VOTING)

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

CO-OPTED MEMBERS (NON-VOTING)

Ms C Foote – Teacher Representative
Ms D Reilly – Looked After Children/Care Leavers Representative
Ms E Holmes - Young Lives Leeds

15 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

There were no appeals.

16 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There were no exempt items.

17 Late Items

There were no formal late items. However, there was some supplementary information distributed prior to the meeting in relation to Item 7 - Scrutiny Inquiry 'Is Leeds a Child Friendly City?' Draft Report (Minute 21 refers)

18 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests.

19 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies were received from Councillors Forsaith, Gruen, Kidger and Renshaw. Councillors Goddard and Jenkins were in attendance as substitutes.

Apologies were also received from co-opted members A Graham and A Kearsley.

20 Minutes - 12th June 2019

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 12th June 2019 be approved as a correct record of the meeting.

Matters Arising

In relation to Minute No 7 – Co-opted Members – the Chair formally welcomed Emma Holmes as the new Young Lives Leeds representative of the Scrutiny Board.

21 Scrutiny Inquiry 'Is Leeds a Child Friendly City?' - Draft Report

The Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support submitted a report presenting the draft report of the Scrutiny Board following its recent inquiry 'Is Leeds a Child Friendly City?'.

The following were in attendance:

- Councillor Venner, Executive Member for Children and Families
- Councillor Pryor, Executive Member for Learning, Skills and Employment
- Steve Walker, Director of Children and Families
- Phil Mellen, Deputy Director for Learning
- Tim Pouncey, Chief Officer for Resources and Strategy

The Principal Scrutiny Advisor introduced the report and informed Members of feedback and suggested amendments to recommendations received during the initial consultation process. The Executive Members and the Director welcomed the report, and noted their support for the recommendations.

In consideration of the draft Inquiry report, a number of matters were raised, including:

- *Knife crime.* There was some discussion around the prevalence of knife crime in Leeds, as stated in the draft inquiry report. The Executive Member for Children and Families noted that some clarity was needed within the inquiry report between young people's fear of knife crime, and the actual rate of knife crime across the city.
- *Communication with young people following consultations.* Members noted the importance of feedback to young people for consultations that they contribute to. The Chair informed Members that a child friendly version of the report would be circulated to children and young people who contributed to the inquiry, and the Director welcomed a revised version of recommendation 3 to reflect formalising a process for consultation feedback to young people.

- *Planning applications.* There was some discussion around the importance of children and young people being engaged in the formation and examination of broader planning documents as well as acknowledging the need for more targeted engagement associated with relevant planning proposals within specific areas.
- *Healthy relationships and friendships.* Members felt that the importance of developing healthy relationships required more prominence in the report, along with a further recommendation specific to providing support and guidance to children and young people around healthy relationships.
- *Opportunities for physical activity across the city.* It was agreed that more narrative would be added to the report in recognition of the importance of mapping and communicating the opportunities and activities available to young people across the city in terms of promoting physical activity.
- *Young people having fun growing up.* Whilst Members noted that the evidence provided during the inquiry predominantly focused around play opportunities for young children, it was agreed that more narrative would be added to acknowledge the importance of providing fun and creative activities that will appeal to a broad age range, as well as being widely accessible. Linked to this, particular reference was made to making high quality arts and cultural opportunities accessible to children and young people across the city, in accordance with the city's Cultural Strategy.

The Principal Scrutiny Adviser noted the specific amendments requested during discussions, and informed the Board that a revised version of the inquiry report would be circulated ahead of publication on the Council's website.

RESOLVED – That the draft inquiry report be amended to reflect the points raised by the Board during its discussion and recirculated electronically to Board Members prior to the final version being published on the Council's website.

22 Financial Performance - Children and Families

The Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support submitted a report that presented financial performance information relevant to the remit of the Scrutiny Board.

The following were in attendance:

- Councillor Pryor, Executive Member for Learning, Skills and Employment
- Steve Walker, Director of Children and Families
- Phil Mellen, Deputy Director for Learning
- Tim Pouncey, Chief Officer for Resources and Strategy

The Chief Officer for Resources and Strategy introduced the report, noting an overspend of £2.4m in relation to demand led pressures such as the cost of looked after children, within the context of maintaining low rates of looked after children despite a growing child population in Leeds. The Director added that current refurbishments of children's homes have resulted in a cost for temporary residential placements, however, this should result in more accommodation and a reduction in external residential placements.

Members discussed a number of matters, including:

- *Traded services.* Members sought clarity around the shortfall for traded services, and were informed that the income target set was intended to be challenging, however a lower buy-in from academies had resulted in the shortfall.
- *Cluster Partnerships.* At the request of the Board, the Chief Officer for Resources and Strategy agreed to provide a breakdown of Cluster balances managed by maintained schools.

RESOLVED – That the contents of the report be noted and the information requested be circulated to Board Members

23 School Organisation Proposals and Objections Procedure

The Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support submitted a report that reflected the Board's recent discussion surrounding the role of Scrutiny as part of the school organisation proposals and objections procedure and seeking ratification on the proposed way forward.

The following were in attendance:

- Councillor Pryor, Executive Member for Learning, Skills and Employment
- Steve Walker, Director of Children and Families
- Phil Mellen, Deputy Director for Learning
- Tim Pouncey, Chief Officer for Resources and Strategy

RESOLVED – That the proposed procedure as set out within the report be agreed.

24 Work Schedule

The Head of Governance and Scrutiny submitted a report which invited Members to consider the Board's Work Schedule for the remainder of the current municipal year.

The Chair highlighted the Board's intention during the autumn months to proactively track progress made in implementing any outstanding recommendations stemming from previous pieces of work undertaken by the Scrutiny Board.

Reflecting on the findings of its recent Child Friendly Leeds inquiry and also the Board's discussions last month, it was agreed that the Board would undertake an inquiry this year around social, emotional and mental health issues of children and young people. The terms of reference for this inquiry will be considered during the Board's September 2019 meeting, with the intention of commencing the inquiry in November 2019.

It was also noted that a specific report relating to school exclusion rates in Leeds would be brought to the Board's October 2019 meeting.

RESOLVED –

- a) That the draft work schedule be noted.
- b) That the Board undertakes an inquiry this year around social, emotional and mental health issues of children and young people and considers the terms of reference for this inquiry at its September 2019 meeting.
- c) That a report relating to school exclusion rates in Leeds be brought to the Board's October 2019 meeting.

25 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Wednesday, 25th September 2019 at 10.00 am (pre-meeting for all Board Members at 9.45 am)

The meeting ended at 12.05 pm