

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

## **INQUIRY INTO CLUSTERS**

### **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 At its meeting on 28 June 2013, the Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) considered its work programme for the 2013/14 municipal year. It was acknowledged that the Board had expressed during two meetings, 14 March 2013 and 25 April 2013, a wish to conduct an inquiry which would consider the role and function of Cluster Partnerships and value they have in the delivery of localised services to children, young people and their families.

#### **2.0 Scope of the inquiry**

- 2.1 The purpose of the Inquiry is to make an assessment of and, where appropriate, make recommendations on the following areas:
- Clarification of the lines of Cluster accountability to organisations within and external to the Local Authority.
  - Cluster governance arrangements and framework
  - Partnership engagement, representation and participation. To identify if there is good representation and participation from partner organisations at a local level across the city.
  - The performance of Clusters and the management of performance and financial information. Ensuring measures are in place which secures total accountability for resources and performance which demonstrates the difference that partnership activities are making across the City.
  - The improvement measures in place to progress the performance of Clusters where it is required.
  - The extent of collaborative and supportive working relationships between Clusters.
  - Outcomes for Children and Young People as a result of Cluster intervention and operation to ensure that local investment is providing good value for money and having a positive impact on children, young people and their families.

#### **3.0 Desired Outcomes and Measures of Success**

- 3.1 In conducting the Inquiry the Board wishes to reflect on the value of Cluster partnerships and identify what positive outcomes the partnerships provide for families, children and young people. The Scrutiny Board will endeavour to establish if robust governance, accountability and performance frameworks are in place which are monitored and utilised to identify areas for improvement. In addition the

Scrutiny Board will seek to establish what measures are put into place to support Clusters who are operating in challenging circumstances.

- 3.2 It is important to consider how the Scrutiny Board will deem if their inquiry has been successful in making a difference to local people. Some measures of success may be obvious at the initial stages of an inquiry and can be included in these terms of reference. Other measures of success may become apparent as the inquiry progresses and discussions take place.
- 3.3 Following the inquiry the Scrutiny Board will publish its report which will identify clear desired outcomes. These will be reflected in the recommendations made. The director or organisation to whom the recommendations have been made will be responsible for monitoring the impact of each recommendation and for advising the Board accordingly as the Board reviews progress.

#### **4.0 Comments of the relevant Director and Executive Member**

- 4.1 In line with Scrutiny Board Procedure Rule 12.1, where a Scrutiny Board undertakes an Inquiry the Scrutiny Board shall consult with any relevant Director and Executive Member on the terms of reference.

#### **5.0 Timetable for the inquiry**

- 5.1 The Inquiry will take place over three sessions. A final report is scheduled to be agreed at the March 2014 Scrutiny Board Meeting.
- 5.2 The length of the Inquiry and range of evidence to be collected is subject to change by agreement of the Board.
- 5.3 In relation to this inquiry, the Board agreed to follow a similar approach to that successfully adopted for its inquiry in 2012 on School Attendance. Two 'case study' areas were identified and instead of a formal Scrutiny Board meeting, half of the members went to each area for the morning. In both areas. Board Members had the opportunity to talk to practitioners and speak to parents and young people, before reconvening for a round table discussion about their findings. This was found to be a very effective way of working.
- 5.4 For this inquiry the Board will visit 2 cluster areas. These areas have yet to be determined.

## **6.0 Submission of evidence**

### **6.1 Session one – November 2013**

- Overview remit and purpose of Cluster partnerships.
- The different types of cluster partnerships
- Cluster Profiles
- Membership of Cluster Partnerships
- Cluster activities - the services expected to be delivered
- Governance arrangements including lines of accountability
- Role of Local Authority with regard to governance and performance
- Role of Schools Forum with regard to Cluster funding and accountability
- Performance monitoring arrangements

### **6.2 Session two – December 2013**

- Six month Cluster performance reports (April – September)
- Cluster performance and reasoning behind differences in performance
- Role of Local Authority in improving performance, providing intervention and providing support
- Cluster to Cluster collaborative working, support and sharing of good practice.
- Significant challenges including socio-economic impacts faced by specific Clusters
- Distribution of funding and monitoring of expenditure to ensuring resources, financial or otherwise, are fully utilised and investment is made appropriately.
- Cluster membership, partnership engagement, participation and effectiveness at a local level.

### **6.3 Session three – January 2014**

- See section 5.3 and 5.4 - meeting in the Clusters.

## **7.0 Witnesses**

7.1 The following witnesses have been identified as possible contributors to the Inquiry:

- Cluster Representatives
- External Stakeholders and Representatives of multi-agency Partners
- Schools Forum
- Education Practitioners and School Governors
- Parents

- Children and Young People
- Officers from Children's Services
- Officers from Strategy and Resources
- Members of the Childrens Trust Board
- Elected Members

## **8.0 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration**

- 8.1 The Equality Improvement Priorities 2011 to 2015 have been developed to ensure our legal duties are met under the Equality Act 2010. The priorities will help the council to achieve its ambition to be the best City in the UK and ensure that as a city work takes place to reduce disadvantage, discrimination and inequalities of opportunity.
- 8.2 Equality and diversity will be a consideration throughout the Scrutiny Inquiry and due regard will be given to equality through the use of evidence, written and verbal, outcomes from consultation and engagement activities.
- 8.3 The Scrutiny Board may engage and involve interested groups and individuals (both internal and external to the council) to inform recommendations.
- 8.4 Where an impact has been identified this will be reflected in the final inquiry report, post inquiry. Where a Scrutiny Board recommendation is agreed the individual, organisation or group responsible for implementation or delivery should give due regard to equality and diversity, conducting impact assessments where it is deemed appropriate.

## **9.0 Post inquiry report monitoring arrangements**

- 9.1 Following the completion of the Scrutiny inquiry and the publication of the final inquiry report and recommendations, the implementation of the agreed recommendations will be monitored.
- 9.2 The monitoring will be undertaken by the Board which will be done at regular intervals appropriate to the content of the recommendation.
- 9.3 The final inquiry report will include information on how the implementation of recommendations will be monitored.