

SCRUTINY BOARD (CHILDREN AND FAMILIES)

WEDNESDAY, 26TH SEPTEMBER, 2018

PRESENT: Councillor A Lamb in the Chair

Councillors H Bithell, D Cohen,
P Drinkwater, C Gruen, J Illingworth,
W Kidger, J Lennox, K Renshaw and
R. Stephenson

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
Ms H Bellamy – Teacher Representative
Mrs A Kearsley – Early Years Representative
Ms C Hopkins – Young Lives Leeds
Ms D Reilly – Looked After Children and Care Leavers

25 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

There were no appeals against the refusal of inspection of documents.

26 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There were no exempt items.

27 Late Items

There were no late items.

28 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests.

29 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies for absence were received from Viv Bryden and Councillor K Bruce, with no substitute Member present.

30 Minutes - 18th July 2018

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 18th July 2018 be approved as a correct record.

31 Matters Arising from the Minutes

Minute 21 – The Board had requested a list of Leeds Schools' current surplus or deficit positions. The Chair noted that details of schools and extended school balances for 2017/18, as reported to the Leeds Schools Forum in June 2018, had been circulated to Members.

32 Co-opted Members

The Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support submitted a report which sought the Board's formal consideration for the appointment of existing co-opted member vacancies.

The Board noted that the following statutory voting co-opted members had been appointed by process of election:

- Parent Governor (Primary) representative – Mrs Kate Blacker
- Parent Governor (SEN) representative – Mrs Viv Bryden

In addition to the statutory voting co-opted members, the Board also acknowledged two nominations for non-voting co-opted members.

The Chair reminded Members of the Board's decision to appoint any additional co-opted members on an ad-hoc basis based on the subject matter of each themed meeting, in response to a Member's query around the appointment of co-optees from different religious communities.

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 2018/19:

- Teacher Representative – Ms Helen Bellamy
- Looked After Children and Care Leavers Representative – Ms Debbie Reilly

33 White Rose Children Looked After Interim Residential Framework Agreement

The Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support submitted a report that reflected the request made by the Chair for the Board to receive a briefing about a recent Key Decision for the White Rose CLA Interim Residential Framework Agreement, in relation to which decision deadlines set out in the Constitution had been missed.

The following information was appended to the report:

- Delegated Decision Notification
- Request to extend the White Rose Children Looked After Interim Residential Framework Agreement
- Approval of Special Urgency
- Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration Screening

The following were in attendance:

- Councillor Lisa Mulherin, Executive Member for Children and Families
- Tom Riordan, Chief Executive
- Sal Tariq, Deputy Director for Children and Families
- Tim Pouncey, Chief Officer, Resources and Strategy
- Kieron Dennet, Head of Commercial (Legal)
- Chris Dickinson, Head of Service, Commissioning and Market Management

The Chair wished it to be noted that the Director of Children and Families, Steve Walker, had written to the Board apologising for his absence during this item. The letter had been circulated to all Members prior to the meeting.

Members discussed a number of matters, including:

- The positive culture of openness that led to Children and Families Directorate managing the oversight relating to compliance with the Key Decision deadline in a transparent manner.
- That in the circumstances of the contract extension and in the absence of a specific Constitutional provision, the proxy use of the Special Urgency Provision was understood as a means of ensuring transparency.
- That a review be undertaken of the Executive and Decision Making Procedure Rules to ensure that any future circumstances where a decision is required can be done so through a tailored and regularised process.
- The systems operating at the time in the Children and Families Directorate to manage key and other decision deadlines, and the revised arrangements now put in place to more effectively manage decision deadlines in the future.
- Members were pleased to hear that all other local authorities within the agreement remained confident in the ability of Leeds to continue as the lead authority for the framework, along with confirmation that no children or public funds were put at risk through the error.
- The Board were keen to be involved in the review of the interim contract for the framework, to develop standards for providers to adhere to and identify any potential savings.

RESOLVED –

- a) That the contents of the report and appendices be noted.

- b) That the matter be referred to Corporate Governance and Audit Committee to look at in further detail in advance of any proposals being brought to the General Purposes Committee and Full Council.
- c) That the Board be invited to participate in the review of the current framework in due course.

34 Scrutiny Inquiry - Is Leeds a Child Friendly City?

The Director of Children and Families submitted a report that presented information linked to the Board's Scrutiny Inquiry and agreed thematic approach based around the five Children and Young People's Plan Outcomes.

The following information was appended to the report:

- Children and young people are active citizens who feel they have a voice and influence - Indicator report
- Children and young people have fun growing up - Indicator report

The following were in attendance:

- Councillor Lisa Mulherin, Executive Member for Children and Families
- Councillor Jonathan Pryor, Executive Member for Learning, Skills and Employment
- Sal Tariq, Deputy Director for Children and Families
- Chris Hudson, Performance Programme Manager, Children and Families
- Hannah Lamplugh, Voice, Influence and Change (VIC) Lead, Children and Families
- Rebecca Gilmour, Deputy Service Manager, Leeds Youth Offending Service
- Vicki Marsden, Play Strategy Officer, Children and Families

The Voice, Influence and Change Lead provided Members with a video and presentation highlighting the model for participation used by the team, some of the historical and local context, and a number of successful youth voice projects that had taken place since 2011.

Members discussed a number of matters, including:

- Members expressed concerns around the barriers to participation faced by children in the outer areas of Leeds, in regards to the cost and connectivity of public transport. Members were informed that as transport was named the top issue in last year's 'Make Your Mark' ballot by the young people of Leeds, the Leeds Youth Council (LYC) have been working with BUS18 to develop an under 19s 'MyDay' bus ticket which has recently been launched for unlimited travel across the city. The LYC have also made a series of other recommendations to BUS18 and are awaiting a response.

- Members recognised the difficulty in measuring emotional outcomes, but valued the use of MyHealthMySchool (MHMS) survey and felt more could be done to encourage schools to take part.
- Members queried the lack of involvement of religious youth groups in voice and influence projects as set out in the presentation, and were informed that the list of youth groups included in the presentation was not exclusive and changed regularly depending on various projects. Members were also informed of the 'Let's Tackle It' event in 2017, which focused on racial and religious discrimination and involved a range of young people and guest speakers from different faiths and religions.
- Members questioned whether there was any voice and influence activity taking place with pre-school children across the city, as it was unclear from the report. Members were informed that a summary document could be circulated, containing more information about voice and influence projects within the early years setting.
- Members expressed concerns regarding the decrease in ratings of 'happiness' in recent years, for which there seemed to be some disparity between measures. Members also cited recent national data which showed a considerable difference between genders in ratings of 'happiness', and requested that gender be included in future surveys and reports as a variable to establish the prevalence in Leeds.
- Particular reference was made to the Future in Mind Strategy and the MindMate website, which were co-produced with young people. It was noted that schools also have MindMate lessons and champions.
- Members expressed concerns around the lack of space available for play activities in the inner city compared to outer areas, and felt that there was a lack of consideration for such facilities through planning processes. The Chair suggested that the Board should look in further detail at the extent of young people's voice and influence beyond Children's Services, particularly in relation to planning and city development.
- Members sought further information on the methods used to ensure that children looked after do not enter the criminal justice system, and were informed of work taking place with children's homes to ensure that the Police are not called when issues can be managed internally by staff, which is already having a great impact. Additionally, Members heard that there was now a stronger focus on helping bereaved young people who are at risk of entering the criminal justice system.
- To gain a greater understanding of the various voice and influence projects taking place across the city, the Chair suggested that Board Members undertake visits to some of the youth groups that the VIC team currently engage with.

RESOLVED –

- a) That the contents of the report and appendices be noted.
- b) That an additional Scrutiny Board meeting be scheduled later in the year to accommodate further consideration of the following key issues raised during today's meeting:

- The extent of young people's voice and influence beyond Children's Services with particular focus on the development of child friendly spaces through planning and city development processes;
- The extent to which young people's voice and influence is helping to identify and address the local transport needs of young people.
- The extent to which the My Health My School survey data is being used to identify and address lower ratings of 'happiness'.

c) That visits to youth groups across the city be arranged for Board Members in the coming months.

(Councillor Gruen, Councillor Renshaw and Co-opted Members C Hopkins and T Britten, left the meeting during discussion of this item)

35 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.

As well as agreeing to amend the work schedule to reflect the Board's decision to hold an additional Scrutiny Board meeting later in the year, the following updates were also highlighted for the Board's attention and approval:

- Whilst it was originally scheduled for the Board to consider the 'enjoy healthy lifestyles' CYP outcome as part of its September meeting, this had now been scheduled for the Board's March meeting.
- That the work schedule had been amended to reflect the decision that was made by the Chief Officer, Partnerships and Health in June 2018 to approve a pause to the phased introduction of transport changes for new entrants to post-16 education scheduled for September 2018. Rather than receive a recommendation tracking report, the Board will now maintain a watching brief on developments as they progress.

RESOLVED – That the work schedule be updated and approved in accordance with the above.

36 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Wednesday, 24th October 2018 at 10.00 am (pre-meeting for all Board Members at 9.45 am)

The meeting concluded at 12:40pm.