

SCRUTINY BOARD (CHILDREN AND FAMILIES)

WEDNESDAY, 6TH MARCH, 2019

PRESENT: Councillor A Lamb in the Chair

Councillors H Bithell, K Brooks, K Bruce,
D Cohen, P Drinkwater, C Gruen,
N Harrington, J Illingworth and J Lennox

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

70 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

There were no appeals.

71 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There were no exempt items.

72 Late Items

There were no late items.

73 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests.

74 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies were received from Councillors Kidger, Renshaw and Stephenson.
Councillors Harrington and Brooks were in attendance as substitutes.

75 Minutes - 23rd January 2019

In consideration of the minutes, reference was made to Minute 64 and the Board's discussion surrounding Special Guardianship Orders. It was noted that references made to the large legal costs associated with such Orders was made in the broader sense and not solely as a direct comparative with kinship caring arrangements. Following the meeting, the audio recording was checked and verified the point raised as above.

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd January 2019 be approved as a correct record of the meeting.

76 Scrutiny Inquiry - Is Leeds a Child Friendly City?

The Director of Children and Families submitted a report including key background information and supporting evidence linked to the third session of the Scrutiny Board's Inquiry and agreed thematic approach based around the five Children and Young People's Plan Outcomes.

The following were in attendance:

- Councillor Lisa Mulherin, Executive Member for Children and Families
- Steve Walker, Director of Children and Families
- Ian Cameron, Director of Public Health
- Janice Burberry, Head of Public Health, Children and Families
- Heather Thomson, Head of Public Health (Healthy lifestyles)
- Michelle Kane, Public Health Principal, Children and Families
- Saira Mumtaz-Jones, Health and Wellbeing Lead, Children and Families
- Hannah Lamplugh, Voice Influence and Change Lead, Children and Families
- Kerry Swift, Health Improvement Specialist, Public Health

The Chair informed Members that the information would be discussed based on two main themes:

- 1) Children and young people are safe from harm
- 2) Children and young people enjoy healthy lifestyles

Children and young people are safe from harm

The Director of Children and Families introduced this theme, noting the need for the two clearly defined and measurable indicators set out in the report, to provide focus.

Members discussed a number of matters, including:

- *The child's perspective.* Members were keen to understand how the child's point of view was integrated into strategies and intervention to support families. The Board heard that all forms of intervention use a restorative approach, working with children, rather than *to* or *for*. Additionally, in Family Group Conferences (FGCs) where the child is

unable to be present, their views are contributed by the coordinator to ensure that their voice is heard.

- *Children's Centres.* Members sought clarity on the role of Children's Centres in reducing the amount of looked after children, and were informed that 75% of looked after children are removed before the age of 5, which reinforces the role of early help through parenting support at Children's Centres.
- *Time limit for care proceedings.* Members sought clarity in regards to the value of the recently introduced 26 week time limit for care proceedings to take place. Members heard that this change was driven by research that evidenced a delay in outcomes, and the subsequent detrimental effect. However, research also suggested that the time limit can impede kinship care arrangements from coming to fruition later in the process. In Leeds, this was not felt to be an issue due to the inclusion of the wider extended family through FGCs taking place prior to the beginning of care proceedings.
- *Mental health.* Concern was expressed regarding the growing need for child mental health services through the Cluster Partnerships, and the lack of resource available, leading to shorter and less thorough interventions. Additionally, as a result of the lengthy waiting lists and high criteria for CAMHS, Members reported that many children were not guaranteed to receive the support they need. Linked to this, it was noted that this year the Leeds Youth Council had also identified mental health provision as a key priority for young people.
- *Visit to DAZL.* Some Members had attended a session at a dance-based youth club in South Leeds, and heard from the young people who attended that they did not feel safe in Leeds. Although it was acknowledged that the two main current indicators were a reflection of the directorate's responsibility to reduce significant harm to young people, this prompted further discussion surrounding the definition of all young people being 'safe from harm' as it was recognised that this can be a complex area to capture and measure. Members also recognised the difficulty for the directorate to hold responsibility for some of the reasons that children may feel unsafe, such as a fear of crime, but had acknowledged the importance of collaborative working across the Council and other partners to help address the impact of such wider determinants on a child's wellbeing.

Children and young people enjoy healthy lifestyles

The Director of Public Health introduced this theme and highlighted some of the key trends and programmes in relation to alcohol and drugs, physical activity, social and emotional mental health, healthy weight, oral health, sexual health and tobacco use.

Members discussed a number of matters, including:

- *Planning decisions.* Members were concerned that the Core Strategy and Site Allocations Plan did not incorporate the voice of children and young people. Members felt that planning decisions needed to consider

recreational space for young people, to enable healthy and fulfilled lifestyles for young people in new developments in the city. The Director of Children and Families had suggested that the introduction of a 'children and young people impact assessment', similar to the current process for overall equalities, could be a helpful way of demonstrating how decisions being made by the Council will have an impact on young people.

- *East Leeds Extension.* The Board noted that work was underway to develop the new East Leeds Extension housing area as an exemplar of planning and design that encourages active neighbourhoods. Linked to this, the Board suggested that young people within the local schools may wish to be engaged in such work too.
- *Travel to school initiatives.* Members heard that Public Health work with the Sustainable Travel Team to develop travel plans, to ensure safe walking and cycling routes to school. Members commented on some positive projects in East Leeds. Members also commented that a barrier to pupils using forms of transport such as bicycles to get to school was the lack of storage space available on school premises
- *Alcohol and drug use.* There was also some concern around the everyday use of alcohol amongst 0.1% of primary school children according to the My Health My School (MHMS) survey, however Members were informed that the self-reporting nature of the survey can occasionally result in anomalies. Members were also informed of the shift in attitudes which have resulted in a reduction in use of alcohol and tobacco amongst young people. However, it was noted that use of drugs, particularly Cannabis, required more attention.
- *Sexual health.* Members sought more information about the inclusion of how well informed young people are around what to expect from Genito-Urinary Medicine (GUM) clinics. Members were assured that there had been a shift away from using 'scary' images to encourage young people to have STI screenings.
- *Buy-in of the Healthy Schools Programme.* Members were assured that a dedicated member of staff maintained regular dialog with the 22% of schools who did not commission the service, and encourages schools to consider the importance of health within the school setting.

RESOLVED – That the contents of the report and appendices, along with Members comments, be noted.

Councillor Illingworth arrived at the meeting at 10:15am during discussion of this item.

Councillors Cohen and Brooks left the meeting at 12:25pm and 12:40pm respectively during discussion of this item.

Co-opted Members Tony Britten, Anne Kearsley and Claire Hopkins left the meeting at 11:55am, 12:30pm and 12:45pm respectively during this item.

77 Work Schedule

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

The Board was particularly reminded of the forthcoming Youth Voice Summit Event on 13th March 2019 from 5pm.

The Principal Scrutiny Advisor also highlighted that whilst the work schedule indicated there would be an extraordinary meeting scheduled in May to finalise the Board's Inquiry report, it was noted that an alternative option open to the Board was to finalise the report by email correspondence to Board Members and formally bring the report to the Board's initial meeting in the new municipal year. The Chair recommended that the Board makes its decision during its April meeting.

RESOLVED – That the work schedule be approved.

78 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Wednesday, 24th April 2019 at 10.00 am (pre-meeting for all Board Members at 9.45 am)

The meeting ended at 12:55pm.