



Report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development

Executive Board

Date: 4 March 2009

Subject: Feedback on Executive Board Requests for Scrutiny

Electoral Wards Affected:

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call In

Not Eligible for Call In

(Details contained in the report)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report provides feedback to the Executive Board on the two requests made at the January meeting, for work to be undertaken by the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services).

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

- 1.1 This report provides feedback to the Executive Board on the two requests made at the January meeting, for work to be undertaken by the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services).

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 At the Executive Board meeting on 14 January, Members considered the Children's Services Annual Performance Assessment 2008. As a result of the discussion, the Executive Board resolved:

"That the report be received, that the actions proposed in sections 4 to 9 thereof be approved, that, in addition the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) be requested to monitor progress and that progress reports be brought to this Board on a quarterly basis."

- 2.2 At the same meeting, Members also considered the Statements of Purpose for the Fostering and Adoption Services for Leeds City Council. As a result of the discussion, the Executive Board resolved

"That the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) be requested to examine the criteria for the consideration of applications for adoption and the manner in which they are applied."

- 2.3 Both requests were considered by the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) on 5 February 2009.

3.0 Main Issues

- 3.1 In response to the first request, the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) agreed to monitor progress in relation to the actions arising from the Children's Services Annual Performance Assessment 2008.
- 3.2 The Scrutiny Board will incorporate this into their quarterly meetings which cover a range of performance monitoring and overview functions. The next such meeting is in April 2009.
- 3.3 In relation to the second request, the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) received a report from the Director of Children's Services setting out the Adoption Agency's Policy, including the criteria applied when assessing applications. Additional information was also provided specifically in relation to how obesity and smoking habits are taken into account as part of the assessment process.
- 3.4 Officers from Children's Social Care and the Leeds designated doctor for Looked After Children (who is also the medical adviser to one of the Adoption Panels) attended the meeting and discussed the matter with the Scrutiny Board.
- 3.5 The Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) agreed that the written and verbal information provided demonstrated that the Adoption Agency's policy and practice is in line with legal requirements and best practice guidance, and that therefore no further scrutiny investigation needed to be undertaken on this topic.

4.0 Implications For Council Policy And Governance

- 4.1 Scrutiny Board Procedure Rules require that anyone submitting a request for scrutiny should be formally notified of the Scrutiny Board's decision regarding the request.

5.0 Legal and Resource Implications

- 5.1 None

6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 The Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) has considered both requests from the Executive Board. The referral on adoption policy has been dealt with, and the Scrutiny Board will monitor progress with the APA action plan as requested by the Executive Board.

7.0 Recommendations

- 7.1 That the Executive Board notes the Scrutiny Board's response to the requests for scrutiny.

Background Papers

Reports to Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) – 5 February 2009
Request for Scrutiny – Annual Performance Assessment
Request for Scrutiny – Adoption Service