

## SCRUTINY BOARD (CHILDREN'S SERVICES)

THURSDAY, 11TH JUNE, 2009

**PRESENT:** Councillor W Hyde in the Chair

Councillors B Cleasby, G Driver, R D Feldman,  
G Kirkland, B Lancaster, K Renshaw and E Taylor

### CO-OPTED MEMBERS (VOTING):

Mr E A Britten	- Church Representative (Catholic)
Prof P H J H Gosden	- Church Representative (Church of England)
Mrs S Knights	- Parent Governor Representative (Primary)
Mr B Wanyonyi	- Parent Governor Representative (Secondary)

### CO-OPTED MEMBERS (NON-VOTING):

Ms C Foote	- Teacher Representative
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#### 1 Chair's Opening Remarks.

The Chair welcomed everyone present to the first meeting of the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) of the 2009/10 Municipal Year.

#### 2 Declaration of Interests

Councillor Driver declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 10, Corporate Governance and Audit Committee Referral, due to his membership of the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee. (minute No. 136 refers.)

#### 3 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Dowson, Gettings and Selby; and Co-opted Members: Mr Falkingham, Ms Johnson, Mrs Hutchinson, Ms J Morris-Boam and Ms T Kayani.

#### 4 Minutes - 7th May 2009

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 May 2009, be confirmed as a correct record.

#### 5 Appointment of Co-opted Members

The report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development sought Member's approval for the appointment of Co-opted Members to the Board. Details of current arrangements were contained in the report.

#### **RESOLVED –**

(1) That the re-appointment of Professor Gosden (Church Representative - Church of England) and Mr Britten (Church Representative - Roman Catholic) as voting co-opted members of the Board for 2009/10 be confirmed;

(2) That the continued appointment of Mr Wanyonyi (Parent Governor Representative - Secondary), Mr Falkingham (Parent Governor Representative - Special) and Mrs Knights (Parent Governor Representative - Primary) be noted;

(3) That Ms Foote and Ms Johnson (Teacher Representatives), Mrs Hutchinson (Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership Representative), Ms Kayani (Youth Work Partnership Representative) and Ms Morris-Boam (Leeds VOICE Children and Young People Services Forum Representative) be appointed as non-voting co-opted members of the Board for 2009/10.

## **6 Constitutional Amendments**

The report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development provided the Board with information and guidance which reflected recent amendments to the Council's Constitution, as agreed by the Council on 21 May 2009 and which directly related to and/or made an impact on the work of Scrutiny Boards.

Members' attention was brought to the Councillor Call for Action (CCfA) provisions which would give opportunity for Elected Members to raise matters for consideration by the Council's Scrutiny Boards. In response to a question regarding the obligation of partner and neighbouring authorities to participate in scrutiny requests, it was reported that further guidance was awaited on this.

#### **RESOLVED –**

- (1) That the amendments to the Council's Constitution as outlined in the report, be noted.
- (2) That the likely changes resulting from the Secretary of State regulations regarding the provision of information from partner authorities be noted.

## **7 Input to the Work Programme 2009/10 - Sources of Work and Establishing the Board's Priorities**

The report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development provided information and guidance to assist the Board to develop its Work Programme for 2009/10.

Relevant information from the following key sources was attached to the report to assist Members:

- Leeds Strategic Plan 2008 to 2011 – Executive Summary
- Building Brighter Futures: The Leeds Children and Young People's Plan 2009-14 – immediate priorities and long term ambitions
- List of scrutiny work undertaken in the past 5 years

The Chair welcomed the following to the meeting to contribute to the discussion about the Board's Work Programme:

- Councillor Stuart Golton – Executive Member for Children's Services
- Councillor Richard Harker – Executive Member for Learning
- Rosemary Archer – Director of Children's Services
- Chris Edwards – Chief Executive, Education Leeds

The following issues were highlighted as potential areas for scrutiny:

- Ongoing focus on safeguarding – including domestic violence
- Launch of the new Children and Young People's Plan
- Changes in the way 14-19 services are provided
- The number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET)
- New policy framework for schools – 21<sup>st</sup> century schools
- Young people's priority around places to go and things to do
- Aiming High for Disabled Children
- Children's Trust Arrangements – further guidance from Government has been deferred for a year
- The impact of population growth on Schools and other Children's Services.
- National Year of Volunteering – how to involve and recruit young people.
- The Rose Review of the primary curriculum– including the recommendation that children started school in the term after their 4<sup>th</sup> birthday
- Replacement of the Learning and Skills Council – complex issues at regional and sub regional level, transfer of responsibilities to the Council
- Anticipated reductions in funding for education over the next ten years.
- Community use of school grounds and buildings.
- Locality working and the need to ensure services are fit for local needs.
- Post 16 education for young people with special educational needs.

In response to Members' comments and questions, the following issues were discussed:

- Additional tuition entitlement for low achievers and any potential detrimental effect on routine class teaching – it was not envisaged that additional teaching for low achievers would create a problem.

- Safer schools – how to change the way that communities engaged with schools and how the police could be involved in learning.
- How to assist those not in education, employment or training (NEETs). It was suggested that a representative of Prospects be invited to a future meeting to discuss this.
- Personal, Health and Social Education (PHSE) – issues surrounding the provision of sex and relationships education and different levels of teaching across schools. Related issues included teenage conception rates.
- Improving attendance.
- The impact of different models of school organisation including trusts, federations and academies.
- Sharing of best practice between schools.

**RESOLVED** – That the information presented with the report and discussion with those present be used towards the development of the Board's Work Programme.

(Councillor Driver declared an interest in this item as a prospective governor at the College of Building. Councillor Renshaw declared an interest in this item as a governor at Seven Hill Primary, East Ardsley Primary and Rodillian High Schools. Councillor Lancaster declared an interest in this item in relation to her roles as governor at Carr Manor High School and member of the West Yorkshire Police Authority.)

## **8 Corporate Governance and Audit Committee referral**

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which gave details on a referral for scrutiny from Corporate Governance and Audit Committee.

The following concerns had been highlighted by the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee following receipt of the Audit Commission's Annual Audit and Inspection Letter:

- The outcomes relating to Children and Young People, particularly infant mortality, fostering and the timeliness of reviews of looked after children, and whether they were caused by problems with leadership and management or resources;
- The high proportion of young people not in employment, education or training

The Committee had subsequently resolved to refer these issues to the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) to investigate these matters further.

Members attention was brought to monitoring of the Joint Area Review and Annual Performance Assessment which demonstrated ongoing work on some of the areas of concern whilst others fell under the remit of health partners. It was reported that there was to be a re-inspection of the foster service and all the matters of concern were already under consideration.

**RESOLVED** – That the report be noted and that Corporate Governance and Audit Committee be informed of the work already being undertaken by the Scrutiny Board on these topics.

## **9 KPMG - Scrutiny Review - May 2009**

The report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development presented the findings of the recent KPMG external audit review of the Scrutiny function in Leeds. It also detailed management's response to the review recommendations.

Issues discussed in relation to the recommendations outlined in the KPMG report included Elected Member training, single item agendas, the amount of information sent to Members and specific training for Chairs.

**RESOLVED** – That the report be noted and the Board's comments be passed to the Scrutiny Advisory Group.

## **10 Executive Board referral**

The report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development gave details of a referral for scrutiny from Executive Board. This followed the Scrutiny Inquiry report of the Scrutiny Board (City and Regional Partnerships) into the role of the voluntary, community and faith sector (VCFS) in council led community engagement.

The report detailed previous instances of the Board's recommendations, namely the Inquiries into the Youth Services and into Services for 8 to 13 Year Olds. This had been acknowledged by the Scrutiny Board (City and Regional Partnerships) in its report. Further discussion focussed on funding for VCFS organisations and concern that further scrutiny of related areas could lead to duplication.

**RESOLVED** – That the report be noted and comment be submitted back to Executive Board.

## **11 Determining the Work Programme for 2009/10**

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which requested Members to determine the Work Programme for 2009/10. A draft work programme was appended to the report.

Further to earlier discussion, the following issues were highlighted:

- Primary school places and effects of the increase in birth rates and the Rose Review.
- Post 16 Special Educational Needs provision.
- Safeguarding
- NEETs

- Quarterly Performance Information

It was also suggested that new Members needed to be contacted regarding availability for ongoing Working Groups.

**RESOLVED** – That the report and discussion be noted and that the Principal Scrutiny Adviser produce a draft work programme based on the earlier discussion of priority issues, to be confirmed at the next meeting of the Board.

(Councillors Lancaster and Feldman left the meeting at 12.00 and 12.15 respectively during consideration of this item.)

## **12 Draft Report - Education Standards - Entering the Education System**

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted the draft report following the Board's Inquiry into Education Standards – Entering the Education System.

**RESOLVED** –

- (1) That the Board's final report and recommendations be agreed.
- (2) That a formal response to the recommendations be produced in line with normal procedures for scrutiny inquiry reports.

## **13 Dates of Future Meetings**

Thursday, 9 July 2009  
Thursday, 17 September 2009  
Thursday, 15 October 2009  
Thursday, 12 November 2009  
Thursday, 10 December 2009  
Thursday, 28 January 2010  
Thursday, 25 February 2010  
Thursday, 25 March 2010  
Thursday, 22 April 2010