

SCRUTINY BOARD (CHILDREN AND FAMILIES)

THURSDAY, 12TH JANUARY, 2012

PRESENT: Councillor J Chapman in the Chair

Councillors G Driver, P Ewens, B Gettings,
A Lamb, P Latty, K Maqsood, A McKenna,
M Rafique and K Renshaw

CO-OPTED MEMBERS (VOTING):

Mr E A Britten – Church Representative (Catholic)
Ms A Craven – Parent Governor Representative (Primary)
Ms J Ward – Parent Governor Representative (Secondary)
Ms N Cox – Parent Governor Representative (Special)

CO-OPTED MEMBERS (NON-VOTING):

Ms C Foote – Teacher Representative
Ms T Kayani – Leeds Youth Work Partnership Representative
Ms A Choudhry – Young Lives Leeds

53 Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed all in attendance to the January meeting of the Scrutiny Board (Children and Families).

54 Late Items

In accordance with her powers under Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chair agreed to accept a late report, agenda item 9, Outcomes for Looked After Children, which was not available at the time of agenda despatch. (Minute No. 60 refers)

55 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Ewens declared a personal interest in agenda item 7, Children Services Improvement Update Report (January 2012), as LEA Governor at City of Leeds High School. (Minute No. 58 refers)

A further declaration of interest was made at a later point in the meeting. (Minute No. 58 refers)

56 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

An apology for absence was submitted by Councillor Khan.

57 Minutes - 10th November 2011

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 10th November 2011 be approved as a correct record.

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting
to be held on Thursday, 9th February, 2012

58 Children Services Improvement Update Report (January 2012)

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report which provided an update on key improvement activity that was continuing across Children's Services in Leeds.

The following information was appended to the report:

- Children's Services Improvement Notice – November 2011 update
- Letter from the Chair of the Improvement Board, Bill McCarthy, to the Minister for Children and Families, Tim Loughton, sent on 8th December 2011
- Response from the Minister for Children and Families, Tim Loughton, to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Wakefield, on 21st December 2011.

The following Executive Member and officers attended the meeting and responded to Members' questions and comments:

- Councillor Blake, Executive Member (Children and Families)
- Nigel Richardson, Director of Children's Services
- Saleem Tariq, Assistant Chief Officer, Children and Young People's Social Care.

The key areas of discussion were:

- Acknowledgement of the positive work undertaken as part of the improvement process.
- Update on the procurement and planning for a new Electronic Social Care system for Children's Services. (It was advised that confirmation of the supplier was anticipated to take place in April 2012, with an implementation date of early 2013.)
- Development of case management systems and links with the voluntary sector.

RESOLVED – That the contents of the report and appendices be noted.

(Councillor Renshaw declared a personal interest in this item in her capacity as LEA Governor at Rodillian High School.)

(Councillor Driver left the meeting at 10.50am during the consideration of this item.)

59 2011/12 Quarter 2 Performance Report

The Assistant Chief Executive (Customer Access and Performance) / Director of Children's Services submitted a joint report which presented a summary of the quarter 2 performance data relevant to the Scrutiny Board (Children and Families).

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting
to be held on Thursday, 9th February, 2012

The following information was appended to the report:

- Performance Reports for the CYPP Priorities including the 3 “Obsessions”
- Children’s Services Directorate Priorities and Indicators.

The following Executive Member and officers attended the meeting and responded to Members’ questions and comments:

- Councillor Blake, Executive Member (Children and Families)
- Nigel Richardson, Director of Children’s Services
- Saleem Tariq, Assistant Chief Officer, Children and Young People’s Social Care.

The main areas of discussion were:

- Improving school attendance through development of intervention work and support for families.
- Governance arrangements of academies.
- Disseminating good practice across schools.
- Tackling the number of referrals and development of a multi-agency approach.
- Concern about the percentage of children’s homes that were rated good or better by Ofsted. (It was agreed to provide the Scrutiny Board with an update about this following the review of children’s homes provision.)

RESOLVED – That the contents of the report and appendices be noted.

60 Outcomes for Looked After Children

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which presented an analysis of the outcomes for looked after children.

The following Executive Member and officers attended the meeting and responded to Members’ questions and comments:

- Councillor Blake, Executive Member (Children and Families)
- Nigel Richardson, Director of Children’s Services
- Saleem Tariq, Assistant Chief Officer, Children and Young People’s Social Care
- Stephen Walker, Deputy Director – Safeguarding, Specialist and Targeted Services.
- Alun Rees, Head of the Leeds Virtual College for Vulnerable Children.

The key points of discussion were:

- Challenges associated with the recruitment of foster carers and the development of key marketing initiatives.

- Update on detailed work undertaken with Professor Thorpe in relation to tackling the number of referrals.
- Development of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF).

RESOLVED – That the contents of the report and appendices be noted.

(Ms Craven left the meeting at 11.40am, during the consideration of this item.)

61 Recommendation Tracking

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which requested Members to confirm the status of recommendations from previous inquiries.

Appended to the report was the recommendation tracking flowchart and draft recommendation status.

The status of recommendations were agreed as follows:

- Youth Service Surveys (recommendation 2) – achieved.
- Outdoor Education Centres (recommendation 2) – not achieved. Progress made acceptable. Continue monitoring.
- School Balances (recommendation 1) – not achieved. Progress made acceptable. Continue monitoring.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the contents of the report and appendices be noted
- (b) That the Scrutiny Board approves the status of recommendations as set out above.

(Councillor Renshaw left the meeting at 12.05pm, during the consideration of this item.)

62 Work Programme

A report was submitted by the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development which detailed the Scrutiny Board's work programme for the current municipal year.

Appended to the report for Members' information was the current version of the Board's work programme, minutes of the Executive Board meetings held on 2nd November and 14th December 2011, an extract from the Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 1st January to 30th April 2012, together with the notes of the Youth Services Working Group Meeting held on 16th December 2011.

The following requests for information / updates were noted at the meeting:

- Consistency of statistics in relation to children's services 3 "obsessions".
- A copy of the review of children's homes.
- The provision of religious education in schools.
- Update on foster carers / looked after children data.
- Fragmentation of school provision / update on academies.

RESOLVED – That the work programme be approved.

(Ms Cox left the meeting at 12.08pm during the consideration of this item.)

63 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Thursday, 9th February 2012 at 9.45am with a Pre Meeting for Board Members at 9.15am

(The meeting concluded at 12.15pm.)