

**SCRUTINY BOARD
(CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE)**

6TH APRIL 2006

PRESENT: Councillor Bale in the Chair
Councillors Brett, Ewens, Hussain, Kendall,
Murray, Renshaw and Selby

**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 C Macpherson – Parent Governor
Representative (Special)

**CO-OPTED MEMBERS:
(NON-VOTING)** Mr T Hales – Teacher Representative
Mr P Gathercole – NCH Representative

125 Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed all in attendance to the April meeting of the Scrutiny Board (Children and Young People).

126 Late Items

In accordance with his powers under Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chair admitted to the agenda a draft Scrutiny Board inquiry report entitled, 'Specialist Inclusive Learning Centres (SILCs)' for Members' approval, which had been unavailable at the time of the agenda despatch and was to be considered as part of Agenda Item 12. (Minute No 135 refers).

127 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Brett declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 11, due to being a Lead Member for the Neighbourhoods and Housing portfolio. (Minute No 134 refers).

Councillor Ewens and Mrs S Knights declared personal and prejudicial interests in Agenda Item 12, due to being governors of the North West Specialist Inclusive Learning Centre. (Minute No 135 refers).

Mr C Macpherson declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 12, due to his daughter being on the roll of the North West Specialist Inclusive Learning Centre from September 2006. (Minute No 135 refers).

Councillor Murray declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 11, due to his involvement with a Learning Partnerships charity. (Minute No 134 refers).

The following Members declared personal interests, due to their respective positions as either school or college governors:

Councillors Bale, Ewens, Kendall, Murray, Renshaw, Selby, Mr E A Britten, Mr C Macpherson and Mrs S Knights.

Professor P H J H Gosden declared a personal interest, due to being a member of the School Organisation Committee.

128 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors R D Feldman and Mulherin, Ms G Cooper and Ms C Foote.

129 Minute of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 16th March 2006 be approved as a correct record.

130 Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 6th March 2006 be noted.

(Councillor Hussain joined the meeting at 10.15 a.m. at the conclusion of this item)

131 Members' Questions

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which afforded Scrutiny Board Members the opportunity to put questions to the Chair (or the Chair's nominee) of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership.

Appended to the report for Members' information was a copy of the relevant extract from the Council's Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 1st April 2006 to 31st July 2006, together with the Executive Board minutes from the meeting held on 22nd March 2006 and the minutes from the Children and Young People's Executive Group meeting held on 25th January 2006.

In attendance at the meeting to answer Members' questions were Rosemary Archer, Director of Children's Services and David Dickinson, Deputy Chief Executive of Education Leeds.

In response to Members' queries relating to the lack of Elected Members on the Children and Young People's Executive Group, the Board was advised that the Executive Group did not possess any decision making powers with regard to financial issues and were informed that arrangements surrounding such groups were still to be determined as part of the requirements under the Children Act 2004. Members also noted that a report detailing such proposals was scheduled to be submitted to the Board in the new municipal year.

The Board then questioned to what extent the child's school should still be the first point of contact if a child was being bullied outside of school, bearing in mind the multi-agency approach that the Children Act 2004 sought to foster.

In response, the Board was advised that the child's school should be the first point of contact, and although all necessary mechanisms were not yet in place, in theory, an overall and comprehensive multi-agency approach should be taken to address the situation. Members also noted that schools were becoming more effective in collaborating with other agencies when tackling such problems and that the head teacher of the child's school would be encouraged to contact the schools of the perpetrators in order to fully address the situation.

132 Youth Service Post Ofsted Action Plan

The Board received a report from the Head of the Youth Service which updated Members on the actions taken in response to Ofsted's recommendations following their inspection of the service in September 2004, which had led to Government Office deciding in February 2006 that no further monitoring of Leeds Youth Service was required.

Appended to the report for Members' information was a copy of the Leeds Youth Service Ofsted Action Plan.

In attendance at the meeting to answer Members' queries and questions were Maz Asghar and Neil Bowden, both of whom were Senior Youth Officers.

In response to Members' questions relating to the increased membership of the Youth Council and the existence of awards ceremonies to recognise the work with young people which was undertaken by the voluntary sector, the Senior Youth Worker undertook to provide Members with data relating to the Youth Council's membership and stated that although no awards ceremonies currently existed, such an initiative could be considered in the future.

Following Members' questions relating to the training of voluntary youth workers in certain areas of Leeds, the Board was informed that due to the length of time it had taken to complete an initial National Vocational Qualification programme, alternative training which would be accessible to the voluntary sector was being considered and was scheduled to begin in September 2006. The Senior Youth Worker then undertook to provide Members with statistics relating to the current number of workers who were fully qualified.

Having discussed issues relating to the improvement of services provided in the Roundhay Ward, the Board referred to the user survey featured in the Youth Service Ofsted Action Plan and questioned whether there was a feedback mechanism established for other agencies, such as the Police, who frequently interacted with the Youth

Service. In response, the Board was advised that although a survey of partner organisations did not currently exist and that feedback came from the Youth Work Partnership, such an initiative could be considered in the future.

With regard to detached youth workers, Members asked about examples of multi-agency detached youth work, and any sensitivities for youth workers when liaising with agencies such as the Police. In response the Board was advised that detached youth workers had been involved in multi-agency Neighbourhood Tasking Groups which had tackled hotspots across the city, and although sensitivities could exist, other agencies had been very encouraging about the role of the Youth Service in diversionary and preventative work.

A discussion relating to the involvement of the Youth Service in the Extended Schools initiative then ensued.

RESOLVED – That the report and information appended to the report be received and noted.

133 Implementing the Children Act in Leeds

The Chief Executive submitted a report which informed Members of the revisions to the officer delegation scheme following the appointment of the Director of Children's Services, advised the Board of the legislative requirements and statutory guidance which related to the role of a Lead Member under the Children Act 2004 and the implications of decision making by individual Executive Members and which set out proposals relating to how the role of the Lead Member for Children's Services might best be supported by other Members.

Appended to the report for Members' information were copies of the revised officer delegation schemes for executive functions following the appointment of the Director of Children's Services, a copy of the revised Article 12 of the Constitution which set out the role of the Director of Adult Social Services, a set of guidance which related to the implications of decision-making by an individual Executive Member and a copy of possible revised Executive Member portfolios which set out alternatives of how the Lead Member for Children's Services may be best supported by other Members.

In attendance at the meeting to answer Members' queries and questions were Paul Rogerson, Chief Executive, Rosemary Archer, Director of Children's Services, David Dickinson, Deputy Chief Executive of Education Leeds, Stuart Turnock, Chief Legal Services Officer and Liz Davenport, Principal Corporate Governance Officer.

Having received a brief summary of the revised officer delegation schemes following the appointment of the Director of Children's Services, the Board was advised that the Children Act 2004 required the local authority to designate a Lead Member in respect of the local

authority's children's services. Although a deadline for the legal requirement to make such an appointment had not yet been set, it was considered appropriate to make such an appointment in Leeds at the annual meeting of Council, in light of the appointment of the Director of Children's Services.

The Board was then informed that although the Lead Member would be fully politically accountable for the local authority's children's services on behalf of the executive, the guidance from the Secretary of State was that arrangements could be made for the Lead Member to share aspects of their portfolio.

The Chief Executive then acknowledged that although it would be a challenge to share the responsibilities of such a role, he stated that due to the size of the portfolio, it was his intention, following discussions with relevant colleagues and Members, to recommend to the Leader of the Council, a model which would see another Executive Member appointed to support the Executive Member designated as Lead Member under the 2004 Act, whose portfolio would be defined in relation to specific functions within the Lead Member portfolio.

Having discussed the implications of individual decision making by an Executive Member and the ways in which concurrent authority would be incorporated into the model, Members made enquiries into the approach taken by other local authorities and some Board Members proposed a model which would see one Executive or Lead Member wholly responsible for the portfolio being supported by a further three non-Executive Members.

Members discussed whether two Executive Members each possessing some responsibilities with respect to children's services, might present ambiguities both internally and externally. In response, the Board was advised that although it was crucial that the adopted model provided absolute clarity with respect to ultimate political accountability, there was no reason why the Lead Member could not be supported by a subordinate Executive Member, given the size of the portfolio.

Following a discussion relating to the potential relationship which could exist between the Lead Member and the subordinate Executive Member and the implications that the adoption of the model proposed by the Chief Executive could have, Members were assured that whatever model was chosen, there would be ample opportunity to review and revise the situation at appropriate intervals in the future.

The Director of Children's Services then gave a brief presentation which related to the differences that her recent appointment would make to the way in which children's services were administered in Leeds, what her priorities as Director would be and what methods and mechanisms would be used to implement the changes required under the Children Act 2004.

It was then formally moved by Councillor Selby and seconded by Councillor Murray

That the proposals before the Board be amended to the effect that the Scrutiny Board (Children and Young People) recommends that at the Annual Meeting of Council, the Leader of Council appoints only one Executive Member (Children Act 2004 "Lead Member") responsible for Children's Services, to be supported by three Lead Members.

Upon being put to the vote the amendment was declared lost and it was

(Under the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 16.5 Councillor Kendall required it to be recorded that she abstained from voting on the amendment moved by Councillor Selby)

RESOLVED –

- (a). That the revised officer delegation scheme for executive functions, following the appointment of the Director of Children's Services, with effect from 1 March 2006, be noted;
- (b). That the consequential amendments to the constitution, in particular the revised Article 12 setting out the role of the Director of Adult Social Services, be noted;
- (c). That the advice contained within the report as to the legislative provisions in respect of the designation of a Lead Member under the Children Act 2004 be noted;
- (d). That the advice contained within the report about the implications of decision making by an individual Executive Member be noted;
- (e). That the advice contained within the report as to how the role of the Lead Member may best be supported by other Members, and in particular the proposals in respect of revised Executive Portfolios to reflect the designation of a Lead Members for Children's Services, be noted;
- (f). That the presentation from the Director of Children's Services be noted.

(Councillors Brett and Renshaw left the meeting at 12.10 p.m. at the conclusion of this item)

134 Anti-Social Behaviour Interventions

The Board received a report from the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development which presented the inquiry report of the Scrutiny Board (Environment and Community Safety) on Anti-Social Behaviour Interventions.

Members stated that as there were several recommendations within the inquiry report which could potentially be investigated by the Scrutiny Board in the future, it was recommended that the Scrutiny Board's successor could give consideration to adding the issue to its

2006/2007 work programme. It was agreed that this should include consideration of the formal response to the recommendations made in the report.

RESOLVED –

(a). That the report and the Scrutiny Board (Environment and Community Safety) inquiry report into Anti-Social Behaviour Interventions be noted;

(b). That the Board recommend that further work into Anti-Social Behaviour Interventions be considered by the Scrutiny Board or its successor in the next municipal year.

(Councillor Ewens and Mrs S Knights left the meeting at 12.15 p.m. at the conclusion of this item)

135 Scrutiny Board Inquiry Report – Specialist Inclusive Learning Centres (SILCs)

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which sought Members' approval of the final draft version of the Scrutiny Board (Children and Young People) inquiry report into Specialist Inclusive Learning Centres (SILCs).

The Chair thanked all of those who had participated in the comprehensive piece of work and stated that he believed that in addition to striking the correct balance the report had done justice to the importance of the issue.

With regard to paragraph 3.32 of the draft report, the Board agreed to replace the word 'saddened' with the word 'alarmed'.

RESOLVED –

(a). That the report and information appended to the report be noted;

(b). That the Scrutiny Board inquiry report into Specialist Inclusive Learning Centres (SILCs) be approved, subject to the inclusion of the above amendment.

136 Annual Report

The Board received a report from the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development which sought Members' approval of the Board's contribution towards the Scrutiny Board (Children and Young People) Annual Report.

Members then extended their thanks to Councillor Bale for his chairmanship of the Scrutiny Board over the last municipal year, which had seen the Board undertake a heavy and varied programme of work.

RESOLVED –

(a). That the report and the information appended to the report be noted;

(b). That the Board's contribution towards the Scrutiny Board (Children and Young People's) Annual Report be approved.

137 Work Programme

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which detailed several issues that the Scrutiny Board had suggested to be considered by the successor Scrutiny Board in the next municipal year.

Members noted that an additional meeting of the Scrutiny Board had been scheduled for 26th April 2006 to finalise and approve the outstanding draft Scrutiny Board inquiry reports from the current municipal year.

RESOLVED – That the report and the information appended to the report be noted.

(The meeting concluded at 12.25 p.m.)