

SCRUTINY BOARD (CHILDREN AND FAMILIES)

THURSDAY, 8TH NOVEMBER, 2012

PRESENT: Councillor J Chapman in the Chair

Councillors C Gruen, A Hussain, A Khan,
A Lamb, P Latty, M Rafique, K Renshaw,
A Sobel and B Urry

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)

CO-OPTED MEMBERS (NON-VOTING):

Ms C Foote – Teacher Representative

Ms C Raftery – Teacher Representative

Mrs S Hutchinson – Early Years Representative

Ms J Morris-Boam – Young Lives Leeds

70 Chair's Opening Remarks

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

71 Late Items

In accordance with her powers under Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chair agreed to accept the following supplementary items, which were not available at the time of agenda despatch:

- Briefing Note – Early Intervention Grant and Funding for the provision of the Free Nursery education entitlement for Vulnerable 2 Year Olds prepared by the Head of Finance (Children's Services) (Agenda Item 7)(Minute 75 refers)
- Learning Skills and Universal Services – Powerpoint presentation slides (Agenda Item 7)(Minute 75 refers)
- 2011/12 Early Years Foundation Stage Profile outcomes by cluster (Agenda Item 7)(Minute 75 refers)

The documents were not available at the time of the agenda despatch, but subsequently made available to the public on the Council's website prior to and after the meeting.

72 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests

The following significant interest was declared at the meeting:-

- Councillor B Urry in his capacity as a Governor at Roundhay St John's Church of England School (Agenda Item 7) (Minute 75 refers)

73 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor B Gettings, Ms T Kayani (Co-opted Member) and Ms J Morris-Boam (Co-opted Member).

The Principal Scrutiny Adviser also informed the meeting that Councillor J Blake, Executive Member (Children and Families) and Mr N Richardson, Director of Children's Services had also conveyed their apologies due to prior engagements.

74 Minutes - 11th October 2012

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 11th October 2012 be approved as a correct record.

75 Scrutiny Inquiry - Foundation Years - providing the best start in life for Children to succeed – Session 3

Referring to Minute 66 of the meeting held on 11th October 2012, the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which provided information relating to session 3 of the Board's inquiry into looking at foundation years (age 0-5) and how services in Leeds were provided to promote the best start in life for children, to equip them with the skills to succeed and promote their social mobility.

Appended to the report were copies of the following documents for the information/comment of the meeting:-

- Domestic Violence Action Plan for Leeds 2012/13 (Appendix A refers)
- Foundation Years – providing the best start in life for children to succeed – Session 3 – Report of the Director of Children's Services (Appendix B refers)

In addition to the above documents, copies of the following supplementary information was also circulated at the meeting:

- A copy of a briefing note entitled 'Early Intervention Grant and Funding for the provision of the Free Nursery education entitlement for Vulnerable 2 Year Olds prepared by the Head of Finance (Children's Services)
- Learning Skills and Universal Services – Powerpoint presentation slides
- 2011/12 Early Years Foundation Stage Profile outcomes by cluster

The Chair welcomed the following officers to the meeting:-

- Sue Rumbold, Chief Officer (Partnership, Development and Business Support), Children's Services
- Andrea Richardson, Head of Early Years Help Services, Children's Services
- Liz Bradley, Early Years and Foundation Stage Improvement Manager, Children's Services
- Neil Warren, Head of Finance, Children's Services

- Lisa Smith, Childrens Centre Manager, Children's Services
- Collette Kurylo, Children's Centre Manager, Chapeltown, Children's Services
- Michelle de Souza, Community Safety Manager, Children's Services
- Joanna Smith, 4Children who ran the City and Hunslet Children's Centre

The Principal Scrutiny Adviser informed the meeting that Session 3 of the inquiry would focus on the following specific areas:

- Leeds Education Challenge – Foundation Stage: Children's Services and Cluster approach to the three prime development areas:
 - personal, social and emotional development
 - communication and language and
 - physical development
- Progress since the Education Standards – Entering the Education System inquiry 2009
- Early Years Foundation Stage (September 2012) Legislation changes
- Free early education – take up of places for 3 and 4 year olds, increasing take up and engaging parents
- Extension of free early education to 2 year olds (September 2013) – Preparation, promotion and strengthening the quality of providers

Prior to discussing Session 3 of the inquiry, the Chair invited Michelle de Souza, Community Safety Manager to briefly discuss the domestic violence support question raised at the last meeting.

She focused on the following three specific areas:

- The fact that domestic violence was triggered when women become pregnant and the support available from midwives and health visitors in this regard
- The work undertaken with the Children's Centres and the information available on domestic violence
- The therapeutic support available for children who had emotional problems as a result of domestic violence

The key areas of discussion were:

- Clarification of the high risk factors and the support available for siblings with specific reference to the work undertaken in this area by MORAC
- Clarification if domestic violence was more evident in areas of deprivation or high unemployment
- Clarification of the work undertaken to date towards verbal and physical violence to teenage girls who were seen as a vulnerable group in this area
- The mental and emotional support available for children and young people who have witnessed domestic violence

Liz Bailey, Early Years and Foundation Stage Improvement Manager presented a brief powerpoint presentation on 'Learning Skills and Universal Services' which focused on the attainment gap in Leeds.

Andrea Richardson, Head of Early Years Help Services highlighted the key issues contained within the report and supporting documents and to assist the Board with their deliberations of the inquiry, representatives from three Children's Centres were present to provide additional information.

The Principal Scrutiny Adviser read out a statement from Jane Middlebrook, Manager of Kaleidoscope from the Private Nursery sector regarding the relationship/involvement between private providers and clusters.

The key areas of discussion were:

- Concerns expressed that there was not enough early years spaces available, especially in East Leeds
- The need for the Board to be supplied with more information on the Early Year's take up
- The concerns expressed that families were struggling to pay travelling expenses to transport children to other areas of the city for childcare
- Clarification of the three questions relating to the attainment gap in Leeds and the need for the Board to be supplied with more details on the proportion of settings and on what challenges were available as part of the representations being made by the Core Strategy
(The Head of Early Years Help Services responded and agreed to provide a breakdown of data on a ward by ward basis in relation to 2, 3 and 4 year olds)
- The need for a working group to be established to address the information raised at today's meeting
- Clarification of the SEN's involvement within the process
- Clarification of the number of 4 year olds who would be in the 20% cohort of low attainment
(The Head of Early Years Help Services responded and commented on the assessment criteria. She agreed to provide more information on the figures via the Principal Scrutiny Adviser)
- Clarification of the support available to parents in relation to the 5 year old provision
- The concerns expressed about the language and literacy issues that existed for children and how the authority engaged with parents
- The funding issues for free early years provision within the different sectors of Leeds
- The need for the Board to be supplied with more detail on cross sector meetings to include numbers of attendees, information on provides and the evaluation criteria
(The Early Years and Foundation Stage Improvement Manager responded and agreed to provide this information via the Principal Scrutiny Adviser)
- Clarification of the pilot take up figures

- Concern about attainment gap data in the JESS and C.H.E.S.S clusters
- The need for a Health Visitor to inform parent of the 'Breeze' at the nine month assessment stage and for records to be undertaken
- The need for developers to be make contribution via Community Infrastructure Levy to the Early Years provision
- Clarification if there were enough Outreach Workers within the area's of need

Neil Warren, Head of Finance to made a brief presentation on the Early Intervention Grant and Funding for the provision of the Free Nursery education entitlement for Vulnerable 2 Year Olds.

The key areas of discussion were:

- Clarification of the protocol in relation to the two year old grant money going into the Dedicated Schools Grant
(The Head of Finance responded and outlined the estimated figures and agreed to report back further information on this issue via the Principal Scrutiny Adviser)
- Clarification of the protocol for the two year old grant being identified for vulnerable children for two years and what would happen in year three
- Concern about the overall requirement to provide an expanded service without any additional funding
- Clarification if the Core Offer was guaranteed for a year or by term .
- The need to consider devising a standard form for any child who was accepted into a school as apart of the transition arrangements

RESOLVED –

- a) That the contents of the report, appendices and supplementary information be noted.
- b) That a vote of thanks be conveyed to those officers in attendance for their contribution and input into Session 3 of the inquiry.
- c) That a working group be established in either December 2012/January 2013 to address the specific issues raised at today's meeting and that in the interim period, Board Members be requested to forward any further/ or unanswered questions to the Principal Scrutiny Adviser for dissemination to relevant officers.

(Councillor A Khan joined the meeting at 10.15am during discussions of the above item)

(Councillor A Hussain left the meeting at 12.10pm during discussions of the above item)

76 Recommendation Tracking – Improving School Attendance
(Due to time restraints, this item was withdrawn until the next meeting on 13th December 2012)

77 Recommendation Tracking – External Placements
(Due to time restraints, this item was withdrawn until the next meeting on 13th December 2012)

78 Draft Scrutiny Inquiry Final Report – Safeguarding Children – Private Care Homes

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which requested that the Board consider and agree their report following its inquiry into Safeguarding Children – Private Care Homes.

Appended to the report was a copy of a document entitled ‘Draft Scrutiny Inquiry Final report Safeguarding Children – Private Care Homes – 8th November 2012’ for the information/comment of the meeting.

The Chair welcomed the following officers to the meeting:-

- Sue Rumbold, Chief Officer (Partnership, Development and Business Support), Children’s Services
- Martin Sellens, Head of Planning Services, City Development

The Principal Scrutiny Adviser presented the report responded to Members’ queries and comments.

The key areas of discussion were:

- To remind the Board that some planning constraints are a national issue
(The Chair confirmed that representation had already been made to the Children’s Minister on this issue)
- Clarification that the Childrens Residential Home Charter was being progressed under the banner of being a Child Friendly City
(The Chief Officer (Partnership, Development and Business Support), Children’s Services responded on this issue)

RESOLVED –

- a) That the contents of the report and appendices be noted.
- b) That approval be given to the Board’s report following its inquiry into Safeguarding Children-Private Care Homes as now outlined.

79 Work Schedule

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which detailed the Scrutiny Board’s work schedule for the current municipal year.

Appended to the report for Members’ information was the current version of the Board’s work programme; a copy of Executive Board minutes of a meeting

held on 17th October 2012 and an extract from the Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 10th September 2012 to 24th October 2012.

The Principal Scrutiny Adviser presented the report responded to Members' queries and comments.

In her presentation, the Principal Scrutiny Adviser referred to the working group established to look into outstanding issues in relation to the Board's Inquiry on 'Foundation Years – Providing the Best Start in Life for Children to Succeed – Session 3' (Minute 75 refers) and confirmed that she would contact Board Members to arrange a convenient date and time in December 2012/January 2013.

The Principal Scrutiny Adviser also referred to the Youth Review Working Group to consider the views and recommendations of the group in response to the report of Damien Allen, NOHA Associates 'The Leeds 'Youth Offer' – findings and propositions. She requested any further suggestions/recommendations on the notes of the meeting to prepare a report for submission on this issue to the Executive Board at the January 2013 meeting.

The key areas of discussion were:

- With regard to Foundation Years, the need for the Board to be more challenging towards the attainment gap in Leeds and as a result the working group should focus on the issue of knowing where the quality of settings were located. In addition the need for the working group to look a research work undertaken by the universities
(The Principal Scrutiny Adviser responded and agreed to look into this issue)
- The need for the Board to see copies of the minutes of the Children's Trust Board

RESOLVED –

- a) That the work schedule be approved.
- b) That the copy of Executive Board minutes of a meeting held on 17th October 2012 and an extract from the Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 10th September 2012 to 24th October 2012 be noted.
- c) That the Principal Scrutiny Adviser be requested to prepare a report to the Executive Board at the January 2013 meeting on 'The Leeds 'Youth Offer' – findings and propositions' in accordance with the recommendations made by the Youth Review Working Group.
- d) That the Principal Scrutiny Adviser be requested to include minutes of the Children's Trust Board within the work schedule.

80 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Thursday 13th December 2012 at 9.45am in the Civic Hall, Leeds with a Pre meeting for Board Members at 9.15am.

(The meeting concluded at 12.30pm)