

AT A MEETING  
- of the -  
**CHILDRENS SERVICES**  
**AND LIFELONG LEARNING**  
**SCRUTINY AND**  
**PERFORMANCE PANEL**  
held at the Council House,  
Walsall on **Thursday 8**  
**September 2005** at 6.00pm

PRESENT

Councillor Bird (Chairman)  
Councillor Arif  
Councillor Chambers  
Councillor Harris  
Councillor Khan  
Councillor Martin  
Councillor Robertson  
Councillor Wilkes

NON-ELECTED VOTING MEMBERS

Mr A Butterworth (Lichfield Diocesan  
Board of Education)  
Mrs E. Collins (Parent Governor)

OFFICERS

Mr David Martin (Executive Director)  
Helen Denton  
Pauline Pilkington  
Jane Evans  
Diane Osborne  
Pat Warner

APOLOGIES

Apologies for non attendance were submitted on behalf of Councillor E. E. Pitt and Mr M. Quinn.

SUBSTITUTIONS

The chairman advised the panel of the following changes to the membership of the committee for the duration of the meeting: -

- Delete: Councillor Cassidy
- Substitute: Councillor Robertson

- Delete: Councillor Walker
- Substitute: Councillor Harris

The panel welcomed Councillor Wilkes to his first meeting of the scrutiny panel.

#### DECLARATION OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of interest declared at this meeting.

#### MINUTES

#### 8. RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 30 June 2005; a copy having been previously circulated to each member of the panel be approved and signed by the chair as a correct record.

#### TEENAGE PREGNANCY – FUTURE MONITORING PROCESS

Prior to the consideration of this item the chair advised the panel that he had agreed to accept a late item on this issue to be raised by Councillor Martin.

The panel agreed that the issue on “Teenage Parents and Parents to be and Supported Housing” to be raised by Councillor Martin can be considered as part of the item on the agenda and be considered at the conclusion of the discussion of that item.

A report prepared by Diane Osborne in respect of data available to form the teenage pregnancy strategy was submitted: -

(see annexed)

Diane Osborne advised the panel that the document had been prepared following requests at the last meeting for information that will enhance partners knowledge of current interventions and inform on the progress towards the reduction in teenage pregnancy. The panel were being requested to consider how often such data should be presented at its meetings.

Councillor Bird enquired how the progress of projects relating to the reduction of teenage pregnancy would be monitored.

The panel was advised that whilst there was no data specifically to provide such information it would be possible to look at trends and to track cohorts in the future.

In answer to a question raised the panel was also informed that data was collected in some form from schools for under 16's although the ethnicity of such students were not directly collected. The panel was also informed that

the number of teenage pregnancies within the ethnic population was very low compared to the indigenous population.

#### 9. RESOLVED

That the information presented at this meeting should be presented in the future on a quarterly basis.

#### Supported Housing for Young Mothers and Mothers to be

Councillor Martin in raising the issue informed the panel that she would be working with Diane Osborne to provide supported housing for young mothers and mothers to be in the borough. Currently the service had no partners to support it except the provision of ten units provided by Caldmore Housing in the Caldmore area and four units at the Lighthouse in Westbourne Street.

Councillor Martin said the facilities provided in Caldmore were inappropriate for these young people because it was within the red-light district and these were young females who were left to provide for themselves in the evenings and at night because of the lack of adequate provision to assist them at this time of the day. None of the fourteen units were fully supported. The aim was to find an adequate site for this service as well as financial and other support. Councillor Bird advised the panel that he was aware of a vacant facility in Aldridge called Beacon View. This had been until recently a unit for people with learning disabilities so the facilities there should be adequate for the needs of these young people.

The panel suggested that Kathy McAteer should be approached to ascertain whether this vacant building could be used for this purpose.

Councillor Bird further confirmed that this service was outside the jurisdiction of the local authority and was a charitable funded organisation. It was not possible, therefore, to seek the funding from the local authority through the portfolio holder.

Diane Osborne advised the panel that capital funding had already been identified and that the revenue could be provided through the housing benefit but the service was currently not being fully supported in Walsall and as a result these young people were without any support at the weekends and during the latter part of the evenings on a week day.

Councillor Bird thanked Councillor Martin for raising this matter with the panel and requested that she keeps the panel informed of the work in progress of this service.

#### MONITORING REPORT – SOCIAL CARE/CHILDREN'S PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The report on the quality and performance of Children's Services during 2004/5 was submitted: -

(see annexed)

The panel was advised that the report summarised the key achievements in respect of quality and performance in Children's Services during 2004/5 and identifies a number of key priorities for 2005/6.

Pauline Pilkington advised the panel that Children's Services are assessed each year and this year for the first time joint assessment has taken place with Social Care and Children's Services. The aim of the assessment is to ensure that these services have met the outcomes set out in the government document "Every Child Matters".

The report listed major developments in these services as set out in the report now submitted.

One of the major developments was the achievement of significant savings to bring Children's Services expenditure in line with the budget following a strategic review predicting an over spend. The aim of Children's Services is to support children in their families and communities and prevent the need for them to become looked after by the authority. For those that require this service the council seeks to ensure they achieve the best outcomes in their lives. The key performance indicators as judged by the CSC/DfES have shown overall significant improvement this year.

Councillor Bird and Councillor Robertson both welcomed the excellent news relating to the improvement in Children's Services.

#### 10. RESOLVED

That the contents of the report be noted and this panel expresses its support and congratulates the Children's Services for the improved performance.

#### CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY

The resolution of cabinet on 13 July 2005 was submitted: -

- "That a report reviewing the role of elected members undertaking children's residential visits be taken to the Children's Services and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny and Performance Panel".

The report to cabinet at its meeting on 13 July 2005 on this issue was submitted: -

(see annexed)

Pauline advised the panel that the aim was to extend the support to looked after children in this borough by requesting that elected members consider undertaking visits to children's homes or contact in other ways with children in local authority homes.

Pauline advised the panel that further information would be submitted to the next meeting of the panel to advise members about the legalities and details of doing so.

The panel were advised that if members were in agreement to undertaking this new task it would be necessary for all those members to undergo a police check.

11. The panel RESOLVED:

- That the proposal for members to visit children's homes was a good one and that the report being presented to the next meeting should include details of the lists of children's homes in each ward of the borough.
- That a rota be drawn up for the beginning of the municipal year.
- That the details of training to be undertaken be included together with the CRB forms and guidelines.

WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2005/6

The report setting out the current position of the work of the panel and its work groups as agreed at the last meeting was submitted: -

(see annexed)

The panel were requested to consider nominations to the Social Inclusion Working Group and the Obesity Working Group for the municipal year 2005/6.

12. The panel RESOLVED:

1. That Councillor Cassidy be appointed the third member of the Social Inclusion Working Group the total membership being three members as follows:-
  - Councillor Arif;
  - Councillor Khan;
  - Councillor Cassidy.
2. That Councillor Martin be nominated to serve on the Joint Obesity Working Group with the Children's Scrutiny Panel for the municipal year 2005/6.

In considering the work programme further Councillor Bird enquired about the School Buildings Working Group, the first meeting of which for the municipal year would take place on 23 September 2005. He requested from Helen Denton for submission to that meeting a progress on the priority one repair work to date and a list of the repair works undertaken during the summer holidays.

FORWARD PLAN – 19 AUGUST 2005

The forward plan for August 2005 was submitted: -

(see annexed)

Councillor Bird said he was very pleased to see the improvement being made to the forward plan in the provision of additional information to enable members to identify the items being submitted to cabinet in the future.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

13. RESOLVED

Members confirmed that the next meeting would be held on 20 October 2005.

There being no further business the meeting terminated at 7.00 p.m.

Signed: .....

Date: .....