

AT A MEETING  
- of the -  
**CHILDRENS SERVICES**  
**AND LIFELONG LEARNING**  
**SCRUTINY AND**  
**PERFORMANCE PANEL**  
held at the Council House,  
Walsall on **Thursday 22**  
**December 2005** at 6.00pm

PRESENT

Councillor Bird (Chairman)  
Councillor Cassidy  
Councillor Madely  
Councillor Walker  
Mrs E. Collins (Parent Governor)  
Mr. M.Lee (Parent Governor)  
Mr. R.Grainger (NUT)  
  
Councillor Hughes (Portfolio Holder)

OFFICERS

David Brown (Director of Children's Services)  
Pauline Pilkington (Assistant Director (Children's  
Services) - Social Care & Supported  
Housing)  
Helen Denton, (Managing Director of Education  
Walsall)  
Susan Lupton, (Strategic Leader (School  
Organisation, Admissions, Capital &  
Asset Management) Education  
Walsall)  
Diane Osborne (Teenage Pregnancy  
Coordinator)  
Jane Evans (Walsall tPCT)  
Stuart Bentley (Scrutiny Support)

APOLOGIES

Apologies for non attendance were submitted on behalf of Councillors E. E. Pitt, Martin, Arif, Khan and Wilkes and on behalf of Mr. Butterworth and Mr. Quinn.

The Chair advised the Panel that Mr. Butterworth had now retired from the Panel and suggested that a letter of thanks be sent on the Panel's behalf to thank him for his service.

## SUBSTITUTIONS

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

- Delete: Councillor Chambers
- Substitute: Councillor Madeley

## DECLARATION OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of interest declared at this meeting.

## MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD 20 OCTOBER 2005

(annexed)

### 22 Resolved:

That the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 20 October 2005, copies having been previously circulated to each member of the panel be approved and signed by the chairman as a correct record, following the addition of Councillor Arif's apologies.

## MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD 28 NOVEMBER 2005

(annexed)

### 23 Resolved:

That the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 28 November 2005, copies having been previously circulated to each member of the panel be approved and signed by the chairman as a correct record.

## MINUTES OF THE SCHOOL BUILDINGS WORKING GROUP 10 NOVEMBER 2005

(annexed)

Councillor Bird reported that he was happy with the progress of the working group and that the group had received a further update of the progress on priority one schemes.

### 24 Resolved:

That the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 10 November 2005, copies having been previously circulated to each member of the panel be approved and signed by the chairman as a correct record.

## MINUTES OF THE SOCIAL INCLUSION WORKING GROUP 30 NOVEMBER 2005

(annexed)

## 25 Resolved:

That the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 30 November 2005, copies having been previously circulated to each member of the panel be approved and signed by the chairman as a correct record.

## ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT (APA) RESULTS

David Brown reported that Walsall had done very well, scoring 3 out of 4 for both Children's Services and Education and that, by definition, Walsall was that fastest improving Children's Services in the country over the period 2002-5. This was a testament to all the hard work that had been undertaken and broadcasting this should aid with recruitment and retention. He further reported that the developments areas highlighted by the assessment would be an integral part of the children's and young peoples plan that would be brought to the panel in due course.

Councillor Bird welcomed the news and expressed his pleasure over the greater cohesion in service delivery with particular reference to the impact of the partnership with Serco. He also praised Councillor Hughes for his input.

Councillor Cassidy stated that Serco had been exceptionally helpful when she had approached them for help and advice arising from Ward issues.

Both Councillors Bird and Cassidy expressed their dismay over the recent events in Sheffield but were of the opinion that such events were far less likely in Walsall than they had previously been. They enquired about the possibility of greater data sharing between services.

David Brown replied that there was a drive to a common assessment framework and one the greatest barriers would be to highlight the borough wide approach to frontline staff.

Councillor Madely was keen that the Council should be seen to be giving Social Workers their full backing.

## TEENAGE PREGNANCY

(annexed)

Councillor Bird reported that Councillor Martin had been impressed by the work of Caldmore Housing Association where they had a zero rate of mothers reporting second pregnancies.

Dianne Osborne replied that the unit was residential and its success highlighted the lack of supported housing in the Borough. She reported that Hayden Sanders were looking to expand and had approached her for advice. She had advised that there was a requirement for family units as the current units were for lone parents.

Councillor Bird suggested that there were properties in Walsall Wood owned by Accord Housing Association that would be ideal.

Dianne Osborne stated that they had employed a consultant to assess possible assets and he had advised her that, due to DDA regulations, it may prove to be better value for money to produce new builds than to refurbish existing stock.

Councillor Madely asks if there were areas of Walsall with higher rates of teenage pregnancy and were resources being targeted in these areas.

Dianne Osborne confirmed that this was the case.

Councillor Bird reported that there was a drive to produce micro-units by the likes of Redrow and Wimpey. These were small and affordable and they may be worth pursuing as an option. He also reported that the Council owned a lorry park, off Brooklands Road, and that this may be a possible site and he suggested officers approach the establishments team to investigate this further.

#### 26 Resolved

That officers contact the Chief Executive of Accord Housing Group to investigate the possible use of properties in the Walsall Wood area.

That officers contact the establishments team to investigate the possible use of the lorry park off Brooklands Road.

#### PROGRESS AND ATTAINMENT: EFFECT OF WALSALL ACADEMY

Helen Denton reported that Serco were still awaiting publication of the Secondary Panda's from the DfES and they were, therefore, unable to draw any meaningful conclusions at this point.

#### 27 Resolved

That Serco would report back to the panel following the publication of Secondary Panda's.

#### CORPORATE PARENTING: PAREMETERS AND OUTCOMES

Pauline Pilkington spoke to the report highlighting the key points for Members and requesting the Members input into the forward plan.

(annexed)

Councillor Cassidy inquired if all Members had undergone a CRB check.

Pauline Pilkington replied that a CRB process would be needed.

Councillor Bird suggested that the whole Council should be CRB checked and that Councillor Hughes take a report to Cabinet requesting that the whole Council undergo a CRB check.

Councillor Hughes and Pauline Pilkington replied that they would be delighted to take such a report.

Councillor Cassidy stated that visits could be emotionally difficult and asked what support the Members would receive.

Helen Denton suggested that a themed approach to the visits might help focus the event.

Pauline Pilkington replied that this was to be the approach taken and Members would be given advice and support throughout the process.

#### 28 resolved

That Pauline Pilkington and Councillor Hughes draft a report to Cabinet requesting that the whole Council undertake a CRB check.

#### BEACON INDEX

(annexed)

Councillor Bird stated that the report seemed self-explanatory and it would appear that all the right boxes were being ticked.

#### ALDRIDGE PUPIL NUMBERS

(annexed)

Councillor Bird stated that he was more satisfied that schools in the area could accommodate the areas' pupils.

Helen Denton stated that there were actually more places available for Aldridge pupils than the report indicated as pupils from outside of the area skewed the data somewhat.

#### CHILDREN'S OVERWEIGHT AND OBESITY

Jane Evans reported that a meeting had taken place with partners and a plan had been drawn up with Education Walsall to collect and collate baseline data. This process should be completed by April. She was now in the process of setting up a small cross-agency working group, details of which would be furnished at a later date, and funding had been sought to fund a lead post from April 2006.

Councillor Bird asked if the work could be linked to the Community Plan, in particular with the work of Walsall Football Club.

Jane Evans replied that she had already been in contact with them.

#### TERMINATION OF THE MEETING

Councillor Bird thanked everyone for their attendance and wished all a Merry Christmas.

There being no further business the meeting terminated at 6:45 p.m.