

**CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL**

5 July 2007 at 6 p.m.

Panel Members present

E. Hughes (Chair)  
E.E. Pitt (Vice Chair)  
Bird,  
Cassidy,  
Chambers,  
Martin,

Officers present

David Brown	Executive Director – Children's Services
Helen Denton	Managing Director – Education Walsall
Pauline Pilkington	Assistant Director - Specialist Services
Tony Stainer	Deputy Managing Director – Education Walsall

**01/07 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Councillors Ahmed, and Khan.

**02/07 SUBSTITUTIONS**

There were no substitution(s) for the duration of this meeting.

**03/07 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP**

There were no declarations of interest or party whip identified at this meeting.

**04/07 LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

Members noted that there were no items for consideration in private session at this meeting.

**05/07 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**Resolved**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2007, copies having previously been circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record.

**06/07 TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES**

The panel discussed the procedures in operation when members wished to book on a training course. The panel noted the training opportunities as previously circulated.

## **07/07 FORWARD PLAN**

The forward plan as at 8 June 2007 was submitted:

### **Resolved**

That the forward plan be noted.

## **08/07 Progress and update on education contract**

David Brown gave an update on the progress of the education contract and circulated a document which detailed the panels concerns and where this was addressed in the education contract (annexed). It was concluded that it was hoped that a preferred bidder would be identified by January 2008.

Members expressed concerns that the project board was operating within tight timescales, and asked if there if contingency plans were for the handover of the contract. David Brown stated that these were in place and he would be happy to provide members with further detail outside of the meeting.

### **Resolved**

That the Children's and Young people Scrutiny and Performance Panel

- Note that David Brown has agreed to provide members on an individual or group basis with information on contingency plans that are in place for the handover of the education contract

The panel agreed to the change of the agenda which was to receive item 10 prior to item 9.

## **09/07 Children's and Young People's Scrutiny and Performance Panel Work Programme 2007/08**

Pauline Pilkington presented the work programme presentation, and stated that it was hoped that the panel would be in a strong position to add value and challenge to service improvements thereby assist the service to prepare for the Joint Area Review (JAR).

Members discussed the work items. It was agreed that the item of school uniforms had been superseded by the government guidance that was introduced shortly after the panel considered the matter.

It was agreed that the panel should place section 106 agreements on the work programme of the panel, as members were concerned that if the Council did not meet legislative requirements it may lose a substantial amount of money, which could benefit children in future.

Councillor Hughes suggested that the panel invited service users to the meetings to illustrate the discussion, and that the panel held its meetings at alternative locations that were related to the panels work programme.

Helen Denton suggested that the panel could hold its next meeting at Fibbersley Park School as they had been interested in monitoring this building project during the last financial year.

Members felt that it should be ensured that the Council was achieving value for money in its investments, and part of this the panel should consider property issues at a working group. Officers emphasised that the areas in the presentation were the challenges for the Council.

Members discussed the attainment of underachieving white working class boys; officers stated that this was a priority within the children's and young people plan. The panel discussed the most efficient way of considering these priorities, it was suggested that a working group was established to consider the attainment of white working class boys, bullying, and the safety of children.

Members discussed the co-opted membership on the panel. The panel were advised that governor support would be holding elections for parent governor representatives on the panel, but that they experienced difficulty recruiting to positions. The panel were also advised that the Archbishop of Birmingham and Lichfield Diocesan Education had been contacted regarding their representation. In addition Dave Jones had been appointed as primary education teacher representative, and Bob Grainger had been appointed as secondary education teacher representative.

Members expressed concern that the funding to Walsall domestic violence forum had been withdrawn when a major factor in the abuse of children was domestic violence and was stated as a priority for children's services. Officers informed members that the Safer Walsall Borough Partnership had withdrawn the funding. Members discussed the possibility of a working group considering this and calling the Safer Walsall Borough Partnership to account for this action. The panel agreed that Councillor Chambers should be lead member for the group.

The panel also requested that Councillor Martin continued to be the panel's champion for teenage pregnancy and would keep the panel updated.

Members asked if there were any school closures planned, Helen Denton stated that there were not any at the moment, but reminded the panel that they had asked for an update on the progress of children who had moved from Beechdale Primary School to Hatherton Primary School.

The panel received a presentation on the Children and Young People's Plan and the priorities therein (annexed).

## **Resolved**

That the Children's and Young people Scrutiny and Performance Panel add the following items to the work programme

- Further information on the parameters of how the education contributions from section 106 can be spent and the possibility of this being widened using creative measures

- The panel considers the Every Disabled Child Matters charter, to determine how well the Council is meeting the requirements of this.
- The panel will receive a presentation on the areas within the self assessment of the JAR, which it indicates will be a challenge for the Council
- The panel will consider bullying, and the safety of children to include domestic violence as part of the remit of a working group.
- The panel places the update of the progress of children who had moved from Beechdale Primary School to Hatherton Primary School on its work programme.
- A working group considers the under-achievement of white working class boys,
- Councillor Martin is nominated the member champion on teenage pregnancy and that the panel receives further updates when available

That the Children's and Young people Scrutiny and Performance Panel establishes the following working groups with the following membership:

#### Property Working Group:

The working group will have the initial remit of considering property services, and buildings within education premises, and children's services.

Councillor Cassidy  
Councillor Bird  
Councillor E.E.Pitt

#### Safeguarding Working Group

The working group will have the initial remit of considering, bullying, and the safety of children to include domestic violence.

Councillor Chambers (lead member)  
Councillor Hughes  
Councillor Martin

The panel consider the establishment of a working group to consider the underachievement of working class boys.

#### 10/07 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING:**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 6 September 2007.

The meeting terminated at 7.05 pm.

Chair:

Date: