

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

18 October 2007 at 6 p.m.

Panel Members present	E. Hughes (Chair) Barton Bird, Cassidy, Chambers Khan, Martin, Micklewright, Mushtaq	
Non-Elected Voting Members	D. Harborne-Smith E. Chawira Paul Williams	Parent Governor Representative Parent Governor Representative Diocesan Schools Commission
Non-Elected Non-voting Members	B. Grainger D. Jones	Secondary School Teacher Representative Primary School Teacher Representative
Officers present	Louise Hughes Karen Adderley Tom McNeil Melanie Harmitt Diane Osborne Yvonne Walsham Susan Lupton Avril Walton Clive Wright	Assistant Director Children's Universal Services Head of Partnership Support and Development Interim Assistant Director Procurement Head of Finance for Children & Young People Teenage Pregnancy Strategic Commissioning Manager Walsall tPCT Solicitor Interim Built Environment Manager Strategic Leader – Education Walsall Director for Learning – Management Support Director Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership

### **22/07 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Councillor E.E.Pitt.

### **23/07 SUBSTITUTIONS**

There were no substitutions for the duration of the meeting.

#### **24/07 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP**

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

#### **25/07 SECTION 106 (PARAMETERS OF HOW THE EDUCATION CONTRIBUTIONS CAN BE SPENT)**

Yvonne Walsham gave members a background to the planning documents that form the basis for section 106 contributions. Councillor Bird expressed concern that the Council was taking a substantial amount of money in from section 106 contributions, and that the Council needed to be aware that there was provision for the developer to claim the money back. Also that money should only be spent in Walsall schools, and the possibility of each case being considered at the relevant Local Neighbourhood Partnerships (LNP).

Susan Lupton gave an updated position of how the money was being spent and informed the panel that the Council had until 2011 to spend the most recently received money. Councillor Cassidy stated that information existed about who had the money and where it was spent.

Councillor Bird asked for the panel to receive a quarterly spreadsheet detailing a breakdown of section 106 monies.

Susan Lupton informed members that a contribution is only required if the level of surplus places was less than 10%.

#### **RESOLVED**

The panel request a quarterly spreadsheet detailing a breakdown of section 106 monies.

#### **26/07 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

#### **RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 6 September 2007, copies having previously been circulated, are approved as a true and accurate record.

#### **27/07 PROPERTY SERVICES WORKING GROUP REMIT**

As lead member, Councillor Cassidy informed the panel that the property services working group was a small but productive group and to date members had been introduced to new members of the team and were planning a visit to Mary Eliot site, she also stated that she was confident that Kevin Kendall was improving the service. Councillor Bird explained that there were changes to the way contractors were used; stating that a specific number of contractors would provide services, and their prices would be passed through a quantity surveyor and also that there would be a project

manager over each project. Members added that the assets register was up to date and the feedback from the group was positive, adding that they felt it was good scrutiny.

#### **27/07 FORWARD PLAN**

The forward plan as at 10 September 2007, having been previously circulated was reviewed. Councillor Bird expressed the opinion that any major decisions should come to scrutiny first for the panel to have their input.

#### **RESOLVED**

That the forward plan be noted and members request that the scrutiny panel has the opportunity to consider key decisions prior to submission to Cabinet.

#### **28/07 SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES STRATEGY**

Clive Wright stated that he was going to provide a presentation on the sustainable communities' strategy (annexed) and would tailor it to services for children and young people as far as possible, but that this was primarily a way of raising awareness.

Councillor Hughes asked what members could expect to see for children and young people in the drafted document.

Clive Wright stated that this was trying to be all things to all people, and that the every child matters framework was evident all the way through. Once complete it would be used to set targets for the Local Area Agreement (LAA). Members were also informed that 16 of the 200 targets were around children; Clive Wright stated that the scrutiny panel were able to see the data set which sums up the children and young people plan but does not replace it.

Bob Grainger informed the panel that recent research indicated that an over emphasis on targets had a detrimental affect on the mental health of children.

Councillor Bird requested further information on the home to school plan, it was agreed that officers would find out the progress of this and speak to Councillor Hughes.

#### **RESOLVED**

That officers find out the progress of the 'home to school plan' and communicate this to Councillor Hughes.

#### **29/07 DIRECTORATE CURRENT FORECAST OUTTURN**

Melanie Harmitt presented the directorate current forecast outturn (annexed).

Councillor Chambers stated that he considered members to be disadvantaged because they did not have copies of slides in advance.

Councillor Bird expressed concern that print and design was losing money as significant investment had previously been put into the print and design service. Melanie Harmitt explained that a proposal would be taken to Cabinet. Members expressed the opinion that this should come to the scrutiny panel first and stated that the item on the forward

plan did not give enough information. Members expressed concern that this item could have been missed by the panel.

## **RESOLVED**

Councillor Zahid is requested to delay the print and design options appraisal due to go to Cabinet in October to allow the scrutiny and performance panel to scrutinise options.

## **30/07 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT (APA) FEEDBACK**

Louise Hughes provided the panel with verbal feedback on the APA, stating that although the gradings had altered overall the service had been awarded a 3, which was a positive result. It was also positive because children's services had reduced their budget but maintained services, evidencing good financial management.

## **31/07 TEENAGE PREGNANCY UPDATE**

Councillor Martin informed members that government targets existed to reduce teenage pregnancy by 2010, which would be difficult in Walsall due to a number of young Mothers. The strategy was to target hotspots to raise aspirations and achievements. Diane Osborne gave a presentation on teenage pregnancy (annexed).

Members were informed of peer mentoring and a project which had resulted in the publication of 'a diary of a pregnant teenager'.

Councillor Cassidy asked how the service worked with the voluntary sector; Diane Osborne stated that the service always tried to engage with the voluntary sector.

Members discussed the fact that pregnancy was a life choice and perceived as a way out of a difficult situation. Diane Osborne explained that young person under 18 should not be in a lone tenancy but in supported accommodation. Members discussed the perception that pregnant girls are given priority over available accommodation. Diane Osborne explained that the service was planning to pursue the development of supported accommodation for teenage mothers.

Councillor Bird suggested that the teenage pregnancy unit should first identify where they wanted the accommodation to be and then to identify land suitable for this accommodation. Diane Osborne suggested that this would be most needed in the West of the borough.

Councillor Hughes suggested that Diane Osborne should come back when the unit had some further information to report.

## **32/07 LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

The Panel considered that the item for consideration under item 37/07 below was exempt information by virtue of the paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) and accordingly resolved to consider that item in private.

## **33/07 EDUCATION CONTRACT UPDATE**

Officers and members discussed the tender process, and safeguards that were in place to prevent the Council being put at risk through information being leaked. Members agreed to receive an update at the next panel meeting in November (budget).

Councillor Cassidy reminded members that it was important to get their CRB checks completed.

**34/07 DATE OF NEXT MEETING:**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 22 November 2007.

The meeting terminated at 8pm.

Chair:

Date: