

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

MONDAY, 13 JUNE, 2011 AT 6. 00 P.M. AT THE COUNCIL HOUSE

<b>Panel Members Present</b>	Councillor B. Cassidy (Chair) Councillor E. Hughes (Vice-Chair) Councillor J. Barton Councillor O. Bennett Councillor K. Chambers Councillor L.A. Harrison Councillor A. Paul Councillor D. Shires
<b>Portfolio holder present</b>	Councillor R. Andrew
<b>Non elected voting members present</b>	Alan McDevitt
<b>Non elected non-voting members present</b>	R. Bragger D. Jones
<b>Officers Present</b>	Louise Hughes, Assistant Director, Children's Services Michelle Whiting, Assistant Director, Specialist Services Graham Talbot, Interim Managing Director, Serco Frank Barnes, Assistant Managing Director, Participation, Serco Sue Wedgwood, Assistant Managing Director, Quality and Effectiveness, Serco Matt Underhill - Scrutiny Officer

### **99/11 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received for the duration of the meeting from Councillor Martin and Councillor Thomas.

### **100/11 SUBSTITUTIONS**

Councillor Harrison substituted for Councillor Martin for the duration of the meeting.

### **101/11 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP**

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

## 102/11 MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting were noted.

### **Resolved**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 April, 2011, a copy having previously been circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record.

## 103/11 WORK PROGRAMME 2011/12

The Chair introduced the item by outlining the key issues that she felt it would be important for the Panel to consider during the municipal year. The following is a summary of those issues and the subsequent discussion:

- The Chair expressed the view that it would be critical for the Panel to be kept up-to-date on major changes within all schools in relation to the Government White Paper on Education;
- The Chair also emphasised the importance of the Panel receiving updates when the status of schools had changed. For example, when a school, either primary or secondary, was granted the right to become an academy;
- The Chair also explained that it would be important for the Panel to receive regular updates regarding the number of Looked After Children (LAC) and the number of children at risk. It would also be crucial for officers to highlight to the Panel any issues that might arise in relation to the funding of services;
- The Chair expressed the view that it would be important for the Panel to further consider how children with special educational needs were supported in the borough;
- The Chair identified a lead role for the Panel in Corporate Parenting, including in encouraging all elected Members to participate;
- The Chair highlighted that it would be important for the Panel to receive feedback from officers regarding child poverty, with information collected from Sure Start Children's Centres and Children's Area Partnerships;
- The Chair emphasised the importance of the Panel being given guidance on the role of the School's Forum. This might then enable the Panel to provide active support to the Forum;
- The Chair also identified the importance of considering the function of School Governors and their role in implementing key changes in schools;
- In relation to the Sneyd School closure there was collective agreement that it would be important for the Panel to be updated regarding the outcomes for those children who remained at the school until closure, as well as those who transferred to other schools. It was also agreed that the opening of the University Technical College (UTC), including its potential impact on school admissions elsewhere in the borough, as well as issues around the teaching standards required by government, be considered by the Panel;
- The Panel also agreed to receive a presentation in relation to the collaborative work being undertaken by the Darlaston cluster of schools;

- The Panel also agreed to consider the new framework for the maintenance and development of school buildings when it becomes available;
- The Panel agreed that all of the issues identified by the Chair and other members of the Panel should be considered during the municipal year;
- In relation to officer proposed items for the work programme, the Assistant Director, Children's Services, explained that the Education item included policy and monitoring of school performance. A period of major government reform was underway, with a number of issues that needed to be addressed including how school performance will be measured, with schools now becoming purchasers of services through which they will seek to raise standards. It will therefore be important to ensure that the council provides effective support to schools in delivering the highest educational standards;
- In relation to the Performance of the Serco Contract, the Interim Managing Director, Serco, explained that similarly to the previous municipal year it was proposed to continue to provide guidance to the Panel on different elements of the contract. This included issues already highlighted by the Chair, support for children with special needs and the School's Forum, together with other important elements including school's admissions;
- In relation to the Children and Young People's Plan, officers explained that the production of a Plan was no longer a statutory requirement. However, it had been determined that it remained a key document which highlighted the council's strategic approach to issues including the improvement of standards and reducing the number of LAC. The Panel agreed that given that significant elements of the Plan considered the correlation between levels of unemployment and the number of LCA in the borough it would be appropriate for this item to be considered together with the Regeneration Scrutiny and Performance Panel;
- In relation to Children with Disabilities officers explained that with limited funding there will some critical decisions in determining service priorities. The Panel heard that the council is making a significant investment in Eldon with the objective of supporting overnight and day-based respite care;
- The Panel also agreed to receive further guidance regarding the new Framework for Inclusion which forms part of the prevent agenda. Members heard that head teachers had already received a training session on the new framework;
- The Panel also agreed to re-establish the Safeguarding Services for Vulnerable Children working group, with Councillor Cassidy, Councillor Hughes, Councillor Paul and Councillor D. Shires participating in the group. It was also agreed to re-establish the Childhood Obesity working group, with Councillor Chambers participating in the group, and an invitation made to Members of the Health Scrutiny and Performance Panel;
- Panel Members also requested a briefing note in relation to free school meals, as well as the School's Meals Service and the success enjoyed by some schools who now deliver this service for themselves.

## **Resolved**

That

- (1) the Panel is regularly updated regarding major changes within all schools in relation to the Government White Paper on Education;

- (2) the Panel receive updates when the status of a school changes e.g. when they are granted the right to become an academy;
- (3) the Panel receives regular updates regarding the number of Looked After Children (LAC) and the number of children at risk. In addition, any issues in relation to funding of these services should also be highlighted;
- (4) the officers provide guidance to the Panel in relation the provision of special educational needs support in the borough;
- (5) the Panel take a lead role in Corporate Parenting and in encouraging all elected Members to participate;
- (6) the Panel receives regular updates regarding levels of child poverty in the borough, together with invited Members of the Regeneration Scrutiny and Performance Panel
- (7) the Panel receives further guidance on the role of the School's Forum;
- (8) the Panel receives further guidance on the role of school governors;
- (9) the Panel will receive further guidance in relation to the Education policy and the monitoring of school performance;
- (10) the Panel should continue to receive guidance on the thematic elements of the Serco Education contract;
- (11) the Panel should continue to receive updates in relation to the closure of Sneyd School and associated issues, including the outcomes for children who remained at the school and the impact of the opening of the University Technical College (UTC);
- (12) the Panel considers the Children and Young People's Plan;
- (13) the Panel receives further guidance in relation to the delivery of services for Children with Disabilities;
- (14) the Panel will receive a presentation in relation to the collaborative work being undertaken by the Darlaston cluster of schools;
- (15) the Panel will receive further guidance regarding the new Framework for Inclusion which forms part of the prevent agenda;
- (16) the Panel will receive guidance regarding the new framework for the maintenance and development of school buildings;
- (17) the Panel receive a briefing note in relation to free school meals, as well as the School's Meals Service;

(18) the Safeguarding for Vulnerable Children Services and Childhood Obesity working groups are re-established for the municipal year;

and

(19) the report be noted.

104/11 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Chair informed Members that the date of the next meeting would be 19 July, 2011 at 6:00pm.

The meeting terminated at 6:57 pm

Chair:

Date: