

BRIEFING NOTE

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE – 31ST OCTOBER 2006.

SCRUTINY BOARD 2 QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT

Respite Care Review

The Board has met with a number of carers and parents of disabled children and young people from the city to better inform their perspective of the Respite Care Review. Members were concerned about the potential impact of a significant service reconfiguration on the lives of affected families and have asked for more information with regard to the commissioning of respite care for such families.

Teenage Pregnancy

Coventry has recently reported a drop in the number of conceptions by teenage parents, though rates are still high compared to other parts of the UK. The Board has been appraised of the strategy being implemented locally, and has requested the latest figures when available, and further information about the implementation of this strategy.

Cabinet Member Strategic Plan

The Board held a very productive meeting with the Cabinet Member concerning his Strategic Plan, and agreed to include, time permitting, several suggested items in their work programme. These include wrap-around care and the effect of children whose first language is not English being enrolled in large numbers in Coventry schools.

JAR Action Plan / Youth Service Inspection

The Board considered the JAR Action Plan and congratulated officers on the excellent progress being made in delivering high quality services to children and young people in the City. The Board have asked for specific information on some of the recommendations of the JAR, most specifically the development of a Child & Adolescent Mental Health Strategy for the City.

Children's Centres Capital Programme

Following a referral from Scrutiny Board 1, the Board considered the latest Children's Centres Capital Programme monitoring report and received assurances from officers that the programme was on track and that no grant had been lost as a result of several delays with phase one of this programme.

Children & Young People's Commissioning Trust

Following the Government White Paper "Every Child Matters", local authorities and Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) have been encouraged to work collaboratively to commission services for children and young people. The Children & Young People's Commissioning Trust is the vehicle chosen in Coventry to deliver this closer working. The Board has received assurances that decisions on joint commissioning will be first approved by Cabinet, and thus open to scrutiny.

Future Work Programme Items

Over the next period the Board will be concentrating on one existing item from their Work Programme (children & young people affected by domestic abuse), and one new item.

Children & Young People Affected by Domestic Violence

The next major work item for the Board is consideration of services in the City to support children and young people affected by domestic violence. The Board will be considering how services in the City compare to some recently published good practice.

Corporate Parenting

A scrutiny seminar has been convened for the morning of Wednesday 13th December, which all City Councillors are to be encouraged to attend. This will brief Members on the current arrangements in the City for caring for looked after children and will cover their responsibilities as Corporate Parents.

As Chair of the Board, I along with Cllrs Kelly & Lucas, recently attended a national conference on Corporate Parenting which covered changes in the direction of Government policy on the care of looked after children. The recently published Green Paper "Care Matters: Transforming the Lives of Children & Young People in Care" has some radical proposals to improve particularly the educational achievements of looked after children. I have instructed officers to report to the Board on the Government's agenda and the implications of the Green Paper for the care of looked after children in the City.

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