
To
Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

Date 4th February 2009

Subject
Scrutiny Chairs' Quarterly Reports - Scrutiny Board 2 (Children, Learning & Young People)

1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of the work of Scrutiny Board 2 during the period November 2008 to January 2009, together with the recommendations and other outcomes of this work.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to note the information contained in this briefing note and to consider any further action.

3 Information/Background

3.1 Activity

The Board held 3 meetings during this period:
05/11/2008; 26/11/2008; 07/01/2009.

Issues considered by the Board over the period were as follows:-

Cabinet Member (Children, Learning and Young People) 2008/09 Portfolio Priorities:
Performance Review of LAA Indicators
Report Back on Visits to Children's Homes: Visit to The Grange & Wisteria Lodge
Respect Yourself Strategy Update
Corporate Parenting and Care Matters for Coventry
Review of Service Provision for Children Looked After in Coventry

The Board, at its meeting on 26/11/2009 also received the following:
Interim Report of the Children's Transport Review

3.2 Recommendations

The Board considered various proposals to improve the role of corporate Parenting within the Council. These were supported by the Board and Cabinet were advised accordingly together with some additional comments. The Board did not choose to make any further recommendations to Cabinet regarding any of the issues included in this quarter's agendas.

The Board requested that officers present regular and periodic reports to all councillors on the progress of the "Respect Yourself" strategy, which co-ordinates work in the City on teenage pregnancy.

3.3 Outcomes

The Board's comments on Corporate Parenting were endorsed by the Cabinet.

The Board has resolved to investigate further the arrangements in Coventry for ensuring young people not in education or employment are minimised. It has been agreed that Connexions will be invited to a future meeting to discuss this and other issues.

The Respect Yourself Strategy was seen as playing an effective role in co-ordinating work on teenage pregnancy in Coventry, both in the preventative agenda and in the support for teenage parents. The Board has asked for feedback from officers on a meeting with the National Support Team, and for the latest statistics when these are available.

Discussion at the January meeting of the Board centred on Looked After Children (LAC) and various current issues regarding their care and support. The Board was pleased by recent improvements in the educational achievements of LAC, however Members did have some reservations regarding the establishment of an assessment centre to replace Wisteria Lodge. The Board also met with Northern Care, the Council's long-term private sector provider of small family-sized accommodation for LAC. Northern Care were very open to dialogue with City Councillors about the care of the children accommodated with them and the Board will shortly be undertaking a series of visits to Northern Care homes which other Members can take part in if they wish.

Discussions on Early Years developments were complex and of particular importance given the current agenda of change and service re-configuration in this area. The Board have requested further information regarding the development of the Early Years Funding Formula, how the extended entitlement to 15 hours per week is to be managed and how the move from City Council provision to school managed services is to be introduced.

As requested by Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee the Board will include in its February agenda a discussion on the implementation of changes to youth service provision in the City.

Briefing Note Author / Contact for Further Information

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26th January 2009.