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**CHILDREN'S SERVICES, YOUNG PEOPLE, AND  
SPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**11 OCTOBER 2007**

Present-

Councillor A. Wilkinson (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Barrow  
Councillor Connell  
Councillor Dennis  
Councillor Hornby  
Councillor Murray  
Councillor Mrs Rothwell  
Councillor Rushton  
Councillor Scowcroft  
Councillor Mrs Swarbrick  
Councillor R. Wilkinson

Also in attendance-

Councillor Mrs Thomas - Executive Member for Children's  
Services  
Mrs M. Asquith - Director of Children's Services  
Mrs L. Jones - Assistant Director (Children and Families),  
Children's Services  
Mrs C. Davies - Head of Finance, Children's Services  
Mr I. Mulholland - Scrutiny Team Leader  
Mr J. Dearling - Senior Scrutiny Officer

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Ms  
Judith Martin and Councillors Ashcroft and Rock.

Councillor A. Wilkinson in the Chair

**15 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting of the Children's Services  
Scrutiny Committee held on 16 August 2007 were  
submitted.

Resolved - That the minutes be approved as a correct  
record.

*Attached Reports:*

[Minutes of the Last Meeting](#)

## **16 MONITORING OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND SCRUTINY PANEL DECISIONS**

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services submitted a report that informed members of the progress of decisions taken and issues raised by the Committee.

In reply to questions from members, the Committee was informed that a report on Gifted and Talented Pupils, scheduled for 11 October, would be submitted by 31 January 2008. The Committee was advised that reports on both the 14-19 Strategy and on the Extended Schools would be provided to the Committee's meeting on 4 December 2007.

Resolved - That the action and progress outlined in the report be noted and matters outstanding continue to be pursued.

*Attached Reports:*

[Monitoring of Scrutiny Committee and Scrutiny Panel Decisions](#)

## **17 EXTRACTS FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE**

An extract from the minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 3 September 2007 was submitted.

Resolved – That the decisions of the Executive be noted.

*Attached Reports:*

[Extracts from the minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 3 September 2007](#)

## **18 MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

The minutes of the meetings of the Executive Member for Children's Services held on 21 August, 4 September, and 25 September 2007 were submitted.

With reference to the minute 33, Home Tuition Service – Use of the Emergency Powers Procedure, 25 September 2007, the Committee requested details for parents interested in home tuition. The Director of Children's Services advised that parents should notify the local authority of their intention to home tutor and that staff

could advise on the resources available.

Resolved – That the decisions of the Executive Member for Children's Services be noted.

*Attached Reports:*

[Minutes of the meetings of the Executive Member for Children's Services held on 21 August, 4 September, and 25 September 2007](#)

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## **19 MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND SPORT**

The minutes of the meetings of the Executive Member for Young People and Sport held on 21 August, 4 September, and 25 September 2007 were submitted.

With reference to minute 9, Little Lever Youth Council, 25 September 2007, Committee members expressed approval of and gratitude to those involved in the Youth Council pilot in Little Lever.

Resolved – That the decisions of the Executive Member for Young People and Sport be noted.

*Attached Reports:*

[Minutes of the meetings of the Executive Member for Young People and Sport held on 21 August, 4 September, and 25 September 2007](#)

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[Minutes of the meetings of the Executive Member for Young People and Sport held on 21 August, 4 September, and 25 September 2007](#)

## **20 MINUTES OF THE SCHOOL PLACE REVIEW POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP**

The minutes of the School Place Review Policy Development Group held on 19 September 2007 were submitted.

Resolved – That the minutes be noted.

*Attached Reports:*

[Minutes of the School Place Review Policy Development Group held on 19 September 2007](#)

## **21 MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES, YOUNG PEOPLE, AND SPORT POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP**

The minutes of the Children's Services Policy Development Group held on 13 August 2007 were submitted.

With reference to minute 5, Children's Services Big Issues, Committee members questioned where funding would be found once children were required to continue their education until they were eighteen. In response the Committee was advised that a notional amount was anticipated in the settlement received from central government but that the figure would not be available until next year.

Resolved – That the minutes be noted.

*Attached Reports:*

[Minutes of the Children's Services Policy Development Group held on 13 August 2007](#)

## **22 IDENTIFICATION OF ISSUES FOR SCRUTINY / ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME**

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services submitted a report which provided members with suitable criteria to aid in the selection of topics for scrutiny and outlined the Committee's work programme.

In response to questions, the Director of Children's Services informed the Committee that reports on the Joint Area Review of Children's Services, on the Annual Performance Assessment, and on the Young Carers would not be available for the 4 December 2007 meeting. The Committee was advised that reports on these topics would be ready for Committee meetings in 2008.

Members' views and comments were sought in relation to any further items and issues that they wanted including on the Committee's work programme. In response members

suggested the good practice of the North West Home Safety Council, particularly in relation to the prevention of unintentional injury to children, warranted further investigation through a report to the Committee.

Resolved -

(i) That the report be noted.

(ii) That a report on encouraging safer home environments be scheduled for the Committee meeting on 10 April 2008.

*Attached Reports:*

[Identification of Issues for Scrutiny / Annual Work Programme](#)

## **23 SUBSTANCE MISUSE**

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report informing the Committee of the national and local situation in relation to young people's alcohol and substance misuse.

The report outlined the four key strands of the government's integrated drug strategy for the UK: preventing young people from becoming problematic drug users; reducing the supply of illegal drugs; reducing drug-related crime and its impact on communities; and treatment and support for drug users.

The report identified three main objectives to the cross-governmental strategic approach to preventing and addressing young people's substance misuse: reforming delivery and strengthening accountability; ensuring provision was built around the needs of vulnerable children and young people; and building service and workforce capacity.

The report made clear that Bolton's estimated problem drug users was higher than the regional average, as was the estimated prevalence of opiate use, crack use, and injecting drug use. The report outlined the range of services in Bolton to respond to young people's substance misuse, delivering interventions in universal, targeted and specialist settings.

Members asked about the methodology of a recent survey of 15 and 16 year olds undertaken by Trading Standards North West and were informed that the responses were collected electronically.

In response to questions, the Committee was advised that the police were regular attendees at 360° meetings and worked closely with the council.

In reply to questions about the IMOKTA (I'm Ok ta) website, the Committee was advised that the website was advertised widely and reviewed regularly.

Resolved - That the report be noted.

*Attached Reports:*

[Substance Misuse](#)

## **24 SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE OFFER REVIEW**

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report summarising the current Council, commissioned, and other services for young people in Bolton. She indicated that the review of services for young people had been initially scoped, and an independent consultant had been commissioned to work with officers, members, and partners to assess the current service provision and propose future options.

In response to questions, the Director of Children's Services confirmed that extended schools would be included in scoping the review.

Members asked about the timescale of the review and were advised that the timescale contained in the report was possibly an optimistic one but that recommendations should be identified by March 2008.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

*Attached Reports:*

[Services for Young People Offer Review](#)

## **25 KEY STAGE 2 AND 3, GCSE, AND A LEVEL RESULTS**

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report informing the Committee of the key stage one, two, three, and four results.

The Committee was informed that results made key stage one a key area for development, and that key stage two

results were in line or below the national average with the performance of looked after children showing improvement.

The report indicated that key stage three results were below the national average but noted the improved attainment of Pakistani heritage boys and girls. The Committee was informed that results at key stage four were still subject to final confirmation but were below the national average.

In response to questions from members, the Committee was advised that some neighbouring Greater Manchester authorities were improving much faster than Bolton, but that the possible reasons for this were being investigated.

Members suggested the value of full and consistent data comparisons throughout the report, particularly in relation to national figures.

In reply to questions, the Director of Children's Services described the tiered intervention service used by the School Improvement Service and confirmed that results data would be easily accessible to Children's Centres.

In response to questions, the Committee was informed that the Greater Manchester City Challenge would be targeted at authorities and schools rather than shared out proportionately across all schools. The Committee was advised that early indications suggested six secondary schools in Bolton would qualify for City Challenge funding.

Members asked what developments were to be introduced to improve results at key stage one. The Director of Children's Services indicated that targets would be set by the school improvement service.

In response to questions, the Committee was advised that school governors had the power to allocate resources within schools to areas where they identified a need.

The Committee discussed the issue of the attainment levels and the achievements of Bolton's special schools.

Members suggested the value of the council recruiting more male primary school teachers, and indicated that school children had themselves identified such a need.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

*Attached Reports:*

[Key Stage 2 and 3, GCSE, and A Level Results](#)

## **26 CHILDREN'S SERVICES PORTFOLIO REVENUE AND CAPITAL MONTH 3 MONITORING REPORT 2007/08**

The Director of Children's Services and the Director of Corporate Resources submitted a joint report informing the Committee of the revenue and capital financial position and providing an update on performance in key areas at the end of the first quarter of the 2007/08 financial year.

The Head of Finance, Children's Services, indicated that the capital programme had increased to over £35 million. The Committee was advised that for fostering and adoption a significant year end deficit was projected but the department was looking to manage the position within the existing budget.

The report indicated that all identified Gershon efficiencies were on target to be achieved with the exception of the restructure of the asset management team. The Head of Finance, Children's Services, stated that one of the underlying difficulties of providing performance monitoring information was that a large number of indicators were not capable of being accurately monitored on a quarterly basis. She indicated that of the twenty-four Best Value Performance Indicators used by Children's Services only eight were capable of accurate quarterly monitoring. The Committee was advised that where possible a final year end out-turn had been forecast based on the monitoring information known.

Resolved – That the Committee continue to monitor the revenue and capital position in respect of Children's Services on a quarterly basis.

*Attached Reports:*

[Children's Services Portfolio Revenue and Capital Month 3 Monitoring Report 2007/08](#)

## **27 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

The following questions were submitted by Councillor Hornby in accordance with Standing Order 35:



Q1. Were we looking at devolving the prioritisation of youth facilities to neighbourhood management organisations that understand the needs of their communities best?

Members were advised of the response from the Director of Children's Services:

The aim of the review was to consider what was available and offered for young people in Bolton across the range of services and develop and then implement a new 5-19 years youth offer that was fit for purpose and would deliver the Government Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) "Aiming High for Young People: A Ten Year Strategy for Positive Activities". In Bolton this would:

- Build an integrated service around needs
- Remove age barriers/ thresholds
- Provide services around localities

The review would cover the age range 5-19 because there was a need to join up services across a wide age range to smooth the transition between different stages of a young person's life and to remove boundaries between some of the current services.

The review would be carried out in line with the Government DCSF "Aiming High for Young People: A Ten Year Strategy for Positive Activities" which was launched in July and concentrated on provision for 13-19 age range. The strategy indicated that by 2008, local integrated youth support services would be:

- working to prevent problems occurring, rather than simply intervening when they do;
- working together more effectively to support the positive development of all young people, but with a clear focus on those experiencing disadvantage;
- providing improved information, advice and guidance to young people to support them to make better choices both in and outside learning;
- offering a comprehensive range of positive leisure-time activities and opportunities for young people, including those offered by extended schools, underpinned by a new duty on Local Authorities to secure young people's access to them; and
- providing targeted support for the most vulnerable teenagers involving tailored packages of education,

informal learning opportunities, and personal support to help address more complex problems.

There was no predetermined outcome for the review, all options would be considered for the best service delivery model and outcomes for young people.

Q2. Issues had been raised with Councillor Hornby regarding the equity of distribution of resources across Bolton's schools. Was it necessary to allocate additional funds to schools that had already benefited from additional funding based on the free school meals formulae? How were we ensuring equity across the Borough in the allocation of funds for extended services?

Members were advised of the response from the Director of Children's Services:

#### School Funding distribution

School funding was allocated mainly through an agreed local formula allocation and specific grant.

#### Local Funding Formula

Following an extensive and lengthy review of the formula for funding schools a "needs based" formula was introduced in April 2002. The objective of the review was to establish a level of resourcing for schools which would enable them to meet the community's expectations.

The basic principles underpinning the formula included

- Simplicity – school funding formula should be easy for schools to understand,
  - Equity – school funding formula should deliver resources in line with need, recognising the different costs of educating particular groups of pupils (for example, those from more deprived backgrounds)
  - Transparency – the formula should be transparent
- The inclusion of a social factor within the funding formula was to counter to some degree the adverse effects of poverty on children's learning, for example:
- i. lack of learning resources outside school
  - ii. reduced level of adult support for learning outside school
  - iii. lower level of nutrition

iv. little or no access to other enrichment experiences such as travel

It was recognised that the use of a social factor was to redress the imbalance; it could not provide absolute equality of opportunity for all children.

Since the introduction of the needs based formula, the method of distribution had been kept under constant review. The Schools Forum had established a small working sub group to consider changes to the formula, and any proposed changes were subject to consultation with the Schools Forum and all schools before implementation. All changes had been recommended by the Schools Forum before being approved by the Executive Member.

In 2004 the DfES & Treasury published the Child Poverty Review. At the time there was some concern expressed that not all the funding for deprived pupils was being directed to those pupils through the local funding formulas for schools. The DCSF had recently requested information regarding the level of deprivation funding targeted to these pupils through the formula. Based on latest information 68 per cent of the notional value for deprived pupils within the budget settlement could be easily identified as targeted towards these pupils. (Discussions with other LAs and DCFS indicated most LAs were targeting between 60 to 70 per cent of the notional value of funding for deprived pupils within the settlement towards these pupils).

We did not allocate funding outside these criteria.

#### Specific Extended Schools Funding

The Allocation of Extended Schools funding had been distributed in agreement with schools and in conjunction with the Extended School/services clusters which included partners from other agencies and the voluntary sector.

During 2006/07, partnerships submitted bids for funding to the Extended Services Partnership Board for approval and any unallocated funding was distributed directly to the clusters using the FSM formula with a minimum guarantee of £5,000.

A current review of the process had agreed that the revenue funding for 2007/08 would be top sliced to fund

central posts such as Speech and Language therapists and the remaining budget distributed with 60 per cent of the budget split across the clusters and the remaining 40 per cent distributed on Free School Meals.

Resolved – That the questions and responses be noted.

(The meeting started at 4.00pm and finished at 5.18pm)