

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING, 7TH APRIL, 2011

Present – Councillors Wild (Vice-Chairman).P. Allen, Ashcroft, Mrs Connell, Darvesh, Francis, Mistry, Mrs Rothwell, Rushton, Mrs Swarbrick and White.

Also in Attendance

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| Ms. S. Schofield | - | Assistant Director, Neighbourhood Services and Committee Chief Officer Support |
| Mr. I. D. Mulholland | - | Principal Scrutiny Officer |
| Councillor Murray | - | Executive Member for Looked After Children and Safeguarding |
| Mrs. M. Asquith | - | Director of Children's Services |
| Mr. J. Daly | - | Assistant Director, Staying Safe |
| Mr. J. Livesey | - | Assistant Director Performance, Planning and Resources |
| Mr C. McIver | - | Head of 5 – 19 Service |
| Ms. T. Ashton | - | Principal Sports Development Officer |
| Mr A. Ryder | - | Principal Educational Improvement Professional |
| Ms. S. Morse | - | Principal Educational Improvement Professional |
| Ms. J. Hampson | - | Business and Development Manager |
| Mr. J. Thorpe | - | |

Headteacher of SS Osmund and
Andrew RC Primary School

Ms. T. Lewyckyj - Headteacher of St James's
Secondary School

Mr. D. Smith - Policy Accountant

Apologies for absence were submitted by Councillor Adia as Executive Member for Children's Services, Councillors Cottam and Mrs Brierley, Ms. J. Martin (Lay Member) and Mr. M. Pickering (Co-opted Member).

Councillor Wild in the Chair.

42. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 10th February, 2011 were submitted.

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

43. MONITORING OF DECISIONS

The Director of the Chief Executive's Department submitted a report which provided details of the progress of decisions taken at previous meetings of this Committee.

Resolved – That the updated position be noted.

44. ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME

The Director of the Chief Executive's Department submitted a report which set out details of the previously agreed Committee Work Programme for the 2010/11 Municipal Year.

Resolved – That the updated Work Programme be noted.

45. VALUE FOR MONEY, EFFICIENCIES AND GRANTS

Mr John Livesey, Assistant Director, Performance, Planning and Resources gave a presentation updating the Committee in relation to the implementation of Executive and Executive Member decisions regarding savings options in Children's Services.

The presentation contained comprehensive information under the following headings or subject areas:-

- Training and Development;
- ECM Cluster Co-ordinators;
- Parenting;
- Lifelong learning; and
- Admissions Appeals.

Members in their discussions referred to:-

- the reduction in cluster co-ordinators;
- early intervention issues;
- matters around the current provision for extended school facilities;
- the future funding of the, Playing for Sport Initiative, at the Reebok Stadium. It was explained that the initiative was still available be that at a reduced level but some funding had been secured. In terms of funding for the, Big Society, it was a question of bidding for the available grants;
- matters around the current school balances position. The Committee were informed that no

Primary School should hold a balance of greater than 8% of funding and Secondary 5% and if a schools balance was greater than that at the end of the financial year and not agreed by the Schools Forum, the monies would be claimed back and redistributed.

With regard to school deficit balances, it was indicated that these were monitored and repayment plans put in place.

Resolved – (i) That Mr. Livesey be thanked for his updating presentation.

(ii) That the discussions in particular in relation to the school balances position be noted.

(iii) That Members of this Committee be notified of the schools currently meeting, the Extended Schools Criteria in Bolton.

46. ANTI-BULLYING IN SCHOOLS

The Committee were introduced to Mr J. Thorpe, the Headteacher of SS Osmond and Andrew RC Primary School and Ms. T. Lewyckyj, the Headteacher of St. James's Secondary School who attended the meeting to provide evidence of the effectiveness of the Council's Anti-Bullying Strategies and Policies.

Ms. Tanya Lewyckyj gave a short presentation on the issue of bullying in Schools, particularly referring to St. James Secondary School. She explained to the Committee that there were different types of bullying, viz:-

- cyber
- physical;
- psychological; and
- one off v persistent.

The Committee were further advised that the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the Equality Act 2010 and the Children's

Act 1989 provided guidance on the issue to headteachers.

Members were informed that whole School issues influenced the issue of bullying and those included:-

- ethos, policies, staff role models, curriculum, assemblies, form time and worship and staff training.

The Pastoral Support System was also important and this included the use of pastoral Logs, the role of the form tutor and year head and behaviour and leaning mentors.

Ms. Lewyckyj also explained that outside agencies were also important such as, Bolton Lads and Girls Club, keyworkers and behavioural support.

The School also used various support groups which included mediation, anger management and self esteem groups.

Mr Thorpe, Headteacher of SS Osmund and Andrew Primary School explained that the policies outlined by Ms. Lewyckyj were features of his School also. He went on to highlight to the Committee the need for good parental liaison, listening teaching staff, anti-bullying posters around the school and a commitment to early intervention. In conclusion, he indicated that there had been no reportable cases of bullying at his school.

Members in their deliberations referred to:-

- good collaboration between Bolton Schools;
- use of mobile phones in some schools;
- no evidence of an increase in bullying;
- the identification to resolution times of incidents.
- the need for hard evidence that the policies and procedures currently worked in terms of the

identification, tackling and reduction of bullying in Schools in Bolton.

Ms. Lewyckyj indicated that example case notes of the tackling of bullying could be circulated to the Committee, amended to keep confidential the individuals involved.

Resolved – (i) That Ms. Lewyckyj and Mr Thorpe be thanked for their attendance and for the submissions they provided.

(ii) That the offer from Ms. Lewyckyj to circulate to Members of this Committee case notes of the tackling of bullying be accepted, amended as appropriate to maintain the confidentiality of the individuals involved.

(iii) That the issue of obtaining further hard evidence that the Anti- Bullying Policy and Procedures actually work in terms of the identification, tackling and reduction of bullying in Schools in Bolton be fed into the work programme event for this Committee at the start of the next Municipal Year for possible inclusion on the work programme.

47. TOWN CENTRE SKATE PARK

The Director of Children's Services Submitted a report and Mr. Chris McIver gave a short presentation which updated the Committee in relation to the, Town Centre Skate Park.

By way of background information, the report explained that on 27th September 2010 the Executive Member for Children's Services noted the Scrutiny Committee's comments that work had been undertaken to improve the management arrangements for the Dawes Street Skate Park and efforts had been made to identify options for an alternative town centre venue.

They acknowledged the ongoing use of the Dawes Street Skate Park and the option to look at a more advanced level specification for any future alternative sites. The committee also put forward a number of recommendations as follows:

1. Contact to be made with the community safety team/police regarding monitoring/action taken, including consultation with young people, to address the occasional instance of skate board use on the town hall square;
2. Carry out further consultation with young people about the current and future skate board provision in Bolton town centre, including the possibility of alternative and/or advanced skate boarding facilities;
3. To consider the proposal for the Council to work with key partners and stake holders to explore a possible third sector partnership bid for funding to support the costs of construction, equipment, etc; and
4. To look at funding issues and ongoing maintenance and management of the facility.

The report went on to highlight that the YMCA had continued to provide the outreach and consultation with young people regarding their use of the skate park. The issue of skate board use on the Town Hall square was monitored by the Neighbourhood Policing Team, who had confirmed that there had been no reported incidents and no longer saw this as a significant priority.

The skate park was well used, with no recorded incidents. The view of the young people through recent consultation was that the current facility was only ever a temporary solution and that if funding could be secured a more permanent and alternative venue would be explored. The option of a more advanced level skate facility was desirable but young people recognised the costs and location issues involved and the current financial constraints.

In terms of the development options, the report explained that following discussions with Planning the option for a third sector agreement on the current site was not deemed viable owing to the length of lease (minimum 15 years) as the land was within the Innovation Zone and was considered to be prime land for developers once the interchange was in place. Therefore,

Planners were only in a position to offer a ten year lease on this site, but most funders would require a minimum lease of 15 to 25 years.

The report went onto set out the options available:-

- the authority to continue to run and maintain the facility.
- to incorporate the skate park provision into the leisure contract review discussion, this was currently being reviewed and negotiated.
- to undertake an open tender process to encourage external partners/companies to put together a first stage proposal/expression of interest for further discussion.

With regard to funding, it was explained that the current estimated running costs of around £11,000 per annum, included cleaning, annual inspections and insurance and had been met on a temporary basis from the Environmental Services budget. Regular visual inspections were made by health and safety trained staff and these would also need to be maintained.

In conclusion, the report explained that it was acknowledged that the skate park was a valued facility and that the issues of anti social behaviour and local business complaints were now almost non-existent. However, in light of the significant financial pressures facing the Council, it was unlikely to be viable to pursue any of the options that involved significant additional spend.

At this stage only option 1 was thought to be viable and the skate park would thus need to remain in its current home until such time as it was viable to address the issue again.

Members in their discussions referred to matters around the possible removal of the equipment in a few years time.

Resolved – That the update be welcomed and the current position be noted.

48. MEMBERS' BUSINESS

The Committee received extracts of minutes of other meetings of the Council relevant to the remit of this Committee:-

- (a) Children's Policy Development Group held on 7th and 14th February and 14th March, 2011
- (b) Primary Capital Policy Development Group held on 25th January, 2011.
- (c) Executive Member for Children's Services held on 21st February and 28th March, 2011.
- (d) Executive Member for Looked After Children and Safeguarding held on 21st February and 28th March, 2011.
- (e) The Executive held on 28th February, 2011.

Resolved – That the minutes of the various meetings be noted.

(The meeting started at 4.00 p.m. and finished at 5.25 p.m.)