

SWINDON CHILDREN'S TRUST BOARD

THURSDAY, 15 MARCH 2012

PRESENT: Liz Holmes in the Chair, Councillor David Renard, Councillor Eric Shaw, Councillor Fay Howard, Liz Holmes, Julie Tridgell (Head teachers), Jo Garton (Head teachers), Peter Crockett (Head Teachers), Ruth Fitzjohn (Swindon Primary Care Trust), Peter Wells (Diocese), John Popowicz (Fire Service), Mike Howard (LSCB) and Doug Morris (Parent & Carers Advisory Group)

Apologies for absence were received from Valerie Johnstone (Governors), John Gilbert (Group Director), Riana Taylor (Probation Service), Andrew Miller (Swindon College) and Kate Rowe (Sure Start)

36. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2011 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Minute 26 – Jo Garton (SAPH) noted that the current agenda did not contain the report on initial assessments, which had been indicated in that minute. Sue Wald (Director Strategy and Commissioning) confirmed that a report would be submitted to the next meeting.

37. Public Question Time

There were no members of the public present and no questions were asked.

38. Swindon Youth Forum

Grishma Ramesh, Naheda Miah and Saria Ahmed from the Youth Forum attended with Amy Law, Barry Jones and Claire Smith (Contracts and Participation Manager) to present an update on the work of the Youth Forum, Chatterbox and Member of Youth Parliament. Each representative gave a short presentation to inform the Board of the work currently being advanced.

The structure of the Youth Forum had changed and they were working on a new look and style for it based on the ideas and feedback received from the wider community at the 2011 Youth Festival. They were also undertaking a recruitment drive as many of the members were now approaching the upper age limit and would be moving on. Information was also provided on the work and progress of Chatterbox, which involved young people with disabilities.

The new Member of Youth Parliament, Grishma Ramesh, informed members that her focus for her year in office would be working to bring all generations together and also continuing to tackle the bullying issue.

The Board commended the Youth Forum on the range of subjects chosen as priorities for 2012 which would draw in the wider community. The new Member of Youth Parliament was also congratulated on her appointment and for planning to

build on the work of her predecessor, Carney Bonner. The representatives were thanked for attending and were invited to return with an update when there were further positive results to report.

Resolved – The Swindon Children's Trust Board:

(1) Agrees that a further report on progress should be brought back to the Committee.

(2) Continues to support the work of the Youth Forum, Chatterbox Group and Member of Youth Parliament.

(3) Agrees that the outgoing Member of the Youth Parliament, Carney Bonner, be thanked for his work to help the young people of Swindon over the last year.

39. The Special Educational Needs Provision Strategy - outcome of the consultation

The Director Schools and Learning (Paddy Bradley) presented a report with information on the outcome of the consultation on the Special Educational Needs Provision Strategy which took place during October and November 2011.

Mr Bradley commented on the disappointingly low response rate but advised that the responses received were generally in favour of the proposals. He made reference to the expansion of provision at The Commonweal School and also to the enquiries being made about a possible new location and new build for Crowdys Hill School.

The Chair (Liz Holmes) noted the wide range of consultees but remarked that they did not include many children. It was suggested that Chatterbox would provide a good starting point to involve children in the consultation process. With such a low response rate Mike Howard (LSCB) queried the value and weight of the result.

Jo Garton (SAPH) admitted that she did not respond as she didn't understand some of the questions. This fact was also mentioned in some of the replies that had been forthcoming. Members commented on the number of acronyms used throughout the document and the technical issues referred to that many would not understand. In addition, there were so many consultations being issued generally that people were getting tired of them. Julie Tridgell (SASH) advised that any consultation was inclined to be lost amongst all the communications to schools and more was needed to advertise it and raise the profile of the consultations.

Resolved – The Swindon Children's Trust Board:

(1) Provides comments on the consultation process as set out above.

(2) Notes the views on the Strategy gathered during the consultation period.

(3) Recommends the Council to approve the development of provision indicated in the Special Educational Needs Provision Strategy, attached as an appendix to these minutes.

40. Raising Participation Strategy

Sally Burnett (Integrated Youth Support Manager) submitted a report regarding the proposed strategies and actions in the Raising Participation Strategy.

Mrs Burnett commented on the report explaining that children currently in Year 10 would be the first to be affected by having to remain in learning until 17, whilst those in Year 8 would need to stay until they were 18. She referred members to the action plan which set out the steps to be taken to engage young people with an appropriate timeframe.

Members commented on the lack of incentive for children with special needs to remain in learning and of the difficulty for some children in making the transition from full time schooling to what was effectively part time learning. Parents also found it difficult to know how to support their children in some instances as the pattern of careers and jobs now available were different to those in the parents' experience.

Mrs Burnett confirmed that work was continuing to ascertain what additional provisions were required for children with special needs. She appreciated the difficulties in moving to post 16 learning and agreed that more work was needed to smooth the transition. Also, she was considering ways of working with parents to provide them with the help and support needed to guide their children.

The Chair (Liz Holmes) requested that future reports include a breakdown of how figures were reached, as this would give meaning to the various percentages quoted. Julie Tridgell (SASH) suggested that a report on how schools proposed to manage their duties from 2016 might be appropriate and agreed that this should come from Swindon Association of Secondary Heads (SASH).

Resolved – The Swindon Children's Trust Board:

(1) Notes the specific strategies recommended and actions to be taken to increase participation in learning for 16 to 19 year olds.

(2) Provides comments on the strategy as set out above and requests that a report on progress which also responds to the points raised be submitted to a future meeting.

(3) Endorses the priorities set out in the strategy.

(4) Requests the Swindon Association of Secondary Heads (SASH) to submit a report setting out how the schools propose to manage their duties from 2016.

41. Sexual Health in Swindon

The Board considered a report by Julie Northcott (Strategic Planning and Commissioning Manager – Sexual Health and Teenage Pregnancy) on the progress and challenges in the work towards improving the sexual health outcomes of young people across Swindon.

Mrs Northcott advised that since the report had been written further data had become available. Swindon now had its lowest rate of teenage pregnancies since records began and was the eighth best performing authority in England, with a 43.9% reduction in the number of pregnancies. She informed members that she wanted to carry out more work around relationship issues and that she was also part of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) Sub-Group that was working on the same issues.

Peter Crockett (ASSSH) expressed concern for children with special needs in all

phases of their schooling as they were a particularly vulnerable group. Peter Wells (Diocese) fully supported the project and he was pleased to note the emphasis was on relationships and not just sexual activity. Julie Tridgell (SASH) commented that her school had undertaken some work around sexualised language in the media when it was noted that it did affect young people. It was agreed that the forthcoming project would be promoted at meetings of Swindon Association of Secondary Heads (SASH), Swindon Association of Primary Heads (SAPH) and Association of Swindon Special Schools Head Teachers (ASSSH).

Resolved – The Swindon Children's Trust Board:

(1) Endorses a time limited project to establish Swindon's education provision capacity across all phases to meet the revised OFSTED inspection framework in regard to the behaviour and safety of pupils (specifically focusing on relationships/risky behaviour element).

(2) Agrees that a report on the outcome of the project be submitted to the Board with proposals for improvements where needed.

42. Children Services Performance Report

The Director Strategy and Commissioning (Sue Wald) presented a report on performance in Children Services through performance updates to the end of December 2011 and updates for January 2012 where data was routinely reported and available.

Mrs Wald referred to paragraph 2.7.4 of the report regarding the number of children in care and advised that the latest figures were not available when the report was first written. Details had subsequently been received and because of the significant increase from 235 at 30 November 2011 to 263 at 29 February 2012, it was felt that a detailed investigation was needed to ascertain the reasons for the increase. Appendix 2 had therefore been withdrawn as it was no longer appropriate and a further report would be submitted to the next meeting.

Peter Wells (Diocese) remarked on the number of groups that received the Performance Report and enquired whether it was helpful to have so much duplication. Both Councillors Shaw and Renard had noted the duplication and whilst it was appreciated that the various groups wanted information on performance levels they agreed that so much duplication could detract from strategic issues. Paddy Bradley (Director Schools and Learning) commented on the need to keep a check on issues and monitor the areas that were improving and those that were not.

Jo Garton (SAPH) commented on the increasing case load of social workers and in view of the difficulty in recruiting and retaining staff, queried whether Swindon had enough people to maintain the level of work. It was explained that the increase mainly affected community social workers and there were very experienced managers in place to oversee the work.

Julie Tridgell (SASH) requested the Board's views on the significant reduction in funding for three secondary schools in 2012/13. Both the Chair (Liz Holmes) and Councillor Renard responded by stressing that the decision on school budgets was taken by the Local Authority based on the recommendations and advice from the Schools Forum, they therefore felt unable to comment on the issue.

Resolved – The Swindon Children's Trust Board:

(1) Notes the performance data for Children's Services to the end of January 2012 where data was routinely reported and available and provides comments as above.

(2) Requests that more detailed information be submitted to the next meeting regarding the number of children in care and the number of adoptions within the Borough.

43. Esafety Programme - Update

Huw Ford (Children Services ICT Manager) presented a report on the progress of the esafety harm reduction programme across Swindon.

Members noted that children were often ahead of their parents in computer literacy and enquired how parents were informed of ways that they could monitor children's use of the internet. Mr Ford advised that they did have access to a helpline and he was working with the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) to promote the safety programme in addition to the schools providing their own instructions for pupils. However it was acknowledged that adults were probably not receiving the same level of information as the children. Liz Holmes (Chair) stated that it would be helpful for a future report to bring together data from all stakeholders involved with esafety to provide a comprehensive view of the situation.

Resolved – That the Trust Board continues to support and endorse the work of the esafety programme across Swindon.

44. Minutes of Children's Joint Commissioning Board

The Director of Strategy and Commissioning (Sue Wald) submitted a report with the minutes of the Children's Joint Commissioning Board meeting of 17 January 2012.

The Chair (Liz Holmes) was pleased to note the progress that was being made by the collaborative working of the various agencies, which was highlighted by the Section 75 integrated budget. Both she and Councillor Renard expressed a wish to see this form of collaborative working continue.

Resolved – That the report and the minutes of the Children's Joint Commissioning Board meeting of 17 January 2012 be noted.

45. New Arrangements for Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services

The Board considered a report by the Director Strategy and Commissioning (Sue Wald) with information on the new Ofsted arrangements for the inspection of local authority children services.

Mrs Wald advised the Board that Swindon would not be included in the first year of the new inspection of local authority arrangements to protect children starting in May 2012, as it was targeting authorities at the weaker end of performance, whereas Swindon was judged to be good following a similar inspection in 2009. A

joint, multi-agency inspection framework was being developed to replace this inspection which will be implemented during 2013/14.

The adoption and fostering services would be inspected by March 2013 under a new framework and evaluation schedule that was being implemented from 1st April 2012. Ofsted then planned to introduce a single integrated 'children looked after' Inspection that covered all areas of child protection and which would be implemented from April 2013.

Peter Wells (Diocese) suggested that it would be helpful for the Board to receive a report that included information on (a) the issues raised at the last inspections together with the action taken and good practices that had been developed to address these issues, (b) any potential new issues that had been identified and (c) what was being done to prepare for the new inspections.

Resolved – (1) That the Board notes the new arrangements for the Ofsted inspection of local authority children services which take effect from 1st April 2012.

(2) That a report be submitted to the next meeting with information on the inspections as detailed above.

46. School Admission Arrangements and Education Transport Policy

The Board considered a report presented by the School Admissions Manager (Emily Fry) regarding school admission arrangements from September 2013 together with an Education Transport Policy for 2013 –14 and providing information on consultation arrangements for the permanent expansion of Haydonleigh Primary School from September 2013 .

Miss Fry commented on the report, highlighting the changes to the admissions process to comply with the provisions of the new School Admissions Code that came into force on 1 February 2012. With there no longer being a need for the Local Authority to coordinate in year admissions, there had been concern that a child could be lost in the system but Miss Fry advised that a monitoring process would be in place to resolve this issue. Paddy Bradley (Director Schools and Learning) commented on the high number (98.8%) of secondary applications that that had been allocated their first preference and commended the Admissions Team for the good performance.

With regard to the Education Transport Policy, there had been a motion to Council on 23 February 2012 and it was agreed that the Policy should be reviewed to consider restoring the parents' ability to attend and address the Education Transport Appeals Sub-Committee. This could affect the Policies for both 2012/13 and 2013/14 and the Policy had been written to take this into account.

Resolved – The Swindon Children's Trust Board recommends the Council to:

- (1) Approve the co-ordinated scheme of admission arrangements for the normal point of entry (Reception Year, Year 3 and Year 7) and In Year admissions for all primary schools and secondary schools in Swindon and neighbouring Local Authorities for September 2013;
- (2) Approve the admission numbers for Community and Voluntary-Controlled schools for September 2013;
- (3) Agree that, if approved, these proposals are determined by 15th April 2012 and implemented by the Group Director, Children for admission for September

- 2013 for all new applicants;
- (4) Authorise the Group Director, Children to undertake consultation on the proposal to permanently expand Haydonleigh Primary School from September 2013.
 - (5) Agree that a report on the outcome of the consultation on the expansion of Haydonleigh Primary School be made to the Cabinet bearing in mind the target timetable set out in Appendix 8 to the report.
 - (6) Approve the Education Transport Policy 2013-14, as set out in Appendix 7 to the report.

47. Minutes of Local Safeguarding Children Board

The Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) (Mike Howard) introduced the report and commented on the minutes. He remarked that by appointing lay members, Swindon was one of the more progressive Boards in the country.

Peter Crockett (ASSSH) commented on the low number of schools with anti-bullying accreditation, as he noted that the level of support and the resources available to tackle this issue had now reduced. It would now be incumbent on the individual schools and their governing bodies to pick up and deal with the issue.

Resolved – That the report and the minutes from the Local Safeguarding Children Board meeting of 13 December 2011 be noted.

48. Future Meetings

The Board considered options for the annual number of meetings and decided that four meetings throughout the year would be appropriate.