

SWINDON CHILDREN'S TRUST BOARD

THURSDAY, 27 SEPTEMBER 2012

PRESENT: Liz Holmes in the Chair, Councillor Doreen Dart, Councillor Rochelle Russell, Jo Garton (Head teachers), Valerie Johnstone (Governors), Ruth Fitzjohn (Swindon Primary Care Trust), Phil Thomas (Community Safety), Mike Howard (LSCB), Doug Morris (Parent & Carers Advisory Group), Nick Letchet (Swindon College) and Kate Rowe (Sure Start)

Apologies for absence were received from Julie Tridgell (Head teachers), Councillor David Renard, Peter Crockett (Head Teachers & Chair of Schools Forum), Louise Tapper (Swindon Primary Care Trust), Hilary Walker (GWH NHS Foundation Trust), Teresa Harding (CAMS), Peter Wells (Diocese), John Gilbert (Group Director), John Popowicz (Fire Service), Liz Mearns (General Practitioners) and Riana Taylor (Probation Service)

11. Minutes

Resolved – that the minutes of the meeting held on 14th June 2012 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

12. Public Question Time

The following question was asked by Mr Paul Sunner:

"In relation to the wide-ranging principles of practice within Agenda item 9 Swindon Children's Trust Board – Future Focus of the Board, I have previously sought clarification concerning the criteria that would determine the independence of the Independent Chair of the SCTB – meeting 14th March 2012.

Both preamble and draft terms of reference highlight areas in which an Independent Chair could, if not advised appropriately, compromise their role's implicit impartiality. e.g. Para 3.2.1 (page 156)...it is proposed that the Board would move to being a true multi-agency Board with all agencies contributing to and submitting reports to the Board on different areas of their work relating to safeguarding...

The draft terms of reference para. 7.2 (page 167) states 'Board members will work in the best interests of the wider community...rather than the specific interests of the organisation nominating them'.

There are a number of principles within the terms of reference that could clearly undermine the Chair's role as one perceived as independent pertaining to conflict of interest with the potential to prejudice the interests of an individual and/or organisation.

In the spirit of consultation I would request consideration of the points raised. How might the Chair suggest consultation by the wider community?"

The Chair (Liz Holmes) informed Mr Sunner that his comments would form part of the wider discussion of Item 9 on the agenda, Swindon Children's Trust Board –

Future Focus of the Board, but stressed that proper legal advice would be sought as and when required.

13. Restorative Youth Services Plan 2012-13

The Service Manager, Youth Offending Team (Kevin Leaning) submitted the Restorative Youth Services Plan 2012-13 for information and approval.

Paddy Bradley (Head of Commissioning, Economy/Attainment) referred to the planned transfer of the cost of remands into custody to Local Government in April 2013 and noted that this was not reflected in the financial implications of the report. Mr Leaning explained that this was currently out for consultation with the results becoming available in 2013. However, the proposals were very unfair to some authorities and this could delay the formal outcome of the consultation.

Members commended the way information was presented in the report, especially liking the mix of facts and case studies but asked if specific numbers could also be included, along with the percentage rates, to keep the figures in perspective.

Mr Leaning referred to the funding streams for the Youth Offending Team and advised that the Wiltshire Police Authority were returning the sum of £17,000 which had previously been allocated to Swindon for prevention of offending. All future Youth Justice Board prevention grants would now be diverted to the new Police and Crime Commissioners for Wiltshire (PCC). He was very concerned at the impact this would have on the service and felt that the Police Authority was not properly aware of the work carried out by the Youth Offending Team. He had already made an appointment to meet with the new Police and Crime Commissioner in November to discuss the issue further.

Resolved – The Swindon Children's Trust Board:

- 1) Fully endorses the work of the Youth Offending Team and wishes to thank the Team for their commitment and hard work over the last year.
- 2) Notes and approves the strategy direction for Restorative Youth Services in Swindon, including plans for reducing first time offending and re-offending.
- 3) Recommends the Council to approve the Restorative Youth Services Plan 2012-13, attached as Appendix 1 to the Report.
- 4) Is concerned that the consequences of redirecting funding could have serious outcomes for the work of the Youth Offending Team and believes that serious consideration should be given to the potential impact before a final decision is made in this respect.

14. Raising Participation Strategy (RPA)

Sally Burnett (Commissioner, Routes to Employment) provided the Board with an update on the progress of Swindon's Raising Participation Strategy.

Mrs Burnett commented on the Strategy which set out to ensure that plans were in place to meet the new legislation requiring young people to remain in learning until the end of the year in which they were 17, and which first applied in 2013 and would affect the current year 11 pupils. In 2015 the requirement was for young people to

stay in learning until their 18th birthday and work was continuing to ensure sufficient suitable provision was in place.

Doug Morris (Parent Advisory Group) commented that the Parent Advisory Group had been involved in the process but he could not see this reflected in the report. Mrs Burnett confirmed that the options for catering for disabled children were still being investigated as it was important to consider the whole cohort in order to provide best value within the available budget.

The Chair (Liz Holmes) remarked on the target of 98% of 16 – 18 year olds participating in learning by 2015 and enquired about the missing 2%. In addition she asked if there were strategies in place to pick up on the young people who drop out of learning and also those that Authority had no knowledge of. Mrs Burnett stated that it was recognised that there would be a consistent cohort that would remain outside of learning and for whom learning of any type would not be appropriate. As regards those who drop out of learning, officers had worked with the Colleges to understand the needs of learners and to gain greater knowledge of what support was needed. To try and identify the young people that were currently unknown to the Authority, officers were talking to other young people who would know where they were likely to be found. They were also considering the use of different methods and providers as officers were aware that traditional methods did not always work. Mrs Burnett confirmed that they were liaising with other agencies, such as the Youth Offending Team and Teenage Pregnancy, to reach as many young people as possible.

Mr Nick Letchet (Swindon College) stated that Swindon College was pleased with the protocol and found it to be very helpful.

Resolved – The Swindon Children's Trust Board notes the progress made on the Raising Participation Strategy and provides comments as set out above.

15. Quality Account 2011/12

The Head of Commissioning – Children and Adults (Sue Wald) presented a report describing the community health services for children and young people that were provided by Swindon Borough Council during the financial year 2011-12. This was the first time that a quality account had been provided and although it had to follow a prescribed format it was acknowledged that there was room for improvement.

Members commented on the report, highlighting areas that appeared confusing and endorsing the use of plain English, but generally it was considered to be helpful and informative. Kate Rowe (Sure Start Children's Centre) remarked that she was already considering ways in which it could be adapted for use within her area.

Resolved – the Swindon Children's Trust Board:

- 1) Notes and welcomes The Quality Account report for 2011-12 and provides comments as set out above.
- 2) Will request reports from officers as required when setting the Agenda for future Board meetings.

16. Minutes of Joint Commissioning Board (Adults and Children)

The Head of Commissioning – Children and Adults (Sue Wald) submitted a report with the minutes of the Joint Commissioning Board (Adults and Children) meeting of 4th July 2012.

Resolved – that the report and minutes of the Joint Commissioning Board (Adults and Children) meeting of 4th July 2012 be noted.

17. Children Services Performance Report and Children's Services Self Assessment 2011/12

The Board considered a report by the Head of Commissioning – Children and Adults (Sue Wald) that provided information on the performance in Children Services through performance updates to the end of June 2012 and for July 2012 where data was routinely reported and available. Also considered was the Children Services Self-Assessment detailing performance for the period April 2011 to March 2012. Mrs Wald commented on the report, referring to the increase in the number of children in care up until May 2012 and to various aspects of the Self-Assessment.

Jo Garton (SAPH) remarked on the reports that had been requested by the Board to further investigate data initially provided in the performance report but which were not forthcoming. A report on initial assessments had never materialised and at the last meeting a detailed report on the exclusion data had been asked for but it was not included in the agenda. The Chair (Liz Holmes) endorsed the comments and referred to the need for an additional element within the minutes to avoid issues being overlooked. The Head of Commissioning – Economy/Attainment apologised for the omission of the exclusion data and having clarified that a separate report was required confirmed that it would be included in the next agenda.

Ruth Fitzjohn (PCT) noted that the issue of sexual exploitation had been investigated by the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) but commented that she would like a report to come to the Trust Board to provide assurance that the matter was being covered. However, it was recognised that this would result in a duplication of work as the issue was within the remit of the LSCB. Mrs Fitzjohn stressed that she simply wanted an assurance and did not want to duplicate any work.

Members commented on other areas within the report including the number of unauthorised school absences within the southern area of the town, the allocation of qualified Social Workers and childhood obesity. It was noted that an obesity strategy had previously been submitted to the Board which did not appear to be having the desired effect. It was therefore felt that the situation should be further reviewed, especially in relation to the younger cohort. Mrs Wald advised that this was the first time there had been an increase in numbers, which had not been anticipated and the issue would be further investigated.

Resolved – the Swindon Children's Trust Board:

1) Notes the performance data for Children Services to the end of June 2012, and with July 2012 updates where data is routinely reported and available and provides

comments as above.

2) Requests the Head of Commissioning – Economy/Attainment (Paddy Bradley) to submit a detailed report on the exclusions data to the next meeting.

3) Notes the Children Services Self-Assessment for the period April 2011 – March 2012, attached as Appendix 1 to the Report.

18. Swindon Children's Trust Board - Future Focus of the Board

The Chair (Liz Holmes) presented a report to generate discussion on the future core purpose, role and focus of the Board and on its relationship with Swindon Local Safeguarding Children Board and the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Mrs Holmes explained that there was no longer a statutory basis for the Trust Board (SCTB) and it was appropriate to review its role and how it could provide value to Swindon Council and its partners. The fact that reports were being considered by multiple Boards had been highlighted at the last meeting and discussions around this issue had continued throughout the summer. Members were now being asked for their views on the Board's future.

Ruth Fitzjohn (PCT) considered that the SCTB had a role to play in providing an overview on all aspects of children services. Although other Boards, such as LSCB and the Commissioning Board dealt with specific areas, there was still a need for an overarching view of the whole process. She also felt that reports that were submitted to SCTB did not always require so much detail, especially where they were submitted to more than one Board. In those instances an executive summary would be adequate and would allow time for more in depth investigation into effective issues. Jo Garton (SAPH) endorsed the view that an executive summary of information would be appropriate on occasions as the amount of paperwork was overwhelming at times. She commented that more people might attend meetings if they had not initially been discouraged by the large agenda and stated that SCTB needed to be more effective and able to provide a quick response to issues. Members endorsed the above views and several expressed disappointment in the drop off in attendance, especially the absence of any police participation.

Several points were mentioned during this discussion including:-

- Partner organisations wished to be more involved as SCTB was currently seen as being Council dominated.
- There should be greater probing of the data within reports and also more questioning of what action was being taken to improve a situation.
- Members would appreciate reports or questions from officers to stimulate discussion on occasions.
- A need to ensure that all aspects of child care were represented by the partner organisations within SCTB.
- To focus the Board's main priorities on what was important for children and then possibly expand from there.

Andrew Ferguson (Solicitor) advised that the SCTB had originally been established to provide an overall view of all relevant partners to inform policy decisions by the Council's Cabinet. Mrs Holmes added that the Board had continuously evolved since its establishment and it now needed to evolve further in order to provide value for all partners. She also enquired whether it was necessary for all policies to

continue being submitting to SCTB as it appeared that some still came to the Board simply because they always had done.

Mrs Holmes informed members that the proposals and views would be developed further before returning to the Board for discussion and asked for volunteers to assist in the process. She concluded by proposing that future meetings should move to a 4.00 p.m. start provided this did not cause undue problems for members, with the possibility that the next meeting would start at this earlier time. Those present agreed that 4.00 p.m. start would be convenient but it was noted that all members would be contacted to confirm.

Resolved – Swindon Children's Trust Board:

- 1) Believes there is a continuing role for the Board and provides its views as set out above.
- 2) Agrees that the Terms of Reference for the Swindon Children's Trust Board be amended to reflect the changing role, purpose and responsibilities of the Board.
- 3) That Ruth Fitzjohn (PCT), Kate Rowe (Sure Start Children's Centres) and Jo Garton (SAPH) along with the Chair (Liz Holmes) work on developing revised Terms of Reference in line with the views expressed at the meeting, which will return to the Board for further discussion and approval.
- 4) Notes the diagram showing Management and Governance Arrangements for Adult and Children Services attached as Appendix 2 to the Report.
- 5) Agrees that future meetings of the Board commence at 4.00 p.m. provided that the change of time does not cause undue problems for members.

19.

Date of Next Meeting

The Board noted that the next meeting would take place on Thursday 6th December 2012 in Committee Room 6 at the Civic Offices, Swindon with a probable start time of 4.00 p.m.