

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL
19th November, 2010**

Present:- Councillor G. A. Russell (in the Chair); Councillors Ali, Buckley, Falvey, Fenoughty, Rushforth and Sims.

Also in attendance were:- Mr. C. A. Marvin and Mrs. L. Pitchley

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dodson, Donaldson, Kaye, Sharp, Mrs. J. Blanch-Nicholson, Mr. M. Burn, Father A. Hayne, Mrs. K. Muscroft, Parish Councillor N. Tranmer and Dr. S. Warren

60. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at this meeting.

61. QUESTIONS FROM THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public or the press.

62. MATTERS REFERRED FROM THE YOUTH CABINET

The Scrutiny Panel noted that several members of the Rotherham Youth Cabinet and of the Looked After Children Council had taken part in the "Eleven Millions Take-over Day" by attending the meeting of the Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee on Friday, 12th November, 2010.

63. COMMUNICATIONS

(1) Consideration was being given to the nomination of a Councillor to represent this Scrutiny Panel on the second Fostering Panel. A copy of the job description and person specification would be issued to Elected Members.

(2) (regional) Scrutiny Review of Children's Cardiac Services (jointly with other local authorities Children's and Health Scrutiny Panels) – Councillors Ali, Falvey, Sims and G. A. Russell were appointed to this Scrutiny Review group.

(3) Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel review of the private rented sector housing – all Members were encouraged to complete and return the questionnaire being issued as part of this scrutiny review.

(4) Carer's Card for young people – a scheme was being launched on 19 November 2010 at the Thornhill Youth and Community Centre, Rotherham.

64. PRIMARY SCHOOL LIFESTYLE SURVEY 2009

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Policy and Planning Team Manager stating that the Lifestyle Survey takes place annually, with participation from both Primary and Secondary school pupils. Questions cover a range of issues, such as health, how pupils feel about school, how safe they feel, how pupils feel about the area in which they live, bullying, and how often they may smoke, drink or take drugs.

The submitted report covered the Primary School Lifestyle Survey 2009 and included (as the appendix) the Executive Summary. The survey had been completed by Year 5 pupils of fifteen schools.

The full Borough-wide report and the relevant data tables would be made available on the Council's intranet and the Executive Summary on the Council's Internet website.

The Scrutiny Panel asked how the collected data is used to inform future service planning and provision (eg: the preparation of the Children and Young People's Plan). Although the return rate was relatively low, it was stated that the survey was statistically significant. Suggestions were made about ways of increasing the number of schools and pupils completing the annual survey.

Resolved:- (1) That the report be received and its contents noted.

(2) That this Scrutiny Panel expresses the view that:-

(a) it is essential that the results of the Primary School Lifestyle surveys are utilised for the monitoring and improvement of services for children and young people; and

(b) in the light of the important use of the survey results, referred to at (a) above, every endeavour be made to encourage all schools to participate in future annual surveys.

65. TRANSFORMING ROTHERHAM LEARNING - PROGRESS UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Lead Adviser, Targeted Intervention and Support stating that Transforming Rotherham Learning was originally conceived as Rotherham's ambitious approach to Building Schools for the Future – a programme of investment from central government to improve the infrastructure of schools. As described in Rotherham's Strategy for Change document, Rotherham took the opportunity to develop an approach that would deliver improved outcomes for children, young people and families. The principles of Transforming Rotherham Learning (developed in consultation with children, families and schools) are that:-

- we are all responsible for all Rotherham's children and young people;
- all Rotherham learners will achieve; no one will be left behind;
- learning is the core business: investment, policy and strategy must be driven by opportunities for learners; and
- learning communities will be rooted in and responsive to the needs of local people.

The report stated that Rotherham's vision is to deliver these principles by developing fourteen geographical learning communities, based on the location of Rotherham's secondary schools, as well as two faith-based learning communities.

In June 2010, the coalition Government cancelled the investment through Building Schools for the Future. However, Rotherham remains committed to the principles of Transforming Rotherham Learning and the concept of delivering these through multi-agency learning communities, firmly rooted in the needs of local communities. This commitment is now embedded in Rotherham's policy framework and has started to re-shape service provision Children and Young People's Services and, in particular, within the School Effectiveness Service.

The actions and consequent developments contained in the submitted report identify the means by which the Authority will better ensure that all children and young people are safe, in good health and making at least expected progress so that they can be in successful education, training or employment at age 19 and beyond into a prosperous future.

The Scrutiny Panel's discussion of this issue included the following salient issues:-

- the impact of budget and service reductions;
- schools choosing academy status and the risks attached to wider learning communities, particularly smaller primary schools;
- the importance of support for the learning communities, from all stakeholders;
- priorities and next steps, as detailed in the report submitted;
- continuation of school improvement partners until March 2011;
- continuing to identify any under-performance in schools and striving to maintain improvements in schools' performance;
- the changing role of school governors;
- prioritising the allocation of resources to the areas of most need.

Resolved:- (1) That the report be received and its contents noted.

(2) That this Scrutiny Panel endorses the continued commitment to the development of learning communities as the key delivery vehicle for the Children and Young People's Plan 2010-2013.

66. WORLD CLASS PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Further to Minute No. 71 of the meeting of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel held on 30th October 2009, consideration was given to a report presented by the Consultant Secondary School Head Teacher containing details of the Local Authority's World Class Primary Schools action plan which will be a key strategy in accelerating pupil progress in Rotherham's primary schools.

During December, 2009 the Council had submitted a detailed action plan to the Department for Education (the DCSF at that time) on improvements to be made to the profile of all of Rotherham's primary schools. There had been concerns about the number of schools performing below the National floor targets at KS2 - 55% L4+ combined in English and Mathematics.

Although the initiative was later 'shelved' at a national level, Rotherham's plan is seen as a key strategy in improving standards and the profile of Rotherham's primary schools. The plan has also received national recognition for its quality and was used by the Department for Education with other local authorities.

The main details are that a clear individual plan of action for each of Rotherham's most vulnerable primary schools was produced. The plans were for those schools performing below the national floor targets, schools in an Ofsted category of concern or those that would be vulnerable at the time of inspection.

The School Effectiveness Service strengthened the way in which in which it segments its schools into strands. The revised strands are:-

- A Outstanding Schools - with the potential to provide system leadership.
- B Good Schools Moving to Great.
- C(i) Satisfactory schools that need to maximise progress in order to become good schools.
- C(ii) Satisfactory schools that perform inconsistently and would be vulnerable at an Ofsted inspection.
- D Schools in Ofsted categories, 'hard to shift' (below combined floor targets for 4 or more consecutive years), and/or very vulnerable.

The Scrutiny Panel's discussion of this issue included the following salient issues:-

- continuing the level of support for schools;
- the importance of co-operation between agencies and professionals in safeguarding children;
- the White Paper on Education, soon to be issued by the coalition Government;
- governance in schools and the expectations upon and responsibilities of school governors.

Resolved:- (1) That the report be received and its contents noted.

(2) That this Scrutiny Panel supports the initiatives with the World Class Primary Schools Action Plan and endorses the proposed actions.

(3) That a scrutiny review be undertaken of the governance of schools.

(4) That a report about the forthcoming Government White Paper on Education be submitted to a meeting of this Scrutiny Panel during the early months of 2011.

67. ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE MISUSE STRATEGY - UPDATE

Further to Minute No. 118 of the meeting of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel held on 3rd April, 2009, consideration was given to a report presented by the Commissioning Officer, Children and Young People's Services concerning the key findings from the current alcohol and substance misuse needs analysis, how services are currently delivered and the key strategic priorities for 2010/11. These key priorities were fully outlined in the Young People's Substance Misuse Treatment Plan and Young People's Drug and Alcohol Education and Prevention Plan (included with the report submitted).

The Scrutiny Panel's discussion of this issue included the following salient issues:-

- specific projects in schools and their value for money, particularly in the light of the reduction in the Area Based Grant;
- the merits of imposing a fixed price per unit of alcohol and whether this action would have an impact on young people obtaining alcohol;
- workforce development;
- inter-agency co-operation and work;
- NHS Rotherham is to continue funding for the teenage pregnancy work;
- funding of future projects in the light of financial constraints and the risks attached to not undertaking work;
- transition of young people to adult services;
- the findings of the Value for Money review and the changes which may be made to the services as a result of this exercise.

Resolved:- (1) That the report be received and its contents noted.

(2) That this Scrutiny Panel notes the priorities and acknowledges that the alcohol and substance misuse strategy reflects national and local strategic direction in terms of Children and Young People's Services.

68. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES - NOTICE TO IMPROVE - PROGRESS AND EXCEPTIONS

Further to Minute No. 12 of the meeting of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel held on 4th June, 2010, consideration was given to a report presented by the Senior Director, Schools and Lifelong Learning concerning the Children and Young People's Services' Notice to Improve. Members noted that detailed regular monitoring continues to take place against a number of actions across several themes.

It was noted that there was likely to be unannounced inspection of Children and Young People's Services in the near future.

The Scrutiny Panel's discussion of this issue included the following salient issues:-

- the use of agency staff and the recruitment of permanent staff;
- work with other agencies, including Safer Neighbourhood Teams;
- the progress made by Children and Young People's Services since the Notice to Improve was issued.

Resolved:- (1) That the report be received and its contents noted.

(2) That progress with the Notice to Improve and the implementation of the action plan continue to be reported to meetings of this Scrutiny Panel.

69. CORPORATE PARENTING - UPDATE ON TRAINING

The Interim Service Manager (Provider Services) informed the Scrutiny Panel of the progress of the training being provided for Elected Members in the role of Corporate Parent for Looked After Children. The training provided to date had been very informative and Elected Members were encouraged to attend future sessions.

70. MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON 15TH OCTOBER, 2010

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel held on 15th October, 2010, be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

71. MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S TRUST BOARD HELD ON 20TH OCTOBER, 2010

Resolved:- That the contents of the minutes of the meeting of the Children and Young People's Trust Board held on 20th October, 2010, be noted.

72. MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE CABINET MEMBER AND ADVISERS FOR SAFEGUARDING AND DEVELOPING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN

Resolved:- That the contents of the minutes of the meetings of the Cabinet Member and Advisers for Safeguarding and Developing Learning Opportunities for Children held on 6th October, 2010, 20th October, 2010 and on 2nd November, 2010, be noted.

73. MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

Resolved:- That the contents of the minutes of the meetings of the Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee held on 8th October, 2010 and on 22nd October, 2010, be noted.