

MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY REVIEW OF EXTENDED SERVICES IN AND AROUND SCHOOLS

THURSDAY, 7 SEPTEMBER 2006

Councillors * Newton (Chair), *Engert, *Vanier and *Oakes

*Member present

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for lateness received from Councillors Oakes and Vanier

2. URGENT BUSINESS

None received.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no such declarations.

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE (REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE REVIEW PANEL – AGENDA ITEM 4)

It was agreed that in addition to the meetings already proposed one be convened with local service partners. Also Members were reminded that they were invited to a Steering Group of the Network Learning Communities on 31 October 2006.

5. PROGRESS WITH REVIEW (REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE – AGENDA ITEM 5)

Officers gave an update on the current position and progress in developing services. The Panel noted that it was the responsibility of the Authority to identify local partners but School Governing Bodies had responsibility for the contractual arrangements. Governing Bodies were also responsible for CRB checks and site safety. The Panel was informed of potential issues regarding using schools for community access where PFI funding was involved. However some schools i.e. Gladesmore were able to operate activities at the weekend by specifying that it was a core curriculum activity.

The Panel was pleased to note that the Authority had designated 16 schools to the DfES as providing the minimum core offer of extended services. This exceeded the target for September 2006 by 4. The target for 2007 was 25% of schools.

The Panel noted the relevance of recent legislation such as Children Act 2004 and Childcare Act 2006 which when implemented would place a requirement on Authorities to ensure that there was sufficient childcare provision in their area. A key challenge for 2010 was to provide sufficient quality affordable childcare provision.

The Panel was informed that 8 more new Children's Centres would be developed by 2008 giving a total of 18. They would be strategically based and provide high quality integrated provision for the care and development of young children. The development of three Children's Networks operating by Spring 2007 was seen as a more co-ordinated method of assessing and supporting children and families and would enable a greater focus on prevention and early intervention. The Panel were advised that some Authorities i.e. Telford were developing this method of provision. The pooling of

budgets and joint commissioning of services were areas that could be examined further.

Officers explained the funding streams available for Extended services. Some funding came to authorities via the Standards Fund and General Sure Start Grant but some went direct to schools through the Schools Standard grant and Dedicated Schools Grant. Additionally schools had specific funding to support personalised learning including support to vulnerable children.

Whilst there was no local area agreement for extended services this could be an area for future consideration.

Community access to school facilities was seen as a real challenge. Also there were issues around charging policies so that it was affordable to local groups. The Panel noted that the Authority often saw itself as a mediator between the community seeking access and the school. The Panel were advised that some schools had appointed a designated member of staff as Co-ordinators of extended services, a position commended by the DfES. Some of these appointments were at a senior strategic level.

An audit was being carried out on what was and could be provided at extended schools. Whilst schools were responsible for consulting with the local community on needs the Authority had an enabling role to play in identifying service providers. Members suggested that the Authority should encourage a needs led assessment.

RESOLVED

That officers provide the panel with more details on:-

1. Funding Arrangements including information about strategic commissioning and sustainability
2. Schools that have Extended Schools Co-Ordinators (the level of post and responsibilities)
3. Main functions and responsibility of the Authority and Schools and **any** action that the Authority has taken to help or encourage schools to meet their responsibilities
Information about the latest audit of services available, including the way it is being carried out, progress, any findings to date and action proposed as a consequence.
4. The latest audit of services at extended schools, including information about the questions asked, the responses received, what schools are participating and whether other schools (such as private schools) should be consulted.
5. What is being done to establish need?

Cllr Martin Newton

Chair

