

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

20 JANUARY 2011

ATTENDANCE OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

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Summary

This report details the areas covered by the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services. The areas within the relevant portfolio are listed each time a Cabinet Member is invited to attend any of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees to be held to account.

1. Background

1.1 The areas within the terms of reference of this Overview and Scrutiny Committee and covered by the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member), according to the Council's constitution are:

- Early years
- Further education
- Home to school transport
- Inclusion
- Primary and secondary education
- School services
- Special educational needs
- Specialist youth services
- Youth

1.2 In addition, Section 19 of the Children Act 2004 provides that children's services authorities in England must designate one of their Executive Members as their "lead member for children's services".

1.3 The Lead Member has political responsibility for the leadership, strategy and effectiveness of the authority's children's services and is an "office holder" under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.

1.4 There is statutory guidance on the roles and responsibilities of the Director of Children's Services and Lead Member for Children's Services. It has been updated to take account of progress made, existing practices and the importance of the both as leaders and champions for children, young people and their families. It also seeks to ensure that these arrangements are supported within each local authority and Local Strategic Partnership.

- 1.5 The statutory guidance states that the Lead Member has the following key roles:
- (a) being politically accountable, through leadership of discussions with Cabinet and other members, for the effectiveness, availability and value for money of all local authority children's services;
 - (b) providing political leadership within, and in partnership beyond, the local authority in order to improve outcomes for all children and young people and narrow the outcomes gap for vulnerable groups of children and young people, by:
 - engaging and encouraging local communities and representative organisations to contribute suggestions, comments and ideas on the quality of children's services and how these might be improved
 - setting the overall vision of the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP)
 - being satisfied that services delivered within the local area are planned, designed, delivered and quality-assured with the involvement of children, young people and their families
 - challenging the Director of Children Services and others, where appropriate;
 - (c) championing the interests of children, young people and their families within the local authority's area (including all those receiving services who do not live in the area) by:
 - ensuring that the local authority celebrates and showcases examples of children and young people's achievements
 - purposeful engagement with local schools, including through visits and dialogue with pupils and staff
 - political engagement with any elected members on the Local Strategic Partnership/s of the Children's Trust, with members of the Local Safeguarding Children Board, and with local community organisations;
 - (d) ensuring that the authority's paid officers maintain a clear focus on effective safeguarding arrangements and promoting the safety and welfare of children across all agencies;
 - (e) ensuring that officers are effectively monitoring education arrangements, including standards of achievement, in the local area;
 - (f) championing early intervention and prevention in delivering services for children, young people and families;
 - (g) exercising political leadership that emphasises the importance of reducing child poverty in the local area;
 - (h) contributing to and being satisfied that the local authority demonstrates high standards of corporate parenting, in particular

by encouraging Members to promote the educational achievement and health and well-being of looked after children and children leaving care; and

- (i) being politically accountable for the audit arrangements adopted by the Council for ensuring data on children's services (which may come from a range of sources) is reliable.

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Background Papers:

DCSF – Statutory Guidance on the roles and responsibilities of the Director of Children's Services and Lead Member for Children's Services - 2009