

DEVON CHILDREN'S TRUST BOARD

At a meeting held at County Hall, Exeter on

20 September 2007

Present

Board Members

Mary Nisbett (Independent Chair)
Kathy Beechen (Voluntary Sector – Youth Services)
Faith Butler (Devon Association of Governors)
Councillor Alan Connett (Devon District Councils)
Juliet Doswell (Faith Communities)
Gary Ferrand (Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service)
Jeannette Kemlo (Parent Carer)
Dr Stella Imong (Clinician nominated by Devon PCT)
Bruce Pollit (Parents of Early Years Children)
Debbie Pritchard (Children's Trust Programme Director)
Councillor Marguerite Shapland (Non-Executive Director, Devon PCT)
Councillor John Smith (Executive Member, CYPS, DCC)
David Tall (Devon Association of Governors)
Tim Tod (Voluntary Sector)
Councillor Nick Way (Executive Support Member, Schools, DCC)
Anne Whiteley (Director of Children and Young People's Services, DCC)
Eelke Zoestbergen (Devon and Cornwall Police Authority)

Also Present

Brian Grady (Commissioning and Procurement Manager, CYPS, DCC)
Rahila Henderson (CYPS, DCC)
Penny Mathers (Government Office South West)
Roland Pyle (Policy, DCC)
Gerry Ruffolo (Committee Secretariat, DCC)
John Shaw (CYPS DCC)
Jenny McNeill (Devon PCT)

Apologies

Councillor Hugo Barton (Executive Support Member, Social Care, DCC)
Nicola Bulbeck (Devon District Councils)
Phil Norrey (DCC Chief Executive)
Dr Virginia Pearson (Director of Public Health, Devon PCT)
Chris Roberts (Learning and Skills Council)
Jenny Rudge (Connexions, SW)
Judith Wright (Voluntary Sector – Early Years and Primary Phase)

10 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2007 were signed as a correct record.

11 Notice of Meetings

Councillor John Smith suggested that consideration be given to publication of leaflets about public participation arrangements and to possible web casting of meetings.

The Chairman agreed that consideration could be given to these suggestions and advertisement of meetings in various publications for example the Youth News Website.

12 Annual Performance Assessment (APA)

Anne Whiteley reported on the visit by Ofsted of the service as part of the Annual Performance Assessment (APA) carried out on 13 September 2007. The assessment was based on how the Authority was working with its partners towards achieving the 5 Outcomes within the Every Child Matters Agenda. Informal initial feedback on the APA appeared promising at this stage. A letter was expected in November on the judgements.

Mrs Whiteley thanked the partner agencies work (including the head teacher associations) and constructive involvement during the APA inspection and the positive contribution they continued to make in promoting the welfare of children and young people.

Penny Mathers from GOSW commended the Local Authority for its hard work following the JAR and APA.

It was noted that the final judgements would be reported to the Board when available.

13 Impact of Exeter Unitary Authority Proposal

Anne Whiteley reported on the current position following the Secretary of State's announcement that Exeter City Council's bid for Unitary status could go through to the next phase of implementation subject to further work on the financial case by the October deadline. The financial case would be subject to independent analysis by the Institute of Public Finance and the Secretary of State's decision was expected in November 2007. If approved and subject to parliamentary process implementation was expected from April 2009. Prior to this however the County Council would seek a judicial review if the proposal was to carry forward. Notwithstanding any legal actions by the County Council senior officers and members were meeting with their counterparts at the City to ensure the continued delivery of quality services for children and young people through partnership working irrespective of any re-organisation. The current issues would not detract from that focus.

Future developments would be reported to the Board.

14 "Care Matters- Time for Change" – White Paper on Children in Care

The Board received from Anne Whiteley a summary of this White Paper to improve the life chances and opportunities for children in care. A 'gap analysis' was currently underway to identify any areas where the LA and its partners fell short of the proposals espoused in the White Paper and which were not reflected in the Children and Young People's Plan. There were ongoing LA initiatives for example a mentoring and work experience scheme. The current pilot was receiving positive early feedback and would now, subject to formal evaluation, be rolled out over the county.

Members referred to the importance of person centred approaches, involving partner agency working to help ensure equal and fair access by children in care to services and opportunities enjoyed by other children. The Board also noted the important transitional phase into adulthood for children in care and the need to promote for example employment opportunities and secured tenancies/housing.

Progress on the 'gap analysis' would be reported to a future meeting of the Board.

15 Hear By Right

Rahila Henderson (Youth Participation and Democracy Worker (CYPS)) led the Board through an exercise on developing ideas on how children and young people can engage in the planning for children's services generally. These would be considered by the National Youth Agency at an event to be held on 6 October. The outcomes of the groups' work would be assimilated by Ms Henderson to develop the action plan for the Children's Trust to achieve Hear by Right status at advanced level.

The Chairman requested that each agency partner represented on the Board nominate a Children's Champion. Each nomination should be forwarded to Rahila or to the Chairman by 16 October (email: rahila.henderson@devon.gov.uk or [,mary.nisbett@devon.gov.uk](mailto:mary.nisbett@devon.gov.uk)).

16 Children with Special Needs

(a) Joint Strategic Review of Health and Social Care Needs

Jenny McNeil, Assistant Director of Strategic Development Devon PCT, reported on the joint strategic review by the PCT and Devon County Council covering Health and Social Care with a view to establishing common priorities and joint commissioning arrangements.

(b) Commissioning of Services for Children with Special Needs

The Board received and noted a report from Brian Grady, (Manager Strategic and Joint Commissioning) on commissioning arrangements for children with special needs. The report covered a summary of the strategy, proposals for 0-5 year olds, and the timescales and key dates leading to a reconfiguration of services by 1 April 2008.

Board members commented on the importance of the outreach work undertaken by special schools, helping support children in mainstream schools. This would help the special schools maintain their expertise and a valuable resource base. The Board also acknowledged the valuable role of the voluntary sector.

The Chairman asked that progress reports be submitted to the Board as part of the formal reporting process, which should be referred to in the key dates chart.

(c) Honeylands Review

John Shaw Head of Service, Children with Special Needs (CYP Directorate) reported on the draft pathway plan for children born with recognised additional needs, which was circulated to the Board. This related to the Honeylands Review with a view to developing a clear common strategy with parents and all the agencies involved.

Progress reports would be submitted to the Board.

17 Devon Strategic Partnership and Local Area Agreement 2008 - 2011

The Board received a briefing note by Roland Pyle (Policy Officer DCC) on the Devon Strategic Partnership, Local Area Agreement and the DSP's Governance structure. The governance structure included the Children's Trust responsible for the Children and Young People's Theme, which is one of 3 other themes around which the LAA would be centred.

A Devon Strategic Partnership conference would be held on 9 October at the Newton Abbot Race Course to which Board members would be invited. The conference would discuss priorities for inclusion in the LAA. The Local Area Agreement 2008-2011 will comprise up to 35 targets drawn from the forthcoming national indicator set, 17 statutory education and early years targets and, at local discretion, additional local targets.

18 Children and Young's Plan 2008 – 2010

The Board received a report from Debbie Pritchard (Change for Children Manager CYP Directorate) on the Plan, the way forward, shape and current situation. The report highlighted the key priorities with named responsible lead officers and timescales. A stakeholders' day was being arranged for 13 November to which the Board was invited (details to follow).

Members discussed the role of the Local Forums in the process and the need for further clarification.

19 Board Meeting Dates

The Board noted dates as follows:

15 November 2007
3 January 2008
28 February
15 May
10 July
25 September
13 November

(11.30am – 1.30pm)

20 Audit Commission

Anne Whiteley informed members that they may be contacted by the Commission, which was undertaking a survey of Children's Trust governance arrangements.

(The meeting started at 11.30am and finished at 1.35pm)

