

---

## Education Scrutiny Committee

28 October 2008

### Review of the Extended Schools Agenda - Scoping Report

#### Purpose of Report

1. This report outlines the proposed methods for carrying out the above named review and asks Members to formally agree the scope and timetable set out below.

#### Background

2. This topic was registered by Cllr Merrett in August 2008 following a decision not to proceed with part B of the recently completed review of School Governors. The Education Scrutiny Committee considered a feasibility report for this new topic at their meeting in September 2008 and agreed that it fit with the following eligibility criteria:

- Public Interest
- Under Performance / Service Dissatisfaction
- In keeping with Corporate Priorities
- Level of Risk

3. On that basis, Members agreed to proceed with the review based on the following remit:

#### Aim

4. to contribute to the development of processes aimed at ensuring accessibility and a high quality of extended school provision

#### Objectives:

- i. Examine the proposed role and composition of the Multi-Agency Steering Group to confirm its functions are fit for purpose and that the appropriate partners and Directorates are involved
  - ii. Assess the affordability, quality and take-up of childcare and activities for children aged 5-11, and identify ways of ensuring their affordability
5. In an effort to keep the review focused it was agreed that it should be completed within six months. Therefore, the final report for this review is scheduled to be submitted to Scrutiny Management Committee (SMC) in April 2009.

## Consultation

6. **Objective i - To Examine the proposed role and composition of the Multi-Agency Steering Group to confirm its functions are fit for purpose and that the appropriate partners and Directorates are involved**
7. As part of the feasibility report, members were presented with information on the proposed Multi-Agency Steering Group which outlined the suggested membership and draft terms of reference (see Annex A). The Assistant Director of Partnership & Early Intervention has been invited to attend this meeting to discuss in detail the proposed role of the steering group and to explain the thought process behind its suggested composition.
8. In addition, the Committee as a whole may choose to attend the first meeting of the Steering Group and nominate one of the Committee to become a permanent member of the Steering Group. This would allow the nominated member to provide the committee with regular updates on the progress being made in developing the work of the Extended Schools Service, which in turn may also highlight specific issues which would benefit from scrutiny review by the Committee.
9. **Objective ii - Assess the affordability, quality and take-up of childcare and activities for children aged 5-11, and identify ways of ensuring their affordability**
10. In considering the feasibility report, the Committee recognised that in order to identify whether the childcare and activities currently available for 5-11 year olds was both affordable and of sufficient quality, the committee would need to gather the views of existing service users.
11. In order to gather the required information, Cllr Merrett suggested in his topic registration form, carrying out a number of surveys – see Annex B. It is recognised however that the costs involved with this approach would be higher than the budget available for this review and as the response rates cannot be guaranteed, the information gathered may not provide a true picture.

## Timetable For Review

12. The Committee is therefore asked to consider the following alternative ways forward:
  - Produce 1No. survey to be sent out to every family in the city with a 6 year old child - the Committee could agree the survey questions at this meeting to enable the Early Years team to proceed with sending out the survey. Responses could be requested by no later than mid December in order that the findings can be presented in a report to the Scrutiny Committee at their formal meeting on 7 January 2009. The Head of Early Years & Extended Schools Service has agreed to finance the survey should members agree to proceed with this suggestion.

- Carry out a number of visits to sites offering extended schools services to meet with existing users to gather their views – it is suggested that the Committee visit 3 sites between now and the end of the year - one which is good, one in a rural area, and one which has some issues which are representative of national concerns. This would give Councillors the opportunity to see the clubs in action, to assess the quality, speak with the heads of the schools, staff running the clubs, parents, carers and children. To facilitate this information gathering, the Committee may wish to draw up a list of possible questions to put to users. The Head of Early Years has provided a list of possible visit dates for Members to consider and agree – see Annex C.
  
- Receive an interim report at the formal meeting of the Committee on 7 January 2009 – The report would summarise the information previously given by the Assistant Director of Partnership & Early Intervention regarding the steering group, present the findings from the survey suggested above and the information gathered from the site visits. It could also include the findings arising from the consultation currently being carried out by the Council on the Children's Plan, and the results from the FIS Childcare Sufficiency Audit completed last year (this has details of what York parents /carers felt about the affordability and accessibility of Extended Schools core offer of childcare). This should enable the Committee to:
  - a) Identify if the Multi-Agency Steering Group functions are fit for purpose and whether the appropriate partners and Directorates are involved
  - b) Assess if the existing childcare services and activities for children aged 5-11 are sufficient both in quantity and quality, and identify ways of ensuring the affordability of those services.
  
- Hold an informal meeting and invite representatives from external providers to attend – This would provide the Committee with an opportunity to discuss their findings with the providers and to gather information on any issues the providers may have. It is suggested that this informal meeting be held on 24 February 2009 (currently a formal Committee meeting date).
  
- Receive a draft final report at the formal meeting of the Committee in March 2009 (date to be confirmed) – This report will present all of the Committee's findings, together with their conclusions and some proposed recommendations for Members approval. Assuming that amendments are identified the Committee may need to meet once again in early April 2009 to reconsider the draft final report and sign it off, prior to its presentation to SMC on 27 April 2009

## **Options**

13. Having considered the information contained within this report Members may choose to move forward with the review in line with the timetable suggested above, or identify an alternative approach.

## **Implications**

14. There are no known Financial, HR, Equalities, Legal or Other implications associated with the recommendations within this report.

## **Corporate Priorities**

15. The remit for this review supports Corporate Priority No.7 – 'Improve the life chances of the most disadvantaged and disaffected children, young people and families in the city'.

## **Risk Management**

16. There are no known risks associated with the recommendations in this report.

## **Recommendations**

17. Members are asked to note the contents of this scoping report and formally agree the methodology and timetable for carrying out this review, as set out in the bullet points within paragraph 12 above.
18. Assuming that the above is agreed, Members are asked to progress the work of this review by agreeing:
  - i. which (if any) Member of the Committee will be its representative on the Multi-Agency Steering Group
  - ii. the questions to be included in the survey of all families within the city who have a six year old child
  - iii. the dates for the committee's visits to 3No. school clubs
  - iv. a number of questions to put to existing users of Extended Schools Services and the service providers, at the site visits

Reason: To ensure compliance with scrutiny procedures, protocols and workplans.

## Contact Details

**Author:**

Melanie Carr  
Scrutiny Officer  
Scrutiny Services  
Tel No.01904 552063

**Chief Officer Responsible for the report:**

Dawn Steel  
Democratic Services Manager  
Tel No.01904 551030

**Scoping Report Approved**  **Date** 17 Sept 2008

**Wards Affected:** *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

**All**

**For further information please contact the author of the report**

## Background Papers:

Feasibility Report dated 9 September 2008

## Annexes

**Annex A** – Membership & Draft Terms of Reference for Multi-Agency Steering Group

**Annex B** – Topic Registration Form

**Annex C** – List of possible visit dates