
Education Scrutiny Committee

3 December 2008

Extended Schools Agenda – Interim Report

Background

1. In September 2008 the committee considered a feasibility report for this topic as registered by Cllr Merrett, and agreed to carry out a review based on the following remit:

Aim

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
4. At their meeting on 28 October 2008, the committee subsequently agreed the following methodology and timetable for carrying out the review:

4 November 2008	Cllr Funnell & Cllr Brooks to attend first meeting of Multi Agency Steering Group, set up to drive forward the Extended Schools Agenda
24 November 2008	Visit to After School Club at Yearsley Grove Primary School
3 December 2008	Formal Meeting to receive interim report, providing feedback from first meeting of Steering Group and containing draft survey for sending to every family in the city with a six year old child
5 December 2008	Visit to After School Clubs at Wheldrake Primary School and Fishergate Primary School
7 January 2009	Formal meeting to receive interim report detailing the findings from the site visits

24 February 2009	Formal meeting to receive interim report detailing the findings from the survey of families with a six year old, and to discuss Extended Schools Agenda with Executive Member for Children's Services (an invitation to attend has been sent)
	Followed by an informal consultation session with representative from schools and external service providers (with guest speaker)
March 2009	Formal meeting to consider draft final report (exact date of meeting to be arranged)

Consultation

3. The methods for consultation are outlined above. Any changes to the methodology should be carefully considered as this may affect Members ability to complete the review prior to Annual Council in May 2009.

First Key Objective - 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

Information Gathered

4. The first meeting of the multi –agency Steering Group was held on 4 November 2008. Three members of the Education Scrutiny Committee were in attendance (Cllr Merrett, Cllr Brooks & Cllr Funnell).

Issues Arising

5. It was recognised at the meeting that the group was too large to generate a good debate and that there were too many meetings in the year. It was also clear that for the group to be more inclusive, more schools, parents and providers needed to participate. A decision was therefore taken to set up a much smaller, tightly focused, strategic steering group. Schools in particular, will be encouraged to be part of this group including secondary schools who may previously have been given the wrong signal due to the alignment of the group with Early Years. Minutes of the meetings will be circulated to a larger network group who will meet once or twice a year (or per term) on a workshop / conference basis, to gather valuable advice and ideas.
6. Those Members who attended the meeting are asked to provide feedback, in order that the Committee can decide whether the agreed changes to the steering group will now ensure it is fit for purpose, and that the appropriate partners and Directorates are all now to be involved at the right level i.e. strategically or consultatively, thus enabling this objective to be signed off.

7. Alternatively, Members will need to identify what further information they require in order to sign off this objective.

Second Key Objective - Assess the affordability, quality and take-up of childcare and activities for children aged 5-11, and identify ways of ensuring their affordability

Information Gathered

8. In order to assess affordability, quality and take-up, Members agreed to issue a survey to all families in the city with a six year old child. It was agreed that the survey should be designed to enable families to include their views in regard to any other children in their immediate family. The Chair of this Committee suggested a number of questions and following consultation with officers in the Extended School team these were incorporated into the draft survey attached at Annex A.
9. Members recognised that even though in many cases childcare and extended schools facilities are coordinated by external partners, it may be possible to acquire information from schools which may identify the needs of families within each school's local community.
10. Members also agreed to hold an informal consultation session after the formal meeting on 24 February for representatives from schools and external providers to discuss the findings from the survey and site visits. To stimulate debate the acting Head of Early Years & Extended Schools Services has suggested inviting Eddie Needham from the Training Development Agency (DfES) to attend, to give a presentation on the national picture regarding extended school services and to compare the provision in York against other Education Authorities.
11. A letter has been drafted requesting information on feedback from any consultations carried out by schools, together with an invitation to attend the consultation session - 'see Annex B.
12. Finally, In regard to the three site visits arranged, Members agreed to ask questions based on those contained within the survey in order to support the survey findings. Unfortunately as Members did not agree the content of the survey at their last meeting, it was not possible to ensure all of the questions were asked at the first site visit on 24 November 2008 to Yearsley Grove Primary School.

Issues Arising

13. Members are asked to provide their comments and suggest any amendments to both the survey and letter, prior to them being issued. It is planned to send out the survey, and letter to schools as soon as possible once any agreed changes have been made. A 'return by' date of 30 January 2009 is suggested for the feedback from schools, in order to ensure the findings can be collated and reported at the meeting scheduled for 24 February 2009. The only

outstanding issue is to identify the most effective method for having the completed surveys returned.

Options

14. Having considered the information contained within this report and associated annexes, Members may choose to:
 - i. Sign off the first objective or request further information in regard to the Multi-Agency Steering Group
 - ii. amend the user survey and covering letter, attached at Annex A (identifying any additional questions to be included where necessary and the best method for returning the completed survey)
 - iii. amend the letter to schools, attached at Annex B

Implications

15. The cost of producing and carrying out the survey will be met by the Extended Schools service from within their existing resources, therefore there are no Financial Implications associated with the recommendations within this report.
16. There are no known Legal, Equalities, HR, implications associated with the recommendations within this report.

Corporate Priorities

17. 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

18. Without the thorough engagement of current users and extended schools service providers the findings from this review could be limited and insufficient to support and evidence the recommendations arising from the review.

Recommendation

19. In light of the above options, Members are asked to:
 - i. Note and provide comments on the interim report
 - ii. In regard to the first objective of this review, agree what if any further information is required in order that it can be signed off
 - iii. Agree any amendments to the documents attached at Annexes A & B.

Reason: To ensure work can proceed as planned for this review whilst complying with scrutiny procedures, protocols and workplans.

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Interim Report Approved **Date** 24 November 2008

Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers: None

Annexes

Annex A - Draft Survey & Covering Letter

Annex B – Draft Letter to Schools