

## **DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL**

### **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

At a Meeting of **Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in Committee Room 2 - County Hall, Durham on **Wednesday 16 February 2011 at 10.00 am**

#### **Present:**

**Councillor J Blakey (Chairman)**

#### **Members of the Committee:**

Councillors C Potts, J Armstrong, D Bowman, P Brookes, S Iveson, J Lethbridge, J Maslin, E Paylor, S Robinson, J Shiell, M Simmons, P Stradling, J Wilkinson and B Wilson

#### **Faith Community Representative:**

Mr P Mackie

#### **Parent Governor Representative:**

Mr N Hallam

#### **Co-opted Members:**

Mr C Dunn and Mr R Pye

#### **Also Present:**

Councillors A Barker, A Naylor, C Vasey and A Cox

#### **Apologies:**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr C McCaughey

#### **1 Minutes**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 December 2010, were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

#### **2 Declarations of Interest, if any**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

#### **3 Any items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties**

There were no items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties.

#### **4 Media Relations**

Ms V Glover, Media Relations Manager advised that the Policy and Communications Team was to attend all Overview and Scrutiny Committees to raise the profile of the work of the committees.

The regional papers were used on a daily basis to extract all articles relating to the County Council which were then evaluated into positive or negative and filed according to directorates. The press had an interest in much of what the Council did. An example of the press articles relating to Children and Young People Services were circulated.

**RESOLVED** that the information given, be noted.

#### **5 Quarter 2 2010/11 Performance Management Report**

Consideration was given to the report of the Assistant Chief Executive which gave details of progress against key performance indicators and explored areas of underperformance in respect of the Altogether Better for Children and Young People priority theme (for copy, see file of Minutes).

Mrs C Payne, Head of Strategic Commissioning gave details of the second quarterly performance management report. Section 1 covered the overview of performance of the Altogether Better for Children and Young People priority theme, section 2 covered an index of performance indicators, section 3 covered indicator analysis report, section 4 covered indicator tables and section 5 detailed the Council Plan progress. Risk management was integrated into the report.

Strong progress had been made in achieving Council Plan actions for Children and Young People in Quarter 2, with all actions on track, meeting or exceeding the target set.

Significant improvement had been made in GCSE results with 83.9% of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSE (or equivalent) passes at grade A\*-C and 55.6% achieving a national indicator of 5 or more GCSE passes at A\*-C including English and Maths. The outstanding level of improvement meant that the Council was now above the national average.

Members commented that it was a very positive report and it was hoped that it could be sustained the following year even though there had been a reduction in funding received. Councillor Armstrong suggested that the performance of Looked After Children's achieving level 4 in key stage 2 English and Maths could be a future addition to the Committee's work programme.

Councillor Barker referred to assessments carried out on reception children and the correlation between children attending Sure Start Children's Centres and commented that the results were not as good as they should have been. The Head of Strategic Commissioning explained that performance indicators measured the assessments carried out in schools and there had been an improvement from a whole range of providers including Sure Start. A national survey published recently had concluded that half of children were not ready for school.

**RESOLVED** that the performance and remedial action for key Performance Indicators be noted.

## **6 Children and Young People's Services**

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Finance, Children and Young People's Services which provided details of School Funding 2011/12 and Beyond, New Early Intervention Grant and CYPS Revenue Budget Plans 2011/12 and Forecast of Outturn 2010/11 based on information at the end of the third quarter of the financial year (for copy, see file of Minutes).

Mr P Barclay, Head of Finance, Children and Young People's Services gave a presentation in relation to School Funding and CYPS Revenue Budget Plans including the Early Intervention Grant for the 2011/12 financial year and beyond.

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) would be distributed to Local Authorities using the current methodology for 2011/12. There was to be a major consultation in the spring on the move to a National Funding Formula. The DSG per pupil was to remain 'cash flat' until 2014/15. Efficiencies in procurement and back office were set as a Government target for schools to save £1.1 billion over 4 years. It was noted that the Council had a very effective procurement team in schools with some excellent contracts in place.

The Minimum Funding Guarantee per Pupil was set at a minus figure of 1.5% and sixth forms would have a phased reduction in resource down to the level in Colleges, which equated to around £280 per student.

The Pupil Premium was to be £430 per pupil and was linked to free school meals, equating to £6m for County Durham from a pool of £625m nationally. Electronic free school meals data was now available for ease of administration and schools would be informed who was eligible.

Grants were to be mainstreamed into DSG and every child would attract over £5000. There was an estimated fall in pupils of approximately 330 between January 2010 and 2011 which would cost £1.6m, of which £0.25m related to extra grants. The County Council Schools Forum views and a subsequent consultation paper was now on the Extranet. The key Forum message was to consolidate where possible with minimal turbulence.

There was too much budget variation if a formula was used for existing grant supporting Excellence Clusters, Excellence Countywide and the Deprivation Grant. Specialist schools funding would be maintained at similar levels as well as Advanced Skills Teachers funding. Ethnic minority achievement was to be protected and managed by the Local Authority. Extended schools would move to school allocations but they would still be able to pool resources to share employee costs. A partial delegation was proposed for primary and secondary targeted support.

The Harnessing Technology Grant that was used for ICT and Broadband in schools was to cease. 75% of the grant went to schools and 25% to Corporate IT. There would be a reduction in the School Devolved Formula Capital Grant of approximately 80%.

A new DfE grant for Condition and Basic Need was £13.6m. In 2011/12, schemes were being prioritised and primary schools where there were not enough places for local demand would be funded (Basic Need). Seaham and Spennymoor schools which had significant condition and curriculum delivery difficulties that were not part of the Building Schools for the Future programme would also be high priorities.

Financial Management Standard in Schools ended in November and a simpler replacement would be developed and implemented by September 2011. The requirement for school Balances Clawback was to be removed from 2011/12. The DfE were suggesting that Business Managers should be a priority for all schools.

The Education Secretary Michael Grove's preferred option for reform was to switch to a national funding formula. Funding should be transparent, logical, equitable and not linked to local authority spend. More Academies were being encouraged nationally. Shotton Hall became an Academy on 1 February, Stanley and Consett schools would become academies from September 2011, and other secondary schools may follow.

The Young Peoples Learning Agency was to be replaced by a new Education Funding Agency which funded Academies, Free Schools and 16-19 provision (schools and colleges). The LACSEG Academy top up via a DfE estimate for next 2 years was 2011/12 £1.4m and 2012/13 £2.3m this impacted directly on County Council funding.

CYPS revenue budget was to reduce by £18.3m over 4 years. High profile revenue budget reductions were

- Support services and management £3.2m over 4 years
- Music and outdoor education self financing
- Integrated teams – reduced management costs
- Reduced EWS and Psychological Services
- Supplies, premises, travel, training costs
- End of Awards Team
- Finance support – Children's Fund and payments process
- School improvement
- Shared use in schools
- Home to School and College transport

Area Based Grant had ceased with a CYPS base reduction of £13.8m. A new Early Intervention Grant would not be ring fenced, £23.7m would be received but this represented a £6.76m cut compared to April 2010.

The budget available for CYPS had been reprioritised and there would be a significant paring back of activity, particularly in the infrastructure of Sure Start and the scale of Connexions Service. The 2011/12 Early Intervention Grant would fund:

- Pre Reprimand Disposal; Teenage pregnancy;
- Youth Substance Misuse; Foundation Learning Courses (not GCSE); Short Breaks for Disabled Children;
- Family Pathfinder Initiative; Mental Health;
- Training for Social Care Workforce;

- Advice to Parents on School Admissions;
- Education / Health Partnerships and Healthy Schools; Education of Looked After Children;
- “Get Out There” Website; Study Support;
- School Improvement, Curriculum Development and Intervention;
- Sure Start and Children’s Centres; 14 plus Student Support and Guidance.

Changes to reflect in budget preparation for 2011/12 included the cessation of ABG and other DfE grants, savings in the MTFP, budget growth for SaSS pressures, zero pay awards, pension contribution rises, carbon reduction contributions and corporate savings on essential car users/mileage rates.

Mr Mackie referred to historical funding of schools and queried to what extent the proposed national funding reform would have on how schools were currently funded. The Head of Finance explained that funding could not be driven solely on the numbers of pupils in a school as some of the rural schools in County Durham had a small number of pupils. Over the years a number of supporting grants had been given to Excellence Clusters (previously Education Action Zones), deprivation grants etc. It remained to be seen how it could all be distributed evenly using a national formula.

**RESOLVED** that the information contained within the report and presentation, be noted.

## **7 National Evaluation of Sure Start Children's Centre**

Dr Christine Merrell, Durham University gave a presentation on her paper ‘Changes in Children’s Cognitive Development’ at the Start of School in England 2001-2008 (for copy, see file of Minutes).

Dr Merrell explained that the Centre of Evaluation and Monitoring (CEM) was part of Durham University who delivered 1.1m assessments each year. CEM systems were used in 44 countries and assessed pupils aged 3 – 18 years.

The study had looked at the Foundation Stage, age 3-5 years, increased nursery provision, curriculum, Sure Start, Education Action Zones and other initiatives and assessed if they had changed children’s cognitive development at the start of school.

Performance Indicator in Primary Schools (PIPs) tests were carried out by teachers in primary schools to give a baseline assessment on entry. There were more than 2000 schools in England used every year. Once the pupil was assessed, schools returned the data to CEM for analysis.

A computer adapted text was used to assess vocabulary, phonological awareness and early reading and mathematics. Date of birth, sex and first language was also recorded.

A sample was taken from 472 state schools in England. Means PIPs Scores indicated that in terms of educational differences, things had remained similar over the years. Statistically there had been a significant decrease from 2001 to 2008 for early reading and picture vocabulary. However, the effect sizes of the differences were small. There had been significant increase in early maths scores although the effect size was also small.

Dr Merrell explained that success from early interventions aimed at influencing the development of young children was difficult to achieve. Reduction in efficacy of small scale programmes when rolled out and limitations with data analysed were reasons why the scores remained so stable over time.

Councillor Strading queried if she was a critic of Sure Start. Dr Merrell explained that she was a critic of interventions not being evaluated correctly.

Councillor Armstrong queried if data was obtained where Sure Start had been present in comparison to where it had not. Dr Merrell advised that the data had highlighted that all interventions or what schools were doing had made no significant improvement.

Councillor Vasey commented that some Sure Start Children's Centres had only recently been opened. There had to be a way of obtaining the data in order for a full evaluation to take place.

Mr F Jassat, Overview and Scrutiny Manager explained that Members had been working on a review of Sure Start, its impact, success and value for money. The committee would have the report prior to it being considered by Cabinet in April.

**RESOLVED** that the information given, be noted.