



meeting EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING SELECT COMMITTEE

date 13 September 2005 agenda item number 5

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

Annual Performance Assessment of Children's Services in Nottinghamshire 2005

Purpose of Report

1. This report sets out for the Committee the context and overview of the annual performance assessment on services provided by Nottinghamshire County Council for children and young people. The annual performance assessment itself is **attached** to this report together with a glossary of terms for clarification.

Information and Advice

Background

The context of the annual performance assessment

2. The Children Act 2004 established a new structure for the inspection of services for children and young people. The inspection framework consists of two main parts - a joint area review known as a JAR and an annual performance assessment or APA. The inspection process brings together ten different inspectorates including the Audit Commission, Ofsted, and Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) and the Healthcare Commission.
3. The APA has been introduced for the first time this year and for education this replaces the existing basis for the education rating used in the Comprehensive Performance Assessment of county councils. The APA assesses the council's specific contribution through education and social care functions to improving outcomes for children and young people. The APA consists of a detailed self assessment against criteria provided by the inspection bodies, together with a judgement made by the DfES and CSCI and a set of performance data and indicators. For Nottinghamshire, services for children and young people cover four departments: education, social services (children's services), culture and community (youth and play services) and the environment department (school catering services).

The self assessment

4. The self assessment process requires all county councils to evaluate their performance against the outcomes for children and young people and identify priorities for action. Nottinghamshire's self assessment was constructed by the children services action group - a team of assistant directors from across the county council led by Pam Tulley, the director of education. More than 40 senior officers completed pro-formas providing information on their particular services and the team carried out a very detailed scrutiny of the data showing outcomes for children and young people.
5. An important part of the self assessment process involved working with county council partners. The children and young people's executive group includes members from the Primary Care Trusts, Connexions service and the voluntary services. This group contributed to the self assessment and several partner members attended the meeting with the DfES and CSCI to review the early draft of the assessment.
6. Nottinghamshire's self assessment was submitted to Ofsted and CSCI on 31 May 2005. It is very much a working document and has not yet been evaluated by the inspectorates.

The main messages within the self assessment

7. Part B of the self assessment contains a summary evaluation of performance. The strengths identified are:
 - the inclusive approach to education with high numbers of pupils with special educational needs included in mainstream education
 - rigorous, multi agency safeguarding policies and procedures
 - good adoption practice
 - high quality school improvement work and national strategy work
 - an inclusive approach to listening to children
 - an effective teenage pregnancy strategy and multi-agency Sure Start programmes
 - extensive and good quality childcare and nursery provision
 - good quality education to employment processes
 - an extensive programme of enrichment processes.

8. The areas prioritised for improvement are:
- improve the health of children and young people in Nottinghamshire (to improve mental health services, halt the rise of obesity, continue to reduce teenage pregnancy and promote the health of looked after children)
 - improve the attainment of young people at key stage 3 and 4 (improve standards in key stage 3 tests and at GCSE, focussing particularly on white working class boys, specific minority ethnic groups and looked after children)
 - ensure the safety of children and young people in communities and families and reduce anti social behaviour (maintain current high standards of safeguarding; reduce bullying, crime and fear of crime)
 - improve children and young people's attitudes to learning and engagement (improving attitudes and attendance in secondary schools, increasing engagement in out of school learning and promoting participation in post 16 education)
 - improve outcomes for children and young people by growing cost effective children's services (improving accessibility of services, promoting ownership of shared targets and improving the value added by services through integrated locality working, workforce reform and joint commissioning).

Statutory and Policy Implications

9. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, personnel, Crime and Disorder and those using the service. Where such implications are material, they have been described in the text of the report. Members' attention is however drawn to the following:-

Personnel Implications

10. The self assessment highlights the priority for growing cost effective integrated services for children. This will involve some reorganisation of existing departmental structures in the county council but as yet the details of this and any potential personnel implications are not known.

Financial Implications

11. The development of integrated children's services will have implications for departmental budgets but the details will not be known until the structure of the future services is decided.

Equal Opportunities Implications

12. The annual performance assessment highlights that there are some groups of children and young people who are underperforming. The actions for improvement identified within the assessment will help improve outcomes for all groups of children and young people but especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, specific minority ethnic groups and those looked after by the county council.

Implications for Service Users

13. The development of effective integrated children's services will be focussed on improving outcomes for children and their families.

Crime and Disorder Implications

14. The self assessment highlights reducing anti social behaviour as a priority for improvement based on a detailed analysis of responses from young people and data from school inspections.

RECOMMENDATION

15. That the Education and Lifelong Learning Select Committee notes the annual performance assessment and seeks regular updates on the progress with those priorities concerned with education and lifelong learning.

PAM TULLEY

Director of Education

Background Papers Available for Inspection

Nil.

M19C1344