

**REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG  
PEOPLE'S SERVICES****KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES****Purpose of the Report**

1. I am pleased to present the key issues and activities as Portfolio Holder for Children & Young People's Services, since the last report to Council.

**Youth Justice Service Inspection Result**

2. During March 2012 the Youth Justice Service was subject to a Core Case Inspection led by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation. Inspectors undertook a review of 62 cases and also surveyed young people in contact with the Youth Offending Teams and victims of youth crime.
3. Inspectors assessed that work to reduce a young person's risk of harm to keep them safe and to reduce their risk of further offending. The initial feedback is very positive and shows significant improvement when compared with the last service inspection in 2008.
4. The final report will be published on 4 July 2014.

**Children's Social Care Services**

5. In my report to County Council on 15 December 2011, I advised on the lifting of the DfE Improvement Notice by the Minister for Children and Families, Tim Loughton MP, following the successful re-inspection of our safeguarding arrangements in September 2011, and the subsequent meeting with DfE Officials to review progress against the Improvement Notice.
6. My report recognised that there remained much to do to in continuing to transform the service. In lifting the Improvement Notice, it was agreed that officials from the DfE would receive a further update on our progress in tackling the areas for further development, e.g. those identified within the Ofsted safeguarding reinspection report, and in embedding and sustaining consistently good quality and timely practice in our work with the most vulnerable young people.
7. At the end of April, we received feedback from the DfE on our progress in tackling these issues. I am pleased to report that this recognises that, through the Children's Social care Transformation Programme, the Council and its partners have sustained and built

upon the performance improvements. Moreover, in the light of current evidence, the Minister no longer feels it necessary for officials to continue to monitor Nottinghamshire's safeguarding improvements. A copy of the Minister's letter to the Leader of the Council is attached at Appendix A.

8. The letter is very encouraging and highly complimentary of the huge effort that has been made by the Council in improving the services to Nottinghamshire's most vulnerable children. It reflects the strong commitment made by Elected Members and the hard work from officers over the past 2 years. I should like to re-affirm my thanks to staff in the Children's Social Care Division for the commitment they show to children, young people and families, and for the way in which they continue to strive for improvement in the services the Council provides to them.

## **Music Hub Bid**

9. On Friday 4 May, Arts Council England announced that Nottinghamshire County Council had been successful in its application to lead a music education hub for Nottinghamshire.
10. Nottinghamshire County Council will receive £2.3 million funding for the Nottinghamshire Music Education Hub funding from September 2012 to March 2015 to ensure that all children in state schools [including academies and free schools] will have access to the best possible music education in and out of school. The funding will be used to:
  - Provide a whole-school instrumental teaching programme in every primary school in Nottinghamshire with 7-11 year old pupils.
  - Help schools to set up more music groups and ensembles.
  - Encourage children and young people to take part in music groups and performances in and out of school.
  - Provide new music-making opportunities for children and young people in school holidays.
  - Provide a subsidised instrumental teaching service for small groups and 1-1 tuition.
  - Provide access to online learning for different instruments.
  - Help all schools to get children and young people to participate in, enjoy and develop their singing.
  - Set up a training network for teachers and other professionals who work with children and young people in music.
  - Provide more opportunities for children and young people to work with professional musicians and attend musical performances.
11. Councillor Philip Owen, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services at Nottinghamshire County Council, said: "This funding is marvellous news for pupils across Nottinghamshire. It gives the County Council and its partners an exciting opportunity to

give every child and young person the chance to learn to sing and play a musical instrument and progress to their own level of musical excellence. It will help us build on the excellent foundations we have already laid for children and young people to make music in Nottinghamshire."

### **New Young People's Centre for Forest Town, Mansfield**

12. On 14 May 2012 the Vice Chairman of the County Council, Cllr Carol Pepper, officially opened the new Forest Town Young People's Centre.
13. This exciting new facility has been made possible through the cooperation of Garibaldi School and funding from the Young People's Service refurbishment budget. The new Centre's design has been heavily influenced by the young people who currently attend the old 1960's building, and has had its name selected by them as 'The Garrage'. The new Centre will include a coffee bar and activity, meeting and gardening areas. The Centre is part of the Young People's Service's continuing refurbishment and capital programme which during 2012/13 will see the opening of two further new Young People's Centres in Sutton in Ashfield and in West Bridgford respectively. These developments will support the delivery of enhanced open access leisure time activities for young people outside of the school day.

### **Youth Service end of year performance 2011/12**

14. The Young People's Service has delivered an increase in both the quantity and quality of its work with young people.
15. Over 32,000 individual young people were engaged in positive activities delivered by the Young People's Service including 2000 young people enrolled on the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme.
16. In total, young people made over 260,000 attendances at positive activities delivered by the Young People's Service.

### **Children Centre System Leaders Pilot – mentoring and coaching programme**

17. The Early Years and Early Intervention Service has been successful in its application to work in partnership with the National College for School Leadership, and 13 other authorities, to trial a mentoring/coaching programme for children centre leaders.
18. The Children Centre Leaders pilot is based on the existing nationwide Local Leaders of Education (LLE) programme which allows successful Headteachers to work alongside other Headteachers to build leadership capacity and drive sustainable improvement across schools.
19. To this end, Children's Centre Leaders with an 'Outstanding' Ofsted inspection rating will be nominated to participate in the programme and will be matched to support those with a 'Satisfactory' judgement.
20. This programme will allow us in Nottinghamshire to build on the current good performance within our Children's Centres and help ensure that we maintain and improve

our excellent Ofsted Inspection results for our centres, which have so far seen 76% of all centres inspected graded 'Good' or better, with no 'Inadequate' judgements, and 5 "Outstanding" judgements.

## **Bidders' Day for Children's Centres**

21. On 19 April the Early Years and Early Intervention Service hosted a Bidders' Day to share the Council's future vision for Nottinghamshire's Children's Centres and to assess interest from potential partners in the current commissioning opportunity to operate and develop Children's Centres across the County.
22. The event was well attended with 47 delegates from 27 different organisations representing a good cross section of voluntary, charitable, public and private organisations.
23. Delegates were given information on the strategic intent of the Council for Children's Centres in Nottinghamshire; the context and scope of the service along with future development opportunities and the forthcoming procurement process. Delegates were also reminded of the County Council's continuing commitment to maintain 58 Children's Centres.
24. The event was a real success and provided a good opportunity for reinforcing the Council's message on the importance of achieving improved outcomes for the children, young people and families of Nottinghamshire, through the delivery of high quality early intervention services.
25. Feedback from the event is now being sought and analysed further to inform the commissioning process for children's centres. The opportunity will be formally advertised in the Official Journal of European Union at the end of April and potential partners will then be able to register their interest.

## **Academy conversions**

26. A further 7 schools have successfully converted to academy status as of 1 April, 2012; namely:
  - Ashfield School
  - Chetwynd Road Primary, Beeston
  - Elizabethan High Comprehensive, Retford
  - North Leverton C of E Primary
  - Quarrydale Comprehensive, Sutton in Ashfield
  - Retford Oaks High School
  - The Priory Catholic Primary, Eastwood
27. This brings the total number of academies within the Nottinghamshire Local Authority to twenty-seven.
28. The proposed conversion of a further 11 schools have been approved by the DfE, 5 of which are expected to be completed this term

29. The legal issue raised nationally by the PFI providers and their funders which delayed the conversion of three schools in Sept 2011 has been resolved and has enabled the conversion of Elizabethan High Comprehensive and Retford Oaks High School. Subject to achieving final agreement between all parties with regard to Post 16 provision it is hoped that Portland & Valley Schools will convert within the next couple of months. In the interim the County Council continue to work with the DfE and the sponsors of these proposed academies to ensure the schools operate smoothly.

## **Nottinghamshire County Council's Advanced Music Ensemble and Choir Concert**

30. On 28 March, Notts Performing Arts produced a concert at the John Fretwell Centre, Mansfield. The concert titled 'Dry your Tears, Afrika' was inspired by one of the young performers, Katie Townsend, who plans to spend next year teaching in Senegal.
31. The concert was attended by the Chairman of the County Council, Councillor Keith Walker and Councillor Allen Clarke who enjoyed performances from young people in the County Advanced Music Ensemble and Choir. The concert featured traditional African songs and concluded with a stirring performance of 'Dry Your Tears, Afrika' from the film 'Amistad'.
32. Councillor Clarke commented on an enjoyable evening and praised the efforts of all the young people and staff involved.

## **First Admissions: September 2012**

33. All parents and carers were contacted with their offer of a place on 13 April by email or letter. Across the county, **90.2%** of applicants in the First Admissions round received an offer of their first preference. 9108 applications were received this year compared with 8374 in 2011, when 92% parents received a first preference offer.
34. This slight decrease in first preference allocations for September 2012 is because we had to find places for an additional **734** children compared with last year.
35. There were 1705 applications for children in the **infant to junior** round for September 2012. 97.8% were offered their first preference and 13 mandatory places were offered.
- As colleagues will be aware there is a national issue concerning the increased demand for school places. Compared with other authorities experiencing increasing birth rates, which is putting strain on the supply of places, Nottinghamshire is managing the situation very positively
  - Every child in Nottinghamshire whose parents want a place with the County has a place at a Nottinghamshire school
  - 264 mandatory offers\* were made across the whole County, only 6 of these being in West Bridgford. 451 such offers were made last year. Of the 264 mandatory places allocated, 149 were catchment school offers (56.4%)

36. Area Officers from Strategic Place Planning and School Admissions identified specific hot-spots across Nottinghamshire and have been working in the last few months to increase the supply of places, by agreement with Head and Governors, in existing schools in areas where they were most needed. *[These hot-spots are in Mansfield Gedling and Hucknall.]*
37. A settled and experienced admissions team and Area Officers are advising a steady stream of parents requesting advice on the availability of places or on how to make an appeal. Appeal arrangements are managed independently of the admissions process by Democratic Services.
38. This time of year sees much discussion taking place between schools, adjoining local authorities, parents and Nottinghamshire Officers as they work hard to ensure that as many parents as possible obtain a place at a school that they are happy with. This “settling down” period lasts throughout the summer as some parents pursue places via the independent appeals process.

*\*A mandatory offer is made where it has not been possible to allocate one of the applicant’s preferences. In these cases the LA offers a place at the next nearest school with places available. This can include an offer of a place at a catchment school.*

## **Creative journeys exploring Looked After Children’s experiences of education**

39. On 10 May 2012 Cllr Allen Clarke attended a seminar organised by The Mighty Creatives in partnership with Nottinghamshire County Council to share the learning and outcomes from an innovative creative programme with Looked After Children.
40. In 2010 The Virtual School commissioned the Mighty Creatives Arts organisation to carry out three research projects looking at engagement of looked after children in education using the arts and investigating the use of isolation as a sanction in schools for looked after children.
41. The project ran for just under a year in Nottinghamshire County Council residential homes, Newgate Primary School and Holgate Comprehensive School. The residential homes looked at various forms of media to express and inform on education issues, Newgate Lane school used the idea of a 'safe space' to increase engagement in education and Holgate school formed a looked after children's group to look at the whole rewards and sanctions policy in the school. The Holgate school group produced a resource that has gone to all schools in the county to help staff look at what looked after children need to be success in their education and to help inform school's reward and sanctions policies.
42. The projects each produced a film of their work which has been shown across the county through designated teacher training and a number of schools have approached the Virtual School to further continue the ideas and project.

## **Clayfields House**

43. Cllr Allen Clarke visited Clayfields House on 20 April, accompanying Cllr Keith Girling on his rota visit.
44. Clayfields House is a Secure Children's Home in Stapleford that accommodates 18 young people of either gender between the ages of 10 – 17 years.
45. Clayfields House was recently successful in securing a two year contract with the Youth Justice Board for 14 out of the 18 beds. Ofsted inspected Clayfields in January of this year and rated the service good with outstanding features. The quality of care and education were rated as "outstanding".
46. These judgements were borne out during Cllr Clarke's visit where he noted the relaxed and caring environment. Evidenced throughout the building are the young peoples' achievements, certificates, education qualifications and the 'City Garden' where young people learn horticultural skills and grow vegetables, herbs and flowers.
47. Young people attend education on a daily basis; this allows them to access the National Curriculum. Many young people achieve nationally recognised qualifications including GCSEs in a variety of subjects. Young people are encouraged to complete courses by returning to the Centre to sit final examinations. Progress in all subject areas was classified as outstanding during the last Ofsted inspection with more than 30 GCSE passes in the past year and, one young person achieved 11 GCSEs.
48. Also of note are the many compliments Clayfields House receives from parents, carers, social workers, youth offending workers and MPs. In March the All Party Parliamentary Group, Women in the Penal System, thanked the Registered Manager for giving oral evidence in a public hearing at the House of Lords in London.

**COUNCILLOR PHILIP OWEN**

**CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES**