

meeting COUNTY COUNCIL

date 30<sup>th</sup> June 2011

agenda item number **7a iv.**

## **REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES**

### **OFSTED Inspections of Children's Centres**

1. Since the Autumn of last year, Ofsted have begun to inspect Children's Centres, in a similar way to school inspections. They take place on a three year cycle and are intended to measure the centres' effectiveness on improving outcomes for young children and their families. So far in Nottinghamshire, 10 such inspections have taken place; two were found to be Satisfactory, five were Good, whilst three were deemed Outstanding! One such centre is Hawtonville CC, who were inspected most recently. Inspectors gave particular praise to their robust safeguarding practices, links with schools and extended services provision and their approach to parental involvement and community engagement. Overall, they were considered to be an excellent model of good practice. Clearly there is a lot to learn from our experiences so far, and much to be proud of!

### **Sustaining Improvement in Children's Social Care - May 2011**

#### Performance & Workload

2. Key measures in relation to the timeliness of Initial and Core Assessments are much improved over the last 12 months:
  - 76% of Initial Assessments were completed in time in May 2011 compared with 37% in April 2010
  - 73% of Core Assessments were completed within timescale in May 2011 compared with 50% in April 2010.
3. We are also seeing a gradual increase in workers with "sustainable" caseloads and a reduction in workers with "high" caseloads. As we recruit additional staff, fill our vacancies and continue to carefully manage thresholds for work coming into the service, the number of workers with sustainable caseloads will increase.

### Recruitment

4. From the financial year 2011/12 the Council has significantly increased the budget in children's social care to enable us to increase our capacity.
5. We have been proactive in recruitment to additional posts, as well as recruiting to existing vacancies. To date, we have successfully recruited to posts in occupational therapy, the family resource team, child protection co-ordination, reviews of looked after children (those in the care of the Council) and social work, including team manager and locality support workers. As we recruit new staff we will endeavour to reduce our reliance upon agency staff.

### Department for Education Improvement Notice review meeting

6. On 15 April we had a meeting with a number of colleagues from the Department for Education to review our performance in relation to targets set out in the Improvement Notice (issued to Nottinghamshire by the Secretary of State in June 2010).
7. It was a positive meeting which concluded that we were making significant progress and that Ministers were currently happy with our level of improvement. A further meeting with the Department for Education will take place in July this year.

### Full Ofsted inspection of Safeguarding Services

8. The only way to finally rid ourselves of the "inadequate" label is to submit to a full Ofsted inspection of our safeguarding services. This is a repeat of the safeguarding elements of the inspection that we had in March 2010. Anthony May has written to Ofsted requesting a re-inspection after the beginning of September 2011.
9. It is the decision of Ofsted as to whether they take us up on our request but I am confident that they will, and that we are in a strong position to meet the standards laid out in the inspection framework. Clearly, we will need to ensure that we are properly prepared and initial preparation arrangements have been made.

### Peer Challenge

10. In May we underwent a Peer Challenge of partnership Safeguarding services. The Government and Professor Eileen Munro are very positive about the idea of safeguarding services reviewing and challenging each other - they see it as a key way of critically looking at what we are doing and then improving our performance.
11. The initial findings of the Peer Challenge Team were positive and those areas highlighted for sustained improvement were already identified. The formal report of the Peer Challenge Team is expected soon.

## Children's Social Care transformation programme

12. Following stabilisation of the service and as part of the continuing improvement journey, we have just commenced work with an external partner (Impower) to transform the service into a more sustainable model.
13. Initial planning will be presented to Children's Social Care managers in June, and a wider communication plan is being developed to take this work forward with our staff and our partners.

### **The Performance of the Young People's Service during 2010/11**

14. The Young People's Service, through the successful work of the Youth Service, has exceeded the performance indicator for the number of young people involved in programmes of positive activities at young people's centres, mobile facilities and youth clubs.
15. The service reached 21,000 (30%) against a previous national target of 17,500 (25%) during 2010/11.

### **MyPlace at Westfield Folkhouse Young People's Centre opening 3 June 2011**

16. The official opening ceremony took place on 3 June, with Councillor Keith Walker formally opening the building as the Chair of the County Council, supported by an introduction by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Kay Cutts and thanks were given to all those involved in the successful completion of the project by the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services, Councillor Philip Owen.
17. There were an estimated 120 people attending the event, including Elected Members from the County Council and Mansfield District Council, members of the Young People's Management Committee, a delegation from the youth centre in Heiligenhaus, representatives from the Mansfield Twinning Association, and approximately 30 ex-members of the Folkhouse (ranging from those who were members in the 1950s to the 1990s).
18. Following the official opening there was the opportunity to view the provision and speak to young people who have been involved in the design of the building.
19. The County Council, in consultation with groups of young people and voluntary sector partners, were successful in attracting £5 million from the 'myplace' programme to enhance the £1.5 million from its own capital programme to provide a total of £6.5 million for rebuilding and refurbishment of the Folkhouse.
20. The 'myplace @ Westfield Folkhouse' Young People's Centre created by Nottinghamshire County Council includes;

- A two story iconic extension attached to the refurbished listed building, with 'Victorian' style sensory garden and allotment bordered by a high stone wall to the land adjacent to Westfield Lane. On the other side of the stone wall, closest to the extension, a young people designed 'chaotic outdoor experience' including sports, performance, games and chill out areas.
  - Inside the extension; dedicated positive activity space for; disabled and none disabled young people, facilities for music/dance/arts/kitchens/coffee bars/IT/ training and counselling.
21. Myplace @ Westfield Folkhouse will operate seven days a week, for various daytime training schemes and Information and Advice services, (including those for Homeless Young People), and evening and weekend positive activities for both disabled and non-disabled young people.

**COUNCILLOR PHILIP OWEN**

Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services

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