

meeting COUNTY COUNCIL

date 28 January 2010

agenda item number **7a iv**

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

Keeping schools open in severe weather

I would like to take this opportunity to thank headteachers, teachers, school caretakers and other support staff who worked hard to keep schools open during the recent bout of severe weather. Conditions varied across our large county but, in general, were much more difficult in the north of Nottinghamshire.

You will be aware that there has been some criticism in the media of school closures. The Chief Executive has asked the head of the Emergency Planning Team to undertake a review of the response of the County Council to the challenges presented by the snow, rain and frost. As part of this review I have particularly requested that our support to enable schools to open, and stay open, is evaluated. In spite of the shortage of road salt, both locally and nationally, gritting teams were directed to clear service roads to some of our special schools – which needed to open to provide not only education but also therapy to some of our most vulnerable children.

However, I do believe that we need to put a plan in place to support other schools where particular difficulties are a known feature, such as steep service roads and drives. I am aware that gritting teams need to give priority to maintaining access on the major road network, and in the light of this I will be discussing with Councillor Jackson what can be done to assist schools in severe winter weather.

Once the review has been completed, within the next couple of weeks, I shall write to the schools informing them of any new arrangements and urge them to do all that is possible, and is consistent with sensible regard for safety, to keep the schools open so that learning will not be disrupted and parents can go to their work.

“A Merry Old Time” - 26th NCC Children and Young People’s Annual Christmas Concert

On 15 December 2009 the Royal Concert Hall came alive to the sounds of Christmas celebrations. An audience of nearly 2,000, of which 1,000 were

young people from Nottinghamshire schools, came together to enjoy and participate in an evening of Christmas music and entertainment themed around characters from the works of Charles Dickens.

The performances by Arts Support Service County Performance ensembles and 11th Session performing arts centre – Mansfield, joined by singers from The Queen Elizabeth School, Grove School and All Saints School brought together over 200 outstanding young performers from around the County.

The audience, which included Councillor Philip Owen and guests, were treated to a range of music from traditional to modern and the event finished with a very energetic 12 Days of Christmas which had the whole audience on its feet. There was no doubt that everyone left the Royal Concert Hall feeling joyous and uplifted having had “A Merry Old Time”!

Services for disabled children

Findings from the second national sample survey of parents of disabled children in England were released in December 2009. The survey was conducted between July and November 2009 on behalf of the DCSF by TNS (world's largest Custom Market Research specialists) and BMRB (British Market Research Bureau). The primary purpose of the survey was to measure parental experience of services for disabled children.

Key points:

- The data is collected through a questionnaire to parents asking for their views of health, education and care and family support services for their disabled child as experienced in the preceding 12 months;
- The framework for the questionnaire is the Aiming High for Disabled Children core offer standards which are:
 - good provision of information;
 - integrated assessment;
 - transparency in how the available levels of support are determined;
 - participation of disabled children and their families in local services; and
 - accessible feedback and complaints procedures.
- The survey provides an overall national score on parental experience (between 0 and 100) for 2009/10. The national overall score increased from 59 points in 2008/09 to 61 points in 2009/10.
- The 2009/10 survey also provides, for the first time, figures for 145 local authorities and 150 Primary Care Trusts (PCTS). The overall scores ranged from 55 to 68 points across local authorities and from 55 to 68 points across PCTs.

The County Council has endeavoured to ensure that high quality information is available and communicated effectively to parents. We understand that 441 parents of disabled children have been surveyed in Nottinghamshire in order

to obtain a view on parental satisfaction with services they receive. Nottinghamshire's score of 64 for both LA and PCT areas is above the overall score of 61 for England and places us equal 7th out of 145 local authorities and also equal 7th out of 150 PCTs.

Key Stage 2

Outcomes for Nottinghamshire pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 are consistently higher than that nationally. The percentage of pupils achieving the expected level (level 4) or above stayed the same in both English (82%) and mathematics (82%), whilst in science there was a small increase from 91% to 92%. Compared to other authorities Nottinghamshire is ranked 6th in the whole country for science and 16th for maths.

The Government sets targets at Key Stage 2 for the percentage of pupils achieving a level 4 or above in both English and Maths. In Nottinghamshire 76% of pupils achieve this standard. Nottinghamshire were one of the few authorities to improve between 2008 and 2009. Comparisons to other authorities place Nottinghamshire 26th (42nd in 2008).

Key Stage 4 (GCSE and equivalent)

(Final figures which include The Samworth Church Academy)

Outcomes for Nottinghamshire pupils at Key Stage 4 have improved at a faster rate than that nationally.

Between 2008 and 2009, the percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more good grades (A*-C) in Nottinghamshire schools has increased 8.0 percentage points to 69.2%. Nationally the increase has been 4.7 percentage points to 70%. In comparison to the other Local Authorities nationally, this places Nottinghamshire 82nd for achievement in 5+A*-C (108th in 2008).

At 5+ A*-C including GCSE English and mathematics, Nottinghamshire improved by 3.9 percentage points compared to 2008 to 47.2%. Nationally the increase was 2.2 percentage points to 49.8%. Comparisons to other Authorities place Nottinghamshire 104th (106th in 2008).

Post-16 (GCE A/AS and equivalent)

(Final figures which include The Samworth Church Academy)

The average point score (APS) per examination gives an indication of the average A level grade achieved by students. In 2009, APS per entry for Nottinghamshire schools has increased 3.3 points to 200.6 which is just below an average grade of C at full A level. This compares to a national increase of 2.3 points to 211.7 (slightly above a grade C). Comparisons to other Local Authorities places Nottinghamshire 127th (129th in 2008).

The average point score (APS) per candidate provides a measure of the average number of A level equivalents studied and the grades achieved. The more qualifications undertaken by a student and the higher the grades achieved then the higher the average point score per student. In 2009 the APS per candidate is 698.0 which is a slight decrease of 3.1 points when

compared to 2008. Nationally, the figure has also decreased (by 0.7 points) to 739.1. Comparisons to other Authorities place Nottinghamshire 88th (77th in 2008).

In 2009 the percentage of candidates achieving 2 or more passes of A Level equivalent size decreased slightly (by 2.0 percentage points) to 92.6%. A decrease of 0.3 percentage points was seen nationally (to 95.0%). Nationally this places Nottinghamshire 118th (87th in 2008).

Deputy Portfolio Holder events

Nottinghamshire Young People of the Year Awards event

Councillor Lynn Sykes and Councillor Allen Clarke attended the Nottinghamshire Young People of the Year Awards event at County Hall on Friday December 11th. The event was attended by friends and families of young people who had been short-listed for awards from a total of 130 nominees from across Nottinghamshire. Also attending were a number of local dignitaries including the High Sheriff of Nottingham and the Leader of the County Council.

Awards were presented to young people who judges felt were most likely to be positive role models for others and the eventual joint winners of the Young Person of the Year Award were Rebecca Bailey from Rushcliffe and Ian Campbell from Bassetlaw.

COUNCILLOR PHILIP OWEN

Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services

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