

meeting COUNTY COUNCIL

date 22 July 2010

agenda item number **7a iv.**

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

### Academies

1. The Academies Bill currently progressing through parliament includes provision for the governing body of any maintained or foundation school in England to apply to the Secretary of State to convert to academy status. In the first instance applications are being processed for schools which have been considered "outstanding" through Ofsted inspection.
2. Nottinghamshire has 50 primaries which have been judged "outstanding", 5 secondary and 4 special schools. The Department for Education has received expressions of interest from 5 of those primaries and all 5 secondary schools. In order to convert to academy status from September 2010 applications were to be submitted by 30 June 2010. Four schools have applied:
  - Barnby Road Primary and Nursery; Newark (Community)
  - Redhill School; Arnold (Foundation)
  - George Spencer Foundation School and Technology School (Foundation)
  - Tuxford School (Community PFI)
3. It is understood that the conversion of PFI schools will be delayed subject to the legal implications being resolved. Tuxford School is therefore unlikely to be able to convert by September.
4. A cross department Officer Group has been established to focus on the practical issues and implications to the Local Authority of Nottinghamshire schools converting to academies. The group has contacted all four schools offering support in their conversion process, and as a result is now dealing with the solicitors acting for Barnby Road Primary in respect of HR matters. The responsibilities for HR, land and buildings have already passed to the Foundation schools on their conversion.
5. Subject to the new legislation it is not incumbent upon any schools to consult with the LA about their decision to convert to an academy. The

Department for Education inform the LA once an application has been made. The Officer group is keen to encourage all schools to contact the LA as soon as possible in order that it can work effectively and proactively to support the school, provide impartial advice on which governors can base their decision and discharge the responsibilities the LA has as employer.

6. A further 13 Nottinghamshire schools which are not judged “outstanding” have so far expressed an interest in converting to academy status. The DfE has not yet published the criteria under which such schools can convert to academy status and further details will be brought to Cabinet when there is clarity.

## **Building Schools for the Future**

7. On 5 July, 2010 the Education Secretary, Michael Gove, MP announced in parliament that there would be a complete overhaul of capital investment in schools, bringing an end to the BSF Programme set up under the previous Labour Government.
8. Whilst there is obvious disappointment that Nottinghamshire will not receive its planned £150million share of BSF investment for our first wave of nine schools, colleagues will understand the financial circumstances that the Government now faces that have led to the decision. There have always been concerns about the bureaucracy involved in the BSF process. Nottinghamshire has spent almost £3million in preparation costs to date and would have probably had to spend a further £2million to close the BSF contract. It is believed that much better use could have been made of this money if the capital investment had been allocated direct to the Council at a much earlier stage.
9. A government review into how best to manage future capital investment in schools is due to report in September and this will guide the government’s next Spending Review period (2011/12 to 2014/15).
10. Ensuring young people attend good schools remains a priority for this administration. To this end, officers in the Children and Young People’s Department have been asked to undertake a review of the entire school estate and establish the worst elements of our school buildings such that any future capital investment is focussed on addressing our worst school buildings in the most effective way.
11. The schools in the first wave included – Garibaldi Comprehensive, Grove Comprehensive, Orchard Special, Meden School and Technology College, The Dukeries College, Nottinghamshire Learning Centre, Joseph Whitaker Foundation School, Magnus C of E Foundation School (Voluntary Controlled), and Minster C of E (Voluntary Aided) (for ICT funding only).
12. The proposed Sutton Community Academy was also being developed in conjunction with the first wave of BSF schools. The new building

plans have also been stopped as a result of this announcement and a further report on this project will be brought to a future meeting of Cabinet when there is further clarity on the implications for buildings for academies and further discussions have been held with West Nottinghamshire College as joint sponsors.

### **Safeguarding Improvement Board**

13. A new Safeguarding Improvement Board has been established to oversee work of our Safeguarding Improvement Programme. The work of the Board is to ensure that the Council and its partners:
  - improve the areas identified in the Ofsted inspection report and have regard to its recommendations;
  - improve performance against key indicators in children's social care; and
  - put in place robust arrangements to sustain and build upon these improvements.
14. The Board membership is made up of members of the Nottinghamshire Children's Trust, the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board, along with me, the Chief Executive and senior representatives from the Police, Health Services and voluntary sector. The Independent Chair of the Improvement Board will be Ged Rowney, a former Director of Children's Services who has led a similar improvement initiative in another local authority. Further details about the work of the Board and the overall improvement plan will be reported to Cabinet and Council later this year. There will also be a presentation about the Safeguarding Improvement Programme to all Members following the next meeting of the County Council on 16 September 2010. In addition, I have asked the Corporate Director for Children and Young People to keep other political group leaders up to date with the work of the Programme.

### **Good Ofsted rating for the first Sure Start Children's Centre to be inspected in Nottinghamshire**

15. The first Sure Start Children's Centre in Nottinghamshire to be inspected by Ofsted has received an overall 'good' rating with one area being judged as 'outstanding' in a report published on 8 July 2010.
16. Nottinghamshire County Council's Mansfield Woodhouse Children's Centre, Swans Lane, Mansfield was inspected by Ofsted last month during a two day process.
17. The co-ordinator and staff from the centre have been praised by the inspectors for their dedication to provide families with a range of good quality services, tailored to meet particular needs.
18. The report notes that provision is good because of the centre's thorough procedures for assessing the needs of users, in particular

disadvantaged and vulnerable families. The care, guidance and support given to users are outstanding because of the extremely safe and nurturing environment the centre provides.

## **Arts Award Live!**

19. Councillor Philip Owen attended this event held at Kelham Hall on 1 July 2010. Arts Award Live! is to celebrate the success of Arts Award Achievement in Nottinghamshire and the City. It was co-ordinated by students working on their Arts Award Gold. Arts Award is a nationally recognised qualification run in partnership by the Arts Council England and Trinity Guildhall. There are 3 different levels – Bronze, Silver and Gold and has been running since 2005.
20. The Award can be run in a variety of settings and is available for 11 -25 year olds. In Nottinghamshire schools predominantly deliver the award. Nottinghamshire has had 339 Arts Awards between April 2009 – March 2010 which included its first 5 Gold Awards.

## **Deputy Portfolio Holder events**

### **Children in Care Council**

#### **Background and Context**

21. The Children in Care (CIC) Council is embedded into the guidance for Care Matters. Social Care and Health are committed to the work of Participation of Young People aged 12 and over to have the opportunity of having a voice about life in care. The CIC council listen to what children and young people in care, and care leavers are saying and these views are taken forward and acted upon, both in terms of issues relating to social care delivery and more generally feeding into the next Children and Young People's Plan and other strategic decisions.
22. The work of the CIC Council has direct links to the written PLEDGE to young people which has strategic commitment from senior management and the Corporate Parenting Panel. The continued support in the establishment and function for the CICC is vital for young people looked after to ensure young people achieve their true value and potential. The PLEDGE underpins that work.
23. There will also be an expectation that members of the CIC Council will be encouraged to have an active role in the Children and Young People Board function linked to Integrated Youth Support Board, ensuring that the voice of Children and Young People Looked After will be embedded into a whole vision for Children and Young Peoples Services.

## **CIC council meeting on 22 June 2010**

24. Seven young people attended from foster care, residential care, care leavers and a young person who also has a voice through the disability support team. The young people welcomed the attendance of Councillor Allen Clarke, Helen Ryan, Service Director and Rachel Coombs, acting Service Head who were all very happy to participate in a drama session, requested by young people to look at sections of the PLEDGE. The session was supported by a Drama tutor. Everyone was encouraged to work together to explore how a DVD could be produced which would support all children and young people from the care system to be aware of their entitlement. The DVD, when finished will also be for social care staff and will support their training and identify the key issues which young people have identified.
25. Councillor Clarke was pleased to see that Sue Shaw, Youth Work Manager, was meeting with a number of care leavers to ensure that the section relating to after care was reflective of their needs. This piece of work has been completed.

## **4Uth festival**

26. On 7 July 2010 Councillor Allen Clarke attended the Youth Centre at the Colonel Frank Seely School Calverton as part of the 4Uth festival which aims to unite teenagers and people over fifty five through the medium of music.
27. Nottinghamshire County Council funded the project called 'Talking About Old Records' which was carried out by Charity Shop DJ and Nottingham Trent University.
28. Students from Colonel Frank Seely School and the Calverton Baptist Church elders' group were trained in basic DJ skills together at the event. Councillor Clarke discussed various music tastes with the young people and elderly attending the event.

## **School Training Link, St Peter's Centre, Mansfield**

29. Councillor Lynn Sykes attended the presentation for the School Training Link Project on Friday, 2 July at St Peter's Centre in Mansfield. This project is part of Nottinghamshire County Council's Skills for Employment and is designed to help disengaged young people in Year 10 and 11 in local comprehensive schools to experience the world of work. These students attend work experience for one day every week over the academic year and also work on a qualification in Job Seeking Skills. Twelve schools participated in the project which has been running very successfully for nearly 15 years.
30. The students have been working in a wide variety of vocations including hairdressing, childcare, mechanics, horticulture, catering, computers, sport and retail. For many of them the experience has improved their behaviour and timekeeping in school and for some it

has enabled them to gain employment or an apprenticeship with their work provider.

31. Councillor Sykes was delighted to present the certificates of achievement to the successful students and was thrilled to see the young people supported by their parents, employers and teachers. She was introduced to the members of staff who have been involved in the project and congratulated them on its continued success.

**COUNCILLOR PHILIP OWEN**

Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services

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