

INTEGRATED PLAN 2011/2012: REPORT OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

To: **County Council**

Date: **15 February 2011**

From: **Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee**

Electoral Division(s) **All**

Forward Plan Ref: *Key Decision:* **Yes**

Purpose: **To report the outcome of the Committee's scrutiny of Cabinet's Integrated Plan, and the implications of this Plan for Children and Young People's Services.**

Recommendation: **The Council is asked to consider the Committee's report in its deliberations on the Integrated Plan 2011.**

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1. SCRUTINY OF THE INTEGRATED PLAN 2011/12

- 1.1 A modified approach to IP scrutiny was introduced this year, featuring greater emphasis on preparatory work and earlier input of the Scrutiny Committee's views. This involved, in autumn 2010, several meetings of a Scrutiny Committee working group with the CYPS Executive Director to discuss then developing budget proposals, resulting in a report and recommendations. These were submitted to an early December meeting of Cabinet / SMT, which allowed the views of the committee to be contributed at an earlier stage than previously.
- 1.2 The IP scrutiny meeting of the CYPS Scrutiny Committee was held on 3rd February 2011. An extended pre-meeting allowed Committee Members to be briefed on the findings of the Children and Young People's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) by Dr Liz Robin, Director of Public Health, Dr. Fay Haffenden (NHS Cambridgeshire) and Mary Whitehand, Head of Planning and Performance (CYPS). This illustrated the main issues facing children and young people in the county and allowed the Committee to adopt an evidence based approach to IP scrutiny.
- 1.3 The Committee records its thanks to those named in paragraph 1.2 for their contribution.
- 1.4 The IP scrutiny meeting focussed on the Cabinet Member for Children and his approach to service planning in the face of the unprecedented budgetary challenge faced by the authority. The severity of the saving required – coupled with the requirement to deliver a significant proportion of this in year 1 – meant that difficult choices had been made. The Committee recognises this fact and endorses the hard work that has resulted in a balanced budget for CYPS.
- 1.5 This report details the conclusions of the Committee in relation to the 2011/12 CYPS IP proposals.

2. KEY FINDINGS

- 2.1 The Committee held the Cabinet Member for Children to account over the financial settlement secured from Cabinet for CYPS. Over the period covered by the IP, CYPS's overall budget is to be reduced by 4.8%, yet Community and Adult Services will receive a 2.4% increase, attributed by the Cabinet Member to demographic funding. Committee members expressed concern at the financial constraint placed upon CYPS relative to other directorates of the council.
- 2.2 The Committee also questioned the extent to which central government lobbying in support of children and young people's services had been undertaken by the administration. Positive steps taken in this regard included a planned visit to the county by the Secretary of State for Education and Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children.

- 2.3 Some within the Committee expressed the opinion that the IP proposals were focussed on the short term and that eventually greater costs would ensue as a result. This was based upon the costs – either in the immediate or in the long term - placed upon other agencies by the council's withdrawal from the provision of certain services, or by a shift away from universal access and an increase in the threshold at which the Council would intervene, towards a focus on tiers 3 and 4. This was countered by the Cabinet Member with reference to, amongst other things, the Placement Strategy, which would ultimately reduce looked after children associated costs, mainly by preventing vulnerable children from entering care in the first instance.
- 2.4 There was also some concern over the extent to which cuts to services such as Cambridgeshire Race Equality and Diversity Service (CREDS) militate against improvements in key issues highlighted by the JSNA, in this case gaps in educational attainment amongst certain minority ethnic groups, particularly in the north of the county.
- 2.5 Removing home to school transport subsidy to those children attending faith schools will affect parents who had chosen St. Bede's School on the assumption that the subsidy would be available, and may have a knock on effect (including financial costs) if pupils relocate to neighbourhood schools, especially if these are oversubscribed.

Service redesign

- 2.6 The Committee heard that savings were to be accompanied by fundamental redesign of services, meaning that, in the mid to long term, many operations will be transformed. This transformation will result in certain services being withdrawn from the less needy; the application of charges to some services in certain circumstances; the withdrawal of most discretionary universal services to schools; and, an increased emphasis on commissioning services where appropriate. The Committee have several comments in relation to this:
- a. Withdrawal of universal service provision may have longer term implications, depending upon the extent to which the universal service is also preventative. Where involvement in a universal service allows early intervention it could be said to provide good value for money, as later interventions are invariably costlier.
 - b. Universal services can be a place where people of all backgrounds mix, furthering the council's objective to foster cohesion, although it is acknowledged that often such services fail to attract the most needy.
 - c. The Committee's member led review of CYPS in New Communities made the point that new settlements have a greater need for universal provision than established communities, and recommended that funding for such provision be set aside for Northstowe through the IP process.

- d. Reducing expenditure on Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT) and other school support services will merely shunt costs onto schools, resulting in little or no discernible saving to public finances in general.
 - e. The voluntary and community sector may not, as yet, have the capacity to provide services on behalf of the council. The county-wide situation varies considerably in this regard, and a key risk is patchy provision involving a mix of statutory and non-statutory providers, none of which is effectively integrated.
- 2.7 The main examples of service transformation include a Placement Strategy, the move to an Integrated Youth Support Service (IYSS), a Unit Model of Children's Social Care and restructure of the Learning Directorate. The IYSS combines Connexions and Youth Services and in so doing creates cost savings and rationalisation. An outcome of the redesign is the move to a more targeted service to which fewer would have access. The Unit Model is operated by Hackney LBC and adoption of the model by Cambridgeshire County Council is being investigated. The Learning Directorate will move to an area model based upon existing CYPS Area Team geographic boundaries.

General points

- 2.8 The Executive Director acknowledged the need to consult children, young people and parent groups more widely regarding its Integrated Plan in future.
- 2.9 The Committee discussed the importance of music services being available to vulnerable groups and their value in keeping young people engaged in education.
- 2.10 The Committee felt that the Integrated Plan's text was better than the previous year's, but that there was still difficulty in distinguishing between savings and cuts. Savings were defined as where the same level of service could be provided more efficiently and a cut as a reduction in service. The Administration were of the view that savings could be made and an enhanced service provided.

Source Documents	Location
Agenda and reports of the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee – 3 February 2010	Room 114a, Shire Hall Cambridge