

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL
2nd July, 2010

Present:- Councillor G. A. Russell (in the Chair); Councillors Ali, Buckley, Dodson, Falvey and Sims.

Also in attendance were:- Councillor Lakin, Mr M Hall, Mr A Martin and Mr M Burn.

Apologies were received from:- Councillors Fenoughty, Kaye, Sharp and Mrs J Blanch-Nicholson.

17. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

There were no declarations of interest made at this meeting.

18. QUESTIONS FROM THE PRESS AND PUBLIC.

Tracy Peacock, a member of the public asked for an explanation as to why the funding had been cut in respect of "Aiming High" the project for children with disabilities.

It was confirmed that there was a number of funding pressures as a result of Government announcements of cuts and it was the Authority's responsibility to ensure that available funding was used for the delivery of priorities. The funding stream relating to "Aiming High" was currently unaffected and therefore the project would be continuing, although there was no guarantee as to how long for.

The Chair reported that there would be further discussion relating to this at a future meeting and that Tracy would be invited to attend.

19. MATTERS REFERRED FROM THE YOUTH CABINET.

There were no issues to report at this meeting.

20. COMMUNICATIONS.

Caroline Webb announced that the Young Champions of Rotherham event was taking place on Wednesday 7th July 2010 at 6.00 pm at Magna. The Mayor would be presenting the awards and all members were invited to attend. Expressions of interest should be made to Martin Smith, Manager of Get Real Team or Caroline Webb.

**21. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES DIRECTORATE
REVENUE OUTTURN 2009/ 10**

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Finance Manager in respect of the Children and Young People's Directorate Revenue Outturn 2009/10.

The unaudited Outturn (excluding schools delegated budgets) for 2009/10 showed an overspend of £3,944,414 against a net cash limited budget of £37,957,288 which represented a variation of 10.39%.

The report stated that this outturn was before adjusting for the carry forward of traded balances (£45,881). The adjusted variance to budget was £3,990,295 overspent (10.51%).

In addition to the above the report also contained a request for an earmarked balance to the value of £3,709.

It was noted that a detailed report on Schools delegated balances would be submitted to Cabinet Member in late July once information regarding planned use of balances had been obtained from the schools with balances higher than the DCSF threshold (5% Secondary, 8% other phases)

The outturn position showed an improvement of £387k on the March 2010 reported budget monitoring position.

Reference was made to the increase in unit costs which had increased from £400k+ to £900k+ which represented an increase of 267% and an explanation was sought. It was confirmed that the demand for providers for looked after children had increased. It was noted that steps were being taken to drive down these costs.

Concerns were raised about the overspend relating to agency costs, when there were vacancies on establishment. Confirmation was given that there needed to be a 6% vacancy factor applied in order to achieve a balanced budget.

Reference was made to the costs of employing interpreters and a query was raised as to the possibility of using volunteers from the community. It was confirmed that in some instances people were recruited from the community but with regard to social care matters it was necessary to use interpreters from accredited agencies. However the Authority were looking to go out to tender for interpretation services which would hopefully bring the overall cost down.

A comment was made about the Children First Review which had highlighted that the service was underfunded. It was queried as to how the service would be managed in the future. Confirmation was given that independent benchmarking had taken place and that a number of areas and issues were being worked through.

A discussion ensued concerning out of authority placements and whether these could be reduced and more in authority provision made available. It was agreed that this required a more in depth discussion and that a detailed report be presented to a future meeting.

Resolved:- (1) That the report be received

(2) That the recommendation to the Strategic Leadership Team and Cabinet to approve the carry forward request contained within the report be supported

(3) That it be noted that the planned use of school balances would be reported to a future meeting.

(4) That a report be presented to a future meeting in relation to how residential services are commissioned for looked after children.

22. FOSTERING INSPECTION UPDATE

Gani Martins, Director of Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting Services reported on the recent Fostering Inspection which had taken place between 21st June 2010 and 25th June 2010.

She confirmed that it had been a successful inspection with significant improvements being made since the last inspection.

It was agreed that a report would be brought to the next Scrutiny Panel meeting with full detail of the inspection.

23. MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON 4TH JUNE, 2010

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel held on 4th June, 2010 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman, subject to the inclusion of Councillor Falvey's apologies.

24. MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE CABINET MEMBER AND ADVISERS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES SERVICES HELD ON 2ND JUNE, 2010 AND ON 9TH JUNE, 2010

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meetings of the Cabinet Member and Advisers for Children and Young People's Services held on 2nd June 2010 and 9th June 2010 be noted.

25. MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE HELD ON 11TH JUNE, 2010

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting of the Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee held on 11th June 2010 be noted.