

Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee – Statement to Council 24 June 2010

1.0 Achievements April to June 2010 (covering meetings 21 April, 26 May and 23 June 2010)

1.1 The remit of the Committee extend across all services delivered to children and young people and their families; including, education, early years provision, 14 – 19 provision, youth services, multi-agency and prevention services including children's physical and mental health support services, and children's social care.

1.2 The Committee has or will have received and monitored:-

- Overview of governance and audit for safeguarding vulnerable children in Shropshire.
- Review of placement strategy for looked after children and children with special educational needs.
- Performance reports for the Corporate Plan – Quarter 3, 2010.
- Financial Reports: budget monitoring – Quarter 4, 2010.
- Transfer of responsibility for 16 – 19 provision.
- Review of employment opportunities for young people, including those not in employment, education or training (needs).
- Update on the establishment of a Family Information Service.
- Review of childcare provision and implications of the economic downturn.
- Monitoring of the Safer Schools Initiative.

1.3 The Committee has noted:-

The critical work being undertaken by social care staff to ensure that the most vulnerable young people are provided with the highest quality care and appropriate provision to meet their needs.

- That there will be a report every six months highlighting areas of concern or success, including staffing levels, service responses and performance and governance arrangements.
- Specific work is being undertaken to accurately measure those national indicators that are currently performing behind current expectations and which will be reported at regular intervals at the committee's request.

The continued progress in delivering the 'Youth Offer' to 13 – 19 year olds in Shropshire, in particular;

- Targeted youth support range of services for young people who require additional support to make a successful transition to adulthood and achieving economic wellbeing.
- To provide additional opportunities for volunteering within the local community and empowering young people to engage in the decision making process.

The transfer of responsibilities for the commissioning and funding of 16 – 19 education and training from the Learning and Skills Council to Shropshire Council.

Under the provision of the Childcare Act 2006, Shropshire Council has a statutory duty to secure sufficient childcare provision to enable parents to work, or undertake education and training that might lead to work.

- Monitoring of performance shows that there has been a 6% increase in the number of places available.
- The last sufficiency assessment showed that Shropshire actually has more spaces than are needed, however, there are specific areas of need, i.e. provision during holiday periods or unsocial hours.
- The Act also places a responsibility on the Council for the provision of information, advice, assistance on childcare and other services, facilities and publications that may be of benefit to parents or prospective parents. The Committee were please to note and congratulated staff on the achievement of the Families First Award.

The review of the proposed improvement action plan for the placement of children looked after by Shropshire Council and for children with statements of special educational need.

- The action plan aims to ensure that decision making between lead professionals and key partners focuses on finding appropriate placements with a view to improve or maintain existing standards of care.
- In addition, that this commissioning and contracting role achieves greater value for money, and draw the current budget overspend back to a balanced budget without need for further budget growth.

1.4 The Committee has agreed:-

- To all of the recommendations in the reports considered and that further monitoring of those key decisions are reviewed by the committee at the appropriate time. In addition, the committee has also agreed to request further updates on the progress of national indicators recording the progress of core and initial assessments.

1.5 The Committee have considered:

That there is currently a consultation on the new Shropshire Schools Vision and Organisation Policy. This is likely to be a major piece of work for the Committee

to support and will review progress at their meeting of 7 July. This will be an all day meeting and the Committee will commission officer to brief on the policy and appropriate supporting information.

2. Work Programme

- 2.1 Arrangements to develop work programmes for the year ahead, picking up and issues rolling over, will be put in place once Council has considered the recommendations of the Scrutiny Review Task & Finish Group and the structures for Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committees have been agreed.

Councillor Claire Wild (Chair)
Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee