

CITY OF PLYMOUTH

Subject: Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel Quarterly Report

Committee: Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Date: 8 April 2010

CMT Member: Director of Services for Children and Young People

Author: Richenda Broad (Acting Assistant Director for Commissioning, Policy and Performance - Lead Officer)

Contact: richenda.broad@plymouth.gov.uk

Ref:

Part: Part I

Executive Summary:

This report sets out a review of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel for the third quarter of 2009/10.

Corporate Plan 2010-2013:

The Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel provides strategic scrutiny of the following Corporate Improvement Priorities and key areas:

- CIP 7 - Keeping children safe
 - CIP 8 - Improving skills and educational achievement
 - CIP 9 - Developing high quality places to learn in
 - CIP 13 - Supporting staff to perform better
 - CIP 14 - Proving better value for money
-

Implications for Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications: Including finance, human, IT and land

None

Other Implications: e.g. Section 17 Community Safety, Health and Safety, Risk Management, Equalities Impact Assessment, etc.

None

Recommendations & Reasons for recommended action:

That the report is noted

Alternative options considered and reasons for recommended action:

N/A

Background papers:

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny minutes and forward plan

Sign off: N/A

CITY OF PLYMOUTH

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel Quarterly Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report sets out a review of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel for the third quarter of 2009/10, incorporating the meetings of 19 November 2009 and 28 January 2010 respectively.

2. Scope of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel

- 2.1 The Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel is primarily concerned with the strategic scrutiny of the following Corporate Improvement Priorities and key areas:
- CIP 7 - Keeping children safe
 - CIP 8 - Improving skills and educational achievement
 - CIP 9 - Developing high quality places to learn in
- 2.2 The detailed terms of reference for the panel are contained in Appendix 1.
- 2.3 The panel consists of the following members and officers

Title	Name	Attendances (6 meetings)
Councillor (Chair)	Purnell	6
Councillor (Vice Chair)	Stephens	4
Councillor	Mrs Beer	4
Councillor	Bowie	3
Councillor	Mrs Bragg	6
Councillor	Delbridge	5
Councillor	Reynolds	2
Councillor	Roberts	6
Councillor	Vincent	4
Statutory Co-opted rep	C Bruce-Spencer (resigned 19.11.09)	-
Statutory Co-opted rep	T Lyddon	1
Statutory Co-opted rep	K Willis	3
Statutory Co-opted rep	M Gee (long-term sick)	-
Co-opted rep	A Kearnes	4
Co-opted rep	J Paget	4
Co-opted rep	K Taylor	3
Co-opted rep	Prof M Totterdell	-
Lead Officer	Richenda Broad/Claire Cordory-Oatway	5
Democratic Support	Cathy McCabe/Amelia Boulter/Rachel Watson	6

- 2.4 The Panel, through effective strategic and operational scrutiny, supports the following cabinet member and CMT officer

Title	Name
Cabinet Member (Children and Young People)	Grant Monahan
Director of Services for Children and Young People	Bronwen Lacey

- 2.5 The panel has a budget of £2,000 to support the scrutiny work.
- 2.6 The panel has requested practical training in respect of finance.

3. Key achievements to date

The panel has now met on six occasions. Meetings have been well structured, managed efficiently and well attended by panel members. A positive contribution has been made to support an effective strategic and operational overview; in particular, the following achievements have already been made:

3.1 Co-opted representatives

The panel has sustained a diverse group of co-opted representatives, including young people, and celebrates the wider perspective these representatives bring.

3.2 Complaints and Compliments Annual Report

The Customer Relations Manager has a statutory requirement to present an annual report to the relevant local authority committee about the operation of its complaints procedure. The report focuses on the compliments, concerns and complaints received within the Children's Social Care Division between 1 April 2008 and 31 March 2009. In response to a specific request from Children and Young People OSP the report provided examples of how the learning from complaints informs and changes practice.

The Panel welcomed the annual report which showed that compliments received in 2008/09 had nearly doubled compared with 2007/08; there had been a slight improvement in timescales for responding to complaints at stage 1; stage 2 complaints had fallen from 13 to 5; there were no stage 3 complaints in 2008/09, compared with 5 in 2007/08.

3.3 Performance and Budget Review

The panel received a detailed briefing on the financial position of Services for Children and Young People. This also touched on the contributions by partners through core and grant funding and how services are resourced. Linked to this was a briefing on performance related to Services for Children and Young People, in particular focussing on the Corporate Improvement Priorities and the priorities of the Children and Young People's plan. This provided a basis for a discussion on the importance of financial and performance data being part of every report to Children and Young People's OSP.

3.4 Children with Disabilities

The panel received a briefing paper on Children with Disabilities and viewed a DVD on young people's views on short breaks. The DVD was part of a consultation process to find out what young disabled people wanted in the future. The panel reflected on the challenges of ensuring the inclusion of children with disabilities in all activities and the development towards this through effective commissioning of services.

The panel made the following resolutions:

- a joint task and finish group with Customers and Communities OSP on facilities for disabled people be included on the work programme;
- information on integration and support for children with disabilities, short breaks, independent living, pooled budgets and education be considered at a future meeting.

3.5 School Attainment Results

The Panel received a report containing school attainment results. The OSP were informed that historically there had been a dip in performance between year 6 and 7 and this was part of the reason for the government to rebrand the KS3 curriculum which would be looking at a more thematic approach to improve transition between primary and secondary schools. The Panel considered the areas for improvement and identified 6th forms and the low entry to higher education as an area for further scrutiny.

The Panel made the following resolutions –

- more detailed information be provided on how underperforming 6th forms were to be addressed;
- that thanks be extended to staff who had contributed to the positive outcomes achieved by Children in Care and the support of the Panel for the concept of 'Virtual Head' be noted.

3.6 Carefirst

It was reported to the Panel that there was a national problem with the efficiency of the Carefirst software package and the Council were taking steps to improve the system, to assist social workers to record on the system and improve the output of data. A project team has been set up, chaired by the Assistant Chief Executive, with a team of 15 – 20 people to deliver the project. The Panel discussed the impact on social workers of an inefficient system for data management and recording and made the following resolution –

- a bullet point synopsis of the 50 – 75% issues causing problems and how the new system would address them be provided to the Panel.

3.7 OFSTED Report

The Panel received a response to the annual unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment arrangements within the Council's Services for Children and Young People and CIP 7 'Keeping Children Safe'. The Panel discussed the areas that could support improvement in managing the volume of referrals to the Advice and Assessment Service and made the following resolutions –

- that a presentation on thresholds and Common Assessment Framework (CAF) be provided to the Panel;
- that a copy of the 'e-safe guidance' due to be launched in April 2010 be provided to the Panel.

4. On the Horizon

As a consequence of the work undertaken by the panel, the following topic areas have been placed on the work programme for the final panel meeting of 2009/10:

- Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
- Teenage Pregnancy Update
- Performance review, including budget

5. Recommendation

- 5.1 That the progress of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny panel is noted by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

Richenda Broad

Lead Officer Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

8 April 2010

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel Terms of Reference

Responsibilities

- On-going monitoring of post-inspection action plans (relating to its policy areas);
- To review new and existing policies and consider how they may be improved and developed;
- To monitor the budget and performance of the Cabinet Member, Department and partners to ensure that the priorities for the area are being delivered upon;
- To monitor performance against the relevant Corporate Improvement Priorities;
- To review Policies within the Budget and Policy Framework;
- To consider Equality Impact Assessments against new and existing policies;
- To investigate local issues to find out how the council and its partners can improve to meet the needs of local people;
- To make recommendations about service delivery to the Cabinet (via the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board);
- To review and scrutinise the performance of partner organisations;
- To set up ad hoc Working Groups as and when required;
- To produce quarterly progress reports to go to the management board;
- Any work delegated to the panel by the Board.

Policy Areas include:

- Children's Services
- Lifelong Learning
- Learning and Family Support
- Education
- Social Care relating to Children and Young People
- Children and Young People's Trust
- Children and Young People's Partnership
- Teenage Pregnancy
- Child Healthcare

Policy Framework Plans and Strategies relating to Policy Areas

- Children and Young People's Plan
- Ideas for Change
- Youth Justice Plan

Membership

The Chair of the Panel shall serve on the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board. The Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel will be chaired by a Member of the opposition political group with the vice-chair from the majority political group. All Members of the panel will adhere to the general rules of Overview and Scrutiny. There are 9 members of

the panel including the Chair and the vice-chair. The vice-chair is from the opposite political group to the Chair.

The Panel also includes 4 statutory members for education matters –

- 2 Parent Governors
- 1 Catholic Church representative
- 1 Church of England representative

All Members of the panel will adhere to the general rules of Overview and Scrutiny.

Cabinet Member

Children and Young People

Directorate

Services for Children and Young People

Lead Officer

Assistant Director, Children's Services

Corporate Improvement Priorities (CIPs)

- Safe Children (CIP 7)
- Skills and Education (CIP 8)
- High quality places to learn (CIP 9)
- Supporting council staff to perform better (CIP 13)
- Providing better value for money (CIP 14)

LSP Link

- Wise