

## **CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL**

TUESDAY, 13 DECEMBER, 2011 AT 6.00 P.M. AT THE COUNCIL HOUSE

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| <b>Panel Members Present</b>                  | Councillor B. Cassidy (Chair)<br>Councillor O. Bennett<br>Councillor K. Chambers<br>Councillor A. Paul<br>Councillor J. Rochelle<br>Councillor K. Sears<br>Councillor D. Shires<br>Councillor R. Thomas  |
| <b>Non elected non-voting members present</b> | D. Jones (Primary Teacher representative)<br>R. Bragger (Secondary Teacher representative)   |
| <b>Portfolio holder present</b>               | Councillor R. Andrew - Children's Services   |
| <b>Officers Present</b>                       | Louise Hughes, Assistant Director, Children's Services<br>Dan Mortiboys, Service Accounting and Financial Reporting Manager<br>Barry Fielding, Contract Exit Manager<br>Heather Maybury, Principal Customer Liaison Officer (Complaints)<br>Alan Michell, Head of Service, Integrated Young People's Support Service (IYPSS)<br>Jenni MacKay, Active Involvement Project Manager<br>Matt Underhill, Scrutiny Officer |

### **144/11 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received for the duration of the meeting from Councillor R. Martin, Councillor E. Hughes, Councillor C. Towe, Councillor M. Bird and Michelle Whiting.

### **145/11 SUBSTITUTIONS**

Councillor Rochelle substituted for Councillor Martin for the duration of the meeting. Councillor Sears substituted for Councillor Hughes for the duration of the meeting.

### **146/11 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP**

There were no declarations of interest or party whip identified at this meeting.

## 147/11 MINUTES

In relation to the minutes of the last meeting it was explained that it had previously been proposed to provide the Panel with a report in relation to School Meals Service. However, this was no longer required as the council had recently decided to continue with the existing arrangements for the next 6 months. A working group which includes Head teachers, representatives from the NHS as well as the council has been formed to shape the future direction of the service. It was also emphasised that the provision of hot meals remained a priority. It was agreed that a briefing would be provided to the Panel in the New Year and that a press release providing further guidance would be circulated to Members.

In relation to the issue of funding transport of pupils who had transferred from the former Sneyd School to Brownhills School, it was explained that a meeting subsequently took place between the Chair of the Panel, the Chair of Schools' Forum and the Assistant Director, Children's Services. Funding of £10k had been identified from transport budgets, together with an additional £5k per annum from the school's entitlement to bus passes. In addition, £28k had been identified from the Children's Services budget, providing a total of £48k which would support a two year phase of provision.

The minutes of the previous meeting were noted.

### **Resolved**

That:-

- (1) a briefing be provided to the Panel regarding the School Meals Service in the New Year;

and

- (2) that the minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2011, copies having previously been circulated be approved as a true and accurate record.

## 148/11 MYPLACE YOUNG PEOPLE'S CENTRE & UK YOUTH PARLIAMENT

The Chair introduced the item explaining that it was an opportunity for the Panel to discuss the Myplace Young People's Centre and UK Youth Parliament (YP) with some of the young participants. The following is a summary of the subsequent discussion:

- The young people explained that the UKYP had been established in 1999, with the intention of providing a voice for young people. In Walsall the most recent election saw 13,600 cast, representing 50% of local young people participate;
- Events have taken place at both regional and national level. This included a recent visit to the Houses of Parliament, which included the opportunity to participate in a debate in the House of Commons. There were also a number of local meetings which focused on the issue of the cost of public transport for young people. In response to a Panel query, the young people explained that if

they were given the opportunity to receive £25k of funding they would seek to identify a range of activities for young people;

- Young people who sat on the Myplace Shadow Board highlighted some of the work they had been involved in to develop the new Centre. A range of facilities would be available for use by young people from throughout the region. This included counselling and health advice, with links having been developed with the NHS. The Centre is due to open in March and will operate between 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. It will also be open at weekends and will be staffed by a range of specialists. The young people highlighted career guidance as an additional service which would prove valuable support if introduced at the Centre;
- Officers and the Portfolio Holder highlighted the significant effort that had been undertaken to ensure that this project retained its lottery funding;
- The Chair thanked all the young people for attending and explained that the Panel would seek to hold a meeting at the Centre post its official opening in July.

### **Resolved**

That the presentation be noted.

### **149/11 BUDGET CONSULTATION FEEDBACK 2012/13**

The Service Accounting and Financial Reporting Manager introduced the report (annexed). The following is a summary of the report and subsequent discussion:

- It was highlighted that the report contained the feedback regarding local views that investment in young people was vital. The report also included the previous response of the Panel to the budget proposals;
- In response to the impending increase in the school leavers age from 16 to 18, together with the cost of the delivery of youth justice expected to be required to be met by local councils, it was explained that a rigorous approach was undertaken in the borough which had resulted in year-on-year reductions in youth offending. The Portfolio Holder highlighted that the new operating model for Children's Services would seek to address and break the cycle that often existed of Looked After Children (LAC) entering the youth justice system before returning to LAC services. It was explained that this would be further supported by collaborative work with local partners, including the police, as well as a focus on early intervention.

### **Resolved**

That the report be noted.

### **150/11 FINANCIAL PLAN 2012/13 TO 2014/15: SECOND DRAFT REVENUE & CAPITAL BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR CONSULTATION**

The Service Accounting and Financial Reporting Manager introduced the report (annexed). It was explained that the budget proposals remained unchanged from those reviewed by the Panel previously.

## **Resolved**

That the report be noted.

### **151/11 QUARTER 2 FINANCIAL MONITORING POSITION FOR 2011/12**

The Service Accounting and Financial Reporting Manager introduced the report (annexed). The following is a summary of the report and subsequent discussion:

- The Chair highlighted that Children's Services had forecast a budget underspend of £237k for 2011/12. Officers explained that this had been achieved by reducing the number of LAC, which was currently at 496. This had been achieved by provision of permanent arrangements for children, including guardianship.

## **Resolved**

That the report be noted.

### **152/11 ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT**

The Principal Customer Liaison Officer (Complaints), introduced the report (annexed). The following is a summary of the briefing and subsequent discussion:

- A total of 140 complaints had been received between 1 April 2010 and 31 March 2011. During this period 15 complaints were received and 17 compliments;
- While the number of complaints received was below the target, it may demonstrate that effective processes are in place to manage issues and prevent a formal complaint being made. For example, the use of mediation had limited to two the number of complaints that had reached Stage 2. Strong partnership working supported early intervention and addressing of issues. This had included swift resolution of concerns regarding contact arrangements with social workers. It was explained that the effective management of complaints had been further supported by the positive outcome of Single Status for social workers which increased salary levels to those of neighbouring authorities and had positively impacted on recruiting and stability of the workforce.

## **Resolved**

That the report be noted.

### **153/11 WORK PROGRAMME 2011/12 AND FORWARD PLAN**

The Panel considered the work programme and Cabinet's Forward Plan.

## **Resolved**

That the work programme and Forward Plan be noted.

## **SUMMARY OF ITEM CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE SESSION**

### **154/11 EDUCATION DEVELOPMENTS**

The Panel noted a presentation and update from the Assistant Director, Children's Services and the Exit Manager.

[Exempt information under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended)]

### **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Chair informed Members that the date of the next meeting would be 26 January 2012 at 6:00pm.

The meeting terminated at 7.20 p.m.