

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2008/09 TO 2010/11

The Committee considered a joint report of the Director of Children and Young People's Service and Director of Corporate Resources concerning the Medium Term Financial Strategy for the period 2008/09 to 2010/11. A copy of the report marked 'B' is filed with these minutes.

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Mr. I. D. Ould CC the Cabinet Lead Member for Children and Young People's Service.

In response to questions the Committee was advised as follows:

General

- i) The proposed budget would enable the Department to deliver the key priorities outlined in the Children and Young People's Plan.
- ii) The Department had agreed to re-instate funding to the Red Cross Toy Library to enable six Saturday openings. A response was awaited from the Red Cross. With regard to playschemes and playgroups, a review was in progress and when the findings of the review were known and a decision reached the Scrutiny Committee would be advised.
- iii) The role and responsibilities of the Schools Funding Forum was complex and a briefing paper would be circulated to all members of the Committee in due course.
- iv) The responsibility for School Crossing Patrols had transferred to the Highways Transportation and Waste Management Department and the budget provision currently within the Children and Young People's Service would be transferred at the end of this financial year.
- v) The budgets assumed that the new indicators due in 2008/09 relating to the Care Matters White Paper, 14-19 Specialist Diplomats and Aiming Higher for Disabled Children would be fully funded. In the event they were not it might not be possible to progress these initiatives.

Growth

- vi) The growth of MIS maintenance was to cover the maintenance contract. This work had previously been done in-house by Corporate Resources.
- vii) The growth for Legal Services was to cover both the increase in care proceedings and the increasing complexity of such cases.
- viii) The growth for Capital Programme Support would enable the Department to employ additional in-house staff to deal with the significant increase in the Capital Programme. It was not the policy to capitalise these costs.
- ix) The transfer of the Children's Services Grant to Formula Grant would have no impact on the overall budget or services.

Savings

- x) The MTFS assumed efficiency savings of 2% in 2008/09 and 3% in subsequent years and applied to all service areas. This was based on advice that it would be difficult to gear up to achieve 3% in the first year. Efficiency targets were a Government imposed requirement and there were clear criteria for determining whether a saving could be deemed to be an efficiency saving
- xi) Part of the savings achieved in 2007/08 from the introduction of transport charges had been allocated to fund bus inspectors, CCTV and vouchers. All these would come into effect in time for the new school year. The implementation of denominational transport charges was now a matter for the Highways Transport and Waste Management Department.
- xii) The staff travel savings in the Administration and Support Services would yield approximately £35,000 as would raising changes on traded activities to 2% over inflation.
- xiii) The procurement saving of £250,000 had been achieved corporately through the Change Management Programme.
- xiv) Savings in Outdoor and Residential Education would be achieved primarily through staff restructuring and additional trading.
- xv) The reduction in matched funding for the Standards Fund would not affect the Department's ability to access this Fund

The Schools Budget

- xvi) Whilst difficult to estimate, it was not thought that inward migration would have a substantial effect on school pupil numbers. The

Department worked closely with schools in planning budgets and it was hoped that moving to 3 year indicative budgets would assist. In some circumstances where schools experienced pupil growth above forecast levels exceptional payments could be made.

- xvii) The additional funding for Personalised Learning, SEN and Pockets of Deprivation would be passed on directly to schools and it was a matter for them how this money was spent.

Capital Programme

- xviii) The roll out of the second phase Children Centres would be on a different basis to that in Phase 1 and it was expected that the financial problems encountered by Phase 1 centres would not re-occur

RESOLVED:

- a) That the information now provided be noted.
- b) That the Scrutiny Commission be asked to explore further the Government methodology for delivering efficiency savings and the scope that exists locally to implement this requirement. In particular the Commission be asked to consider and comment on the appropriateness of all service areas being asked to achieve the same level of efficiency.
- c) That, given the significant efficiency savings to be achieved in 2009/10 and 2010/11, the Director of Children and Young People's Service be requested to submit reports at the earliest opportunity on how these are to be achieved.