



CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:- 26 JANUARY 2010

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

MINUTE EXTRACT

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children and Young People's Service and the Director of Corporate Resources on the proposed Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for the period 2010/11 to 2013/14 as it related to the Children and Young People's Service (CYPS). A copy of the report marked 'B' is filed with these minutes.

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting the Cabinet Lead Members for Children and Young People, Mr I. D. Ould CC and Mr E. F. White CC and the Cabinet Support Member for Children and Young People, Mr G. A. Hart, who were attending for this item.

The following points arose from discussion and questions:

Arts in Education

- a) 85% of the budget for Arts in Education was funded by the Standards Fund for Music. The provision relating to music – curriculum support for schools, individual tuition, support for ensemble and performance work – would not be affected by proposed cuts to the County Council's contribution. It was noted that the Standards for Music funding was only guaranteed until March 2011.
- b) The County Council's contribution of approximately £420,000 per annum had allowed for drama and dance activities to be added to the Arts in Education offer and the withdrawal of this subsidy might result in these activities ending. However, work was being undertaken to investigate the possibility of retaining some drama and dance provision, including the option of seeking parental contributions and revised arrangements for schools to purchase the service. A pilot scheme could be trialled in the autumn term 2010.
- c) Administrative and support services for Leicestershire Arts had been restructured to facilitate the proposed approach.
- d) The withdrawal of the funding would be phased over 2 financial years, 2011/12 and 2012/13, with the focus in the early years on reducing management and administration costs.

- e) The City Council provided a building at a peppercorn rent and this was expected to continue.
- f) The Extended Services section of CYPS covered a range of separate, discrete services funded by a variety of means: external grant, traded services, etc. The Arts Service was the only element with local authority funding.

Youth Services

- g) 15% of 13-19 year olds in the County attended youth clubs offered by the Youth Service.
- h) The work of the Youth Service was increasingly targeted at vulnerable young people. The funding for the universal offer delivered in schools, all activity undertaken in the 19 priority neighbourhoods and the work done with particular groups of young people (e.g. Looked After Children, disabled and those suffering rural isolation) would be protected.
- i) Local authorities were coming under increasing pressure to become commissioners of services rather than providers: voluntary and community sector organisations would increasingly provide general leisure activities for young people.
- j) It was proposed to find the reduction in funding for Youth Services from £250,000 saving in premises costs; £250,000 savings in the commissioning budget; and the remaining £500,000 from staffing costs. It was noted that the particular skills of youth workers were utilised to assist the work of groups such as the Impact Team, Children in Care Team and Teenage Pregnancy Strategy Team.
- k) In connection with particular elements of the budget, it was noted that:
 - i. There were no plans to close the 5 Free Standing Centres. The possibility of using them to develop hub and spokes model of provision was being explored;
 - ii. The Youth Opportunity Fund was externally funded and only guaranteed to the end of the current financial year;
 - iii. Recent vacancies in the Youth Work Service Unit, based at County Hall, had not been filled;
 - iv. Funding for the Jitty Youth Portal and the Positive Activities website would not be cut.

Other

- l) Connexions was now a local authority funded service and, as such, would be required, as are all local authority services, to find 3% efficiency savings year on year. There were opportunities for Connexions to share backroom functions with either the City or County Councils. The savings would not impact on frontline services.
- m) The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) had not yet released its proposals for consultation on the formula for the distribution of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) from 2011/12.
- n) It was expected that Leicestershire would continue to receive the lowest per pupil DSG settlement for English Authorities. It was noted that the County's schools did not receive the lowest settlements in England, as CYPS top-sliced less than many other authorities.
- o) The Breaking the Barriers element of the budget had been transferred into the budget for the Department of Adult Social Care.
- p) In relation to the forecast budget for Specialist Services, it was noted that differences from the current year were explained by changes in how individual grants were handled and the transfer of some budgets to other sections. There would be no service reduction in this area, however, it would be expected to contribute to the 3% year on year efficiency savings.
- q) There would be a reduction of 3 posts of National Strategy Consultants supporting interventions in schools. It was expected that all local authorities identify relevant skills within their own schools and encourage the development of inter-school links and networks to provide support to schools. Schools would receive the same level of service, delivered by a different method. This approach was in accordance with government policy.
- r) The reduction in posts supporting CYPS strategy and policy would also amount to 3 posts.
- s) It was not possible to predict the numbers of unaccompanied asylum seekers coming into the County: the service worked in arrears and reclaimed the grant.
- t) The disaggregation of the Community Services Department would not result in CYPS administering any additional Shire grants: the Department already administered the Voluntary Youth Organisations grants.

- u) In connection with the Capital Programme, it was noted that:
 - i. the grants listed in Appendix C for 2010/11 had all been confirmed. There was no information on funding beyond that, so the Service had only produced a one year capital programme at this stage;
 - ii. The sums set aside for Special Education Need provision in South Leicestershire would go to refurbishing Birkett House and also to expand provision at another unit.

RESOLVED:

- a) that the report and information now provided be noted;
- b) that the comments of the Committee be forwarded to the Scrutiny Commission for consideration at its meeting on 3 February 2010.