

Meeting of the Council – 19th July, 2010

Annual Report of the Select Committee on Children's Services for 2009/10

Purpose

1. To consider the draft annual report of the Select Committee on Children's Services for the review of the 2009/10 year, as set out below.

Background

2. Article 6 of the Council's Constitution requires Select Committees to report annually to the full Council on their workings and to make recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate. It has previously been agreed that the annual report of the Select Committee on Children's Services should be made to the July meeting of the Council.

3. The work of the Select Committee on Children's Services is governed by the following Terms of Reference:-

"To fulfil all of the overview and scrutiny functions of a Select Committee as they relate to Children's Services and, in particular, the functions and responsibilities of the Council under the Children Act 2004 and associated regulations and guidance, including:-

- (a) The roles and responsibilities of relevant partners;
- (b) Listening to and involving children.

With the objective of improving the well-being of all children in the Council's area by developing the "Every Child Matters" outcomes."

4. Given the size and makeup of its membership, the Select Committee continued the practice of appointing Dedicated Working Groups to undertake detailed scrutiny and review.
5. The Committee and its Working Groups were particularly concerned to ensure that their work focused specifically on the five "Every Child Matters" outcomes, viz:-

Be Healthy
Stay Safe
Enjoy and Achieve
Make A Positive Contribution
Achieve Economic Well-Being

and the following Key National and local issues:-

- Improving Outcomes for Looked After Children;
- Reducing Teenage Pregnancies;
- Improving education standards.

6. The Committee's work programme for the 2009/10 Municipal Year has included:-

- > Protection of Children in England – Lord Laming's Report and Government Action Plan
- > Report on Dudley's Schools OFSTED Outcomes April 2009 to March 2010
- > Findings of an OFSTED Inspection in respect of Dudley's Fostering Service
- > Dudley Children's Trust including the Children and Young People's Plan
- > Progress and Achievements in Early Years Foundation, Key Stages 1 to 4
- > Annual Report on Outcomes for Looked-After Children
- > Annual Report of the Dudley Safeguarding Children Board
- > Vision 2025 – A Strategic Plan for Learning including Building Schools for the Future – Readiness to Deliver Supporting Statement
- > Report on the Performance on Future Developments for the Dudley Youth Offending Service
- > Machinery of Government Changes 16-19 Funding Transfer
- > Unannounced Inspections of Contact, Referral and Assessment Arrangements for Children in Need and Children who may be in need of Protection
- > Call-in of Delegated Decision Sheet DCS/1/2010 – The Future of Pensnett High School
- > Standards Report – Performance Data

7. The three Working Groups met several times during the year and considered the following items:-

Youth Working Group (to consider integrated youth support and youth items)

- Key Targets
- Launch Pad
- Youth Service Progress Report
- Giving Young People a Voice

Social Care Working Group (to consider child safeguarding and social care)

- A Day in the Life of a Social Worker
- Unannounced Inspection of Contact, Referral and Assessment Arrangements for Children in Need and Children who may be in Need of Protection
- Social Workers in Care Management – Impact on Court Directed Activity
- Building a Safe, Confident Future

Education Provision 3 years to 19 years (to consider relevant issues including Capital Programme planning and Building Schools for the Future).

- Updates regarding
 - Children's Centres (Sure Start Capital Grant)
 - Primary Capital Programme Projects
 - Old Park Special School Rebuild as part of the Thorns Community Learning Village
 - Rebuild of Quarry Bank Primary School

- Asset Management Planning

The annual report of the Working Groups is attached as Appendix A.

8. The following issues from the Committee's Work Plan are worthy of specific mention:-

(a) **Primary Capital Programme**

In June, a report was submitted providing an overview and update of progress made by the Council on the government's Primary Capital Programme.

The programme involved the rebuilding or refurbishment of primary schools and a presentation was given by the Headteacher of Wrens Nest Primary School on the Targeted Capital Funding Project.

Further to the presentation, the Buildings and Estates Managers reported on the details of the Primary Schools Building Programme.

(b) **Black Country Challenge End of Year 1 Review**

A report was submitted advising the Committee of the work and progress made in relation to the Black Country Challenge activity highlighting the resources and activity directly impacting on schools in Dudley; and indicating areas of success and slippage and the implications for years 2 and 3 of the programme. Priorities for the future which had emerged included recruitment and retention issues, parent and community engagement linked to raising aspirations, work to support the performance of underachieving groups, leadership development and business engagement. It was indicated in the report that funding for year 2 of the project would support those priorities.

(c) **Findings of an OFTSED Inspection in respect of Dudley's Fostering Service**

This inspection had been undertaken in March 2009 and looked at progress made in meeting the recommendations of the previous inspection in January, 2008, when the overall rating of the service had been judged inadequate with a notice of action to improve.

It was now reported that the service had been rated against the outcomes as follows:-

- Being healthy – satisfactory
- Staying safe – satisfactory
- Enjoying and achieving – good
- Making a positive contribution – good
- Achieving economic wellbeing – satisfactory
- Overall judgement – satisfactory

The Inspection Report set out actions which the Council should take to comply with legislative requirements and made a number of recommendations to improve the quality and standards of care further. In addition, good practice recommendations had been made which would form

the basis of an improvement plan for the Fostering Service which would and move the service forward to achieve excellence in delivering high quality services to looked after children and in preparation of future OFSTED inspections.

(d) **Protection of Children in England – Lord Laming’s Report and Government Action Plan**

A report was submitted advising the Committee of the outcomes and recommendations of Lord Laming’s Child Protection Review in consequence of the baby Peter case; the action taken by the government in response to Lord Laming’s recommendations and Dudley’s current position and the actions taken to date by the Council against the key actions identified.

Specific actions which related to social work training and retention and the role of ICT; inspection and statutory targets; and political and professional accountability, leadership and governance as indicated in the report were noted.

(e) **Dudley Children’s Trust including the Children and Young People’s Plan**

Progress was reported on the activities of the Children’s Trust in Dudley, including the development of the Council’s Children and Young People’s Plan.

The report indicated that the vision of the Children’s Trust and the manner in which it was proposed that this would be achieved were set out in the Children and Young People’s Plan for 2009-11. The key priorities for action within the Plan were set out in the report.

In two recent external reviews of partnership working, these being the Inspectorate report of young people not in education, employment or training and the review by the Department of Health on infant mortality, favourable comments had been made on the collaborative arrangements in Dudley.

(f) **Progress and Achievements in Early Years Foundation Stage**

An update on progress and achievements in the Early Years Foundation Stage was considered. The report confirmed sessions in respect of summer born boys and the learning environment had been introduced in consequence of the single point of entry for all children in the reception year effected from September 2008 and summarised other support provided to improve outcomes in Early Years. Particular reference was made to the targeting of schools on the programme for communication, language and literacy.

Initiatives explained in the report in relation to Early Years Support included the Looking Glass Centre, the Young Children’s Voice Project, the Dudley Recordkeeping and Great Outdoor Tool Kits, the Early Education Programme and certain ratings, standards and scales.

Outcomes in relation to Dudley’s performance against targets in the areas of Communication, Language and Literacy Development and Personal Social Emotional Development were discussed and it was confirmed that the

Council was making progress in these areas. In relation to the “Every Child a Talker” programme, it was confirmed that the number of speech therapists available was currently sufficient.

(g) **Raising Attainment at Key Stage 1 – Progress Report**

An update on the work being undertaken to raise standards in Key Stage 1 and which outlined the work currently taking place to raise standards was received which summarised the initiatives being undertaken in schools to raise standards, including the “Every Child a Reader”, “Every Child Counts”, “Communication Language and Literacy Development” and “Assessment for Learning” programmes. The report also referred to the measures devised and produced by the Primary Education Team for training to support the improvement of Key Stage 1 Teachers.

Key Stage 1 results for 2009 in relation to reading, writing and mathematics had seen improvements in the respective levels of expectation for the year. The overall improvement rate for Dudley and Key Stage 1 was faster than that of the national average.

(h) **Raising Attainment at Key Stage 4 – Progress Report**

A report was submitted to the Committee on the work being undertaken to raise standards in Key Stage 4 (14-16 year olds).

Provisional data on the achievement of 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSE or equivalent, including English and Mathematics were the best set of individual school results since 2001 and continued Dudley’s trend of year on year improvement. The number of schools where under 30% of pupils had achieved 5 A*-C grades at GCSE including English and Mathematics had reduced and the number of schools below the floor target had fallen from 3 to 2. Robust action plans were in place to support the two remaining schools. The report set out priorities for 2009/10, in relation to universal and targeted advice and support to schools, one to one tuition, assessment for learning and assessing pupils’ progress, functional skills, the Ethnic Minority Achievement Programme and the Leading Teacher Programme.

Only the Pensnett School of Technology of the schools referred to in the report had been inspected under the new OFSTED framework.

(i) **Annual Report on Outcomes for Looked-After-Children**

This report considered the Council’s performance in discharging its corporate parenting responsibilities for children in care, and advising the Committee of the key comparator outcomes for Looked After Children and of key developments in the service for those children.

Additional pressure on the Council’s core services in terms of placements and social work in consequence of the revised safeguarding arrangements required further to the Baby Peter and other child abuse cases was noted.

It was confirmed that additional resources provided for Care Matters had not been granted on a ring fenced basis.

A representative of Social Workers would be invited to attend a future meeting of the Committee to explain and discuss their role.

(j) **Annual Report of the Dudley Safeguarding Children Board**

The report summarised the core objectives of the Board.

Emphasis was made concerning the significant amount of attention that needed to be given to the focus on the key priorities for the Board for 2009-12, in relation to which collaborative arrangements with Sandwell would help to mitigate the likelihood of local child abuse cases remaining undiscovered or not dealt with. Reference was made to the impact on both the budget and the workforce on the greater number of referrals being made and anticipated in the future as a result of the increased emphasis on safeguarding in the light of the recent cases and the Government's intention to require a far greater cross section of the public engaged in activities involving children to be CRB checked. A suggestion was made that a handbook should be produced for parents with regard to the latter issue. The reasons for the apparent rise in cases of neglect should be explored and defined and that a comparison of Dudley's position against neighbouring authorities would be useful. It was agreed to provide figures in this regard for the previous six months regarding the increase in cases referred. It was indicated that while the increase was significant, the figures could not be relied on entirely as they were produced on the basis of a year in arrears.

(k) **Vision 2025 – A Strategic Plan for Learning including Building Schools for the Future – Readiness to Deliver Supporting Statement**

"Vision 2025" would comprise a strategic learning plan for Dudley which would support children, young people and their families and building on current successes, to enable a transformational step change that could take place in order that young people had outstanding opportunities in the future. The Council were working with other stakeholders to develop a long term strategic plan for learning provision which would run from 2010-2025 and which would encompass the key principles outlined in "Every School Matters" and the Children's Plan. The Strategic Plan would translate the vision statement into a more detailed strategy for delivery. The report indicated the work undertaken to date.

It was noted, with regret, that the Building Schools for the Future bid had not been successful, notwithstanding the positive feedback from the Department of Children, Schools and Families on the content and quality of the Council's submission. Nevertheless it was confirmed a commitment of the Council to progressing the schemes comprising the submission, as contained in Vision 2025, and to implementing them as and when capital finance was available.

An update on the position with the school will be made at the next meeting of the Committee, the report to include:-

- The position with regard to staffing;
- The position with regard to the transfer of pupils of particular reference to children with special or additional educational needs.

(l) **The Performance on Future Developments for the Dudley Youth Offending Service**

A report considered progress in respect of the discharge of the duties of the Youth Offending Service and advising of current and future developments in relation to legislative changes and central government guidance and indicated the three key responsibilities for Local Authorities and their partners under the Crime and Disorder Act, 1988, in relation to youth offending, and their impact on the Youth Offending Team. The report also summarised the content of the two crime prevention projects to which funding from the Youth Justice Board had been allocated and included a summary sheet for the period from April 2008 to March 2009, summarising the Dudley Youth Offending Service's performance against key national performance indicators. Overall, the performance of the Youth Offending Service had been rated as Good by the Youth Justice Board, with little outside support from the Board being required.

The report also indicated future developments and methods proposed which would require Youth Offending Teams to implement some major changes in the next few months, the most significant of which being the introduction of the Youth Rehabilitation Order. The report also specified the work being undertaken under the Government's Youth Crime Action Plan on crime and anti-social behaviour and set out the eight key methods of working identified to achieve the aims of the Plan.

Consideration was also given to the issue of young persons in custody.

(m) **Behaviour and Attendance**

A report was submitted setting out data, trends and developments relating to attendance and exclusions in Dudley Schools for the 2008/09 academic year.

The report indicated that the majority of exclusions had taken place in the secondary sector and had fallen over the year from 2008. Primary School exclusions had reduce; exclusions from special schools and children in public care had also fallen from the previous year.

Regarding attendance, this had shown a marked improvement on previous years for both the secondary and primary sectors and it was indicated in the report that the preliminary data for 2008/09 indicated a further improvement in the overall absence figures.

In relation to persistent absence, Dudley had been identified in 2009 as one of the three Black Country Local Authorities requiring intensive support from the National Strategies Team. However, the Council had fallen only marginally into this category.

Reference was made to the following initiatives as contributors producing a solution for absence figures: the introduction of Township Fair Access Panels; the appointment of a secondary Behaviour and Attendance Consultant; the implementation of the "Preventing Exclusions Strategy"; the imposition of fixed penalty notices for non-attendance; truancy suites; a "Parenting Contract/Order Policy" that was now in operation; and a growing

confidence by schools in the robust nature of Local Authority Services to schools in respect of attendance and behaviour related issues.

(n) **Unannounced Inspections of Contact, Referral and Assessment Arrangements for Children in Need and Children who may be in Need of Protection**

A report was submitted on concerns expressed by the Social Care Working Group about unannounced inspections by OFSTED of Children's Social Care Services.

The report indicated performance in relation to children with a Child Protection Plan; the current position of the Council with regard to completion rates for assessment; workload pressures in identifying any delays in the allocation of new referrals requiring initial assessment and any cases awaiting transfer out of the Assessment Services; and the current position on work on referrals that did not proceed to an initial assessment. The report drew attention to staffing pressures, particularly those relating to Social Workers.

The report contained the conclusions of an assessment and risk audit into management practices and summarised the programme of support for staff to ensure that children were seen alone routinely; that a consistent focus on the child was maintained; that children's views were recorded; that there was always an audit trail on management oversight; and that the quality of child protection plans was improved. It was indicated that the audit arrangements were currently being updated and the measures being taken to respond to improvements identified in the report.

The Working Group had also been concerned about the impact on the local authority since the Baby Peter case, which had led to a very significant increase in possible child abuse cases being referred to the Local Authority.

(o) **The Future of Pensnett High School**

A special meeting of the Committee was arranged to scrutinise the decision of the Cabinet Member to approve the publication of a statutory notice to close Pensnett High School.

A copy of the Decision Sheet, together with the report submitted to the Cabinet Member, was attached to the Lead Officer's report. The questions asked by the Members who had called-in the decision, together with responses, had been circulated. The Committee also received a letter from Ian Pearson MP, which was circulated prior to the meeting.

At the conclusion of the Committee's deliberations, it was agreed that the decision of the Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services be confirmed and that the decision be not referred back for further consideration and that in addition to the statutory consultation requirements, the Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services and the Director of Children's Services be recommended to make provision for a special meeting of the relevant Area Committee in any future consultation arrangements which involve potential school closures.

Those Members who did not vote in favour of the main resolution issued a minority report.

Further details are available in the reports and minutes of the Special Meeting held on Thursday 21st January 2010.

Reference was made to the current position with regard to a decision to close the Pensnett School of Technology with effect from 31st August 2010 had been made by the Cabinet at its meeting held on 17th March 2010. The implications of closure were discussed.

It was proposed that the relocation of pupils would have been completed by the beginning of May. In relation to pupils in years 9 and 10, work was being undertaken due to maximise the availability of all option entitlements for the pupils remaining at Pensnett School.

(p) **Operation Stay Safe in Dudley**

Further to the request made at the meeting of the Committee held on 12th November, 2009, a report was submitted giving details of the background, development and implementation of Operation Stay Safe and to its progress in Dudley since its introduction in July 2009.

Of the 43 young people brought to Safe Centres to date, only two had been repeat contacts. The scheme had unveiled a concerning level of vulnerability amongst some young people who went out on a Friday night and details in this regard were set out in the report.

The report concluded that Stay Safe could be an effective tool in reducing Anti-Social behaviour. The Crime Reduction Implementation Group had decided an extension of the initiative for the whole borough would be explored.

(q) **Position Statement on Dudley's Provision for Children with Special Educational Needs**

The report itemised the elements of the Strategy which were now complete, or had the necessary momentum to be completed within a prescribed timescale; indicated aspects of the original Strategy that remained in progress; and set out the aspects of the original Strategy that were now redundant. Certain developments had been identified as being integral to the development of a flexible continuum of provision for children with special educational needs. The report also summarised the role of the Special Education Implementation Group in co-ordinating the work of each of the key elements of the Strategy.

(r) **16-19 Funding Transfer – Transfer Arrangements and Risks**

Arrangements for the commissioning and funding of 16-19 education and training on 1st April, 2010 with regard to which Local Authorities would be able to join up commissioning of all services for all young people up to the age of 19 (or the age of 25 for persons with learning difficulties) were reported. There were risks to the Council both in terms of costs associated with staff transfer and the delivery of the commissioning function and the

successful delivery of the Commissioning Cycle, which would be in three phases.

Particular attention was drawn to members of staff who would be transferring to the Council from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), details in respect of the workloads and expertise of whom were currently awaited from the LSC. The National Commissioning Framework would cover the commissioning, allocations and funding cycle for delivery in the 2011/12 academic year.

Information was supplied on the implications of the transfer of responsibility for funding, with particular reference made to the requirement for local authorities to start paying providers of 16-19 learning from mid April and to manage providers' financial performance against this funding.

(s) **Standards Report – Performance Data**

In relation to the Early Years Foundation Stage, Dudley was improving and closing the gap on its statistical and geographical neighbours but, since its starting point had been made from a low base, substantial work still needed to be done in order to reach local and national averages. In relation to this phase of education, however, Dudley was currently 15th out of all authorities in terms of improvement.

In relation to Key Stage 1, the rate of progress was good, particularly in the areas of English and Mathematics, and in Key Stage 2, Dudley had now reached the national average for making a significant rate of progress and improvement. In Key Stage 4, since the figure of 5A* to C passes in English and Mathematics had become the key indicator, Dudley had improved and had reached the target successfully.

In relation to Key Stage 5, statistical information on the outcomes in this regard would be provided in future reports when substantive information was available.

It was agreed that in future reports:-

- information would be provided by township;
- information on statemented pupils would be provided;
- statistical information regarding pupils with special educational needs would be circulated.

(t) **Report on Dudley's Schools OFSTED Outcomes April 2009 to March 2010**

The inspections carried out over the period by OFSTED had been made under three different frameworks with the expectations of OFSTED having increased incrementally each time. Members were cautioned that valid and robust comparisons between inspections were difficult to make.

The report set out the outcomes for all schools inspected in Dudley through the period but did not include thematic or subject inspections, nor the outcomes of HMI monitoring reports for schools judged to require a "notice to improve" or "special measures".

Schools whose performance had been graded as satisfactory or inadequate for pupil achievement or safeguarding would have a reduced overall effectiveness judgement. Schools judged to be inadequate on safeguarding would automatically be placed in a “Notice to Improve” or “Special Measures” category.

In relation to primary schools, one school had been judged to require “Special Measures” and one to require a “Notice to Improve”. The school in special measures had since received HMI monitoring visits and the latest report had judged the school to be making satisfactory progress against all key issues. Both schools were being monitored by the Local Authority, who had judged progress to be satisfactory.

Only two secondary schools had been inspected over the period, one of which had been judged to require special measures and the other to require a notice to improve. The school in special measures, Pensnett School of Technology, would close on 31st August, 2010 and was currently being supported by the Local Authority and Black Country Challenge. The progress of the school with the notice to improve was being monitored and would shortly be subject to a formal local authority monitoring visit.

In relation to special schools and pupil referral units, only one inspection report had been carried out and this had been judged to be good.

(u) **Other issues considered**

Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2008/09

The draft Equality and Diversity Annual Report of the Director of Children’s Services for 2008/09 was received and noted.

Annual Report 2008/09 – Children’s Statutory Social Care Complaints and Compliments

The statutory complaints, comments and compliments annual report for Children’s Social Care Services for the period from 1st April, 2008 to 31st March, 2009 was approved.

Quarterly Corporate Performance Management Report

The Quarterly Corporate Performance Management reports were received during the year.

Specific reference was made to the following issues. Figures confirmed results showing a four year trend in improvement in the percentage of pupils gaining 5 A*-C at GCSE which compared well with the national average. Main stream schools had collectively recorded their **highest ever** result. Progress in the Healthy Schools agenda continues. 22 schools were completing the annual review tool for the National Healthy Schools status enhancement model.

There were a number of red triangles showing below target performance.

These included:-

- the percentage of prosecutions for non-school attendance issued within 14 days of receipt of instruction;
- the percentage of pupils persistently absent in secondary schools. The Direction of Travel was positive and officers view is that this information reflects the position at the end of half term 1 and by the end of half term 2 returns will provide a better indication as to whether they are on track or not;
- performance indicators for young people not engaged in education, employment or training, with the exception of those young people with learning difficulties, but which showed some improvement and Dudley performed better than the national average;
- percentage of initial assessments for children social care carried out within 7 days of referral and National indicator 66 – the percentage of looked after children cases which should have been reviewed during the year that were reviewed on time.

The Council's performance for under 18 conceptions in the Borough was improving and closing the gap between Dudley and the national average. While, nevertheless, the overall position was improving, the 15-17 year old age group, where performance had declined, was particularly problematic.

Update of the Council's Capital Strategy

In November a report was submitted seeking consideration of the updated Capital Strategy for the Council, which invited the comments of the Committee on any issues on the draft it wished to have taken into account when the Strategy was considered by the full Council for approval.

Review of the Community Strategy

In November a report was submitted seeking observations on the draft Community Strategy.

Concerns were expressed at the use of jargon and the lack of simplicity in the text and also the scrutiny process as a whole, which was not considered to be working satisfactorily. The Chairman invited Members of the Committee to e-mail him with their observations on the scrutiny process. The Chairman and the Opposition Spokesperson for the Committee also stated their intention to arrange for the operation of scrutiny to be considered by their respective political groups and for the outcome to be fed back to the Council.

Revenue Budget Strategy 2010/11

The proposed Revenue Budget Strategy for 2010/11 and medium term financial strategy from 2010/11 to 2012/13 for the services provided under the Terms of Reference of this Committee was considered.

Reference was made to the refocusing of the Children's Services Budget, as identified in particular in the "Pressures" and "Savings" sections of the report. The Director also drew attention to the financial implications of the significant increase in referrals of children to the Local Authority arising from the Baby Peter case and the consequential financial impact of this in terms of looked after children, Court Supervision costs, and associated matters.

Dudley Children's Services Comprehensive Performance Assessment

A report was submitted on the judgements regarding Children's Services in the Comprehensive Area Assessment published in December, 2009. While, overall, the Directorate had been judged as good, several areas required further improvement and these were indicated in the report.

Information Advice and Guidance for Young People

A report was submitted advising the Committee about current developments in the provision of information, advice and guidance to young people.

Multi Skills Playground Initiative

Details of the scheme, which involved the instalment of playground markings used for physical activities and games outdoors and the training arrangements made for both school staff and out-of-hours learning providers, were presented.

Conclusion

9. We continue to monitor performance Quarterly .This year has seen continuing improvement with many good performances being recorded. and most of the targets having been met, in some cases where they have not these are outside of our direct control or even so still showing improved performance. In order for members to assess performance a new contextual report has been produced to help interpret and inform which has successfully aided members understanding and appreciation of the problems and issues facing the service.
10. The Select Committee has considered a number of major issues varying from the future of Pensnett School to the impact of the Lord Laming report; the results of OFSTED inspections and a new vision for Children's Services by 2025.
11. Whilst maintaining our focus on the important general education and social care issues, we have significantly developed our involvement with and input to the broader children's issues and the "Every Child Matters" outcomes. Improving outcomes for all children and young people in the Borough is this Select Committee's overriding objective and improving outcomes for all children remains its key priority.

Finance

12. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report at this stage.

Law

13. The requirement for the Committee to make an annual report to the Council is contained in Article 6 of the Constitution.
14. The relevant statutory provisions regarding the Council's Constitution are contained in Part II of the Local Government Act 2000, together with Regulations, Orders and Statutory Guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

Equality Impact

- 15. The Committee has taken equality and diversity issues into account whilst scrutinising the areas of work described, particularly in relation to front-line service delivery and issues such as attendance and exclusion and engagement of potentially disenfranchised groups in normal service delivery.
- 16. The work of the Select Committee in 2009/10 was targeted at services for children and young people and their views were heard and considered in the Committee's deliberations.

Recommendation

- 17 That the Annual Report of the Committee, as set out above, be noted.



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Chairman of the Select Committee on Children's Services

Appendix A

Annual Report of the Working Groups

Youth Working Group

1. Initial feedback was given on the implementation of the Youth Offer as of 1st April 2009, with confirmation that youth service delivery was meeting operational expectations. Areas highlighted as particular strengths included holiday provision, work with targeted groups, such as, disability and looked after young people, and the development of work with schools.
2. Members were provided with a demonstration of the website 'launchpad' which is being developed in order to provide young people with information on *'things to do and places to go'*.
3. At the following Working Group the report provided an update on the Service Business Plan, including areas of new work, proposed developments and significant achievements.
4. Achievements of particular note being the delivery of diversionary positive activities which contribute to reductions in anti social behaviour and the extent to which the Youth Service supports young people to be actively involved in shaping services.
5. Members were provided with area youth service profiles and the latest progress against Key Performance Indicators.
6. As a result of questions raised, the final report detailed the operational stages of detached youth work and the methods by which the delivery is evaluated and positive outcomes for young people identified. Those present acknowledged the value of a detached youth work provision.
7. The Working Group closed with a power point presentation by young people on the current opportunities that have enabled them to influence decision making.
8. Activities ranged from allocating funding, interviewing prospective work candidates and standing for election as a member of the United Kingdom Youth Parliament.
9. The presentation ended with their intended actions and ambitions for 2010-11.
10. The Chair of the Working Group requested that the young people be invited to attend a future Select Committee in order to enable greater recognition of their achievements.

Education Provision Working Group

11. The Working Group aimed to review current practice and outcomes of education provision funding. Scrutinising the progress made in Dudley on delivering the National Sure Start programme for Children's Centres identifying the grant funding allocated to Dudley and outlining progress that has been made in identifying projects and delivering the buildings. Currently 20 Children's Centres have been

12. The second area reviewed was Primary Capital Programme. The programme aims were highlighted and the funding allocated to Dudley was detailed along with how the first stages of development have been planned. Progress was shared including the recently built Wren's Nest Primary School, proposed plans for the rebuild of Quarry Bank Primary School and proposed plans for the remodelling of Hawbush Primary School.
13. Information regarding the relocation of Old Park Special School was presented. The new build plans which were presented as an example of use of Targeted Capital Fund development. This new special school will form the third part of the Thorns Learning Community Village Project -our new Education Campus development. This development will form a key part of Vision 2025.
14. The Borough Asset Management Planning (AMP) process was described. This included the work of the AMP Consultation Group, the development of the AMP Scoring Matrix for prioritising expenditure and the work conducted by LA Officers with schools for the development of School Building Development Plans.

Social Care Working Group

15. The Select Committee on Children's Services Social Care Working Group received 2 reports relating to the work undertaken by the Assessment Service who receive all initial work into the Social Care Service and a report on the work undertaken by the Care Management Service who deal with the on-going child protection and court work as well as longer term looked after children.
16. The Group were informed of the substantial increase in work to the Service which has accelerated post Baby Peter death in Haringey. This is having significant and serious impact on staff's ability to respond in a timely way to requests for services for children in need. The Committee were concerned about the impact on staff and implications for safeguarding children and recommended that this was reported at the next Select Committee.
17. The Working Group also considered implications on the forthcoming Ofsted Inspection on contact, referral and assessment arrangements for children in need and noted areas of concern for the Directorate.
18. In light of national attention to the social care and child protection arenas the Working Group also received a report on the outcome of the findings of the Social Work Taskforce and implications for the social care profession within Dudley.