
**Meeting of Executive Members and Children's
Services Advisory Panel**

7 December 2006

Report of the Director of Learning, Culture and Children's Services

**Service Plan Performance Monitoring Period 2 (1 August – 31
October): Children's Services**

Summary

1. This report analyses performance by reference to the service plan, the budget and the performance indicators for all of the services funded through the Children's Services budget.

Background

2. Last year, the council introduced a new cycle for reporting to Executive Members. A common proforma has been developed for all services in the directorate which summarises progress against the actions listed in the service plan, records variations from the budget, and comments on the Performance Indicators for which information has become available during the reporting period. These are attached as appendices to the covering report (Annex 1). Service Managers have been asked to use no more than 2 sides of A4 for their monitoring report.
3. A summary of the main findings on progress on services within each of the Executive Member's portfolios is included below.

Analysis

4. The service plan monitoring reports show significant progress against a very challenging programme established by service and group managers at the beginning of the financial year. Where progress has been slow, it has been for a variety of reasons, some of which are about the complex demands that are made on service managers by partnership working. In a number of services, however, the problem has been quite simply about the lack of capacity to implement plans fully. Successive budget savings over a number of years may be starting to impact on performance and staff well-being. Currently a significant number of staff are absent on long term sickness, some of which is stress related. Despite this, outcomes continue to show improvement.
5. Pupil performance continues to show year on year improvement. The dip in performance of children at the end of the foundation stage was less steep than

the national decline and is almost certainly explained by improved moderation procedures. Results in English at Key Stage 2 were better than ever, and the slight dip in maths followed a significant improvement in 04-05. Much of the improvement can be attributed to a number of factors, including, of course, the growing understanding in schools of how to maintain continuous improvement. The authority mounted a successful oracy project to support improvements in literacy, extended the Intensifying Support programme (ISP) and included more schools than ever before in the Primary Leadership Programme (PLP).

6. Secondary schools continued to perform well, delivering the best ever results in maths and science at Key Stage 3, and an increase in the % of pupils achieving 5 A* - C at GCSE that matched the rate of improvement nationally and put York in the top 20% of Local Authorities.
7. Performance Management systems introduced by the DfES show the authority moving from amber (some concerns) to green (good) for the number of schools achieving the Healthy School standard and confirmed the authority's own judgement of progress on the 14 – 19 strategy as good. Good progress has been made in establishing the Training and Development Unit, but some concerns exist about the performance of the governance service, particularly in the turnover of staff.
8. Access and Inclusion services have experienced considerable success in tackling some significant problems. The level of permanent exclusions continues to be high, but the number of young people on the education otherwise register is falling very rapidly. As a consequence the level of provision is now increasing with more young people attending the Pupil Referral Unit for more days per week than in the recent past. This has been achieved largely because of the willingness of secondary school headteachers to collaborate over the reintegration of much larger numbers of excluded pupils than ever before.
9. The level and quality of provision for minority ethnic groups has also improved, with support being provided since September for the rapidly growing number of EAL learners in school. A new activities programme has been developed for Traveller teenagers through the Youth Service and the TESS.
10. Perhaps most gratifying has been the significant decline in the level of bullying reported in the school survey.
11. In common with a number of authorities in the region, York has seen a rise in the care population in recent months. Whilst there is no single, simple explanation of this increase, the authority has initiated work to review and enhance partnership child protection interventions with drug abusing families
12. There have been significant improvements in the systems that the authority has in place to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable children and young people in the city. Clifton Family Centre has been successfully relocated into the new Integrated Children's Centre at Clifton Green, and the level of unallocated case is now consistently below the 2.5% target that the service aims to achieve. The Children and Families Service has also reduced the size of some assessment documents and is undertaking active pilots prior to a re-launch of the Integrated Children's System. As a direct result of this work assessment completion rates are showing a marked improvement. Poor

performance historically against this indicator has been one of the main reasons why the authority has just missed the top rating in the APA assessment for Children's Social Care over the last couple of years.

13. The pace of change has continued to put the support services under huge pressure, the scale of which is not always understood by schools. Since the beginning of the last reporting period, the support services have delivered on the following initiatives, none of which they were established to provide:
 - New nutritional standards
 - Building Schools for the Future
 - One school Pathfinder
 - New school census requirements
 - Extended schools
 - Children's centres
 - Recruitment and selection (CRB regulations)
 - Job evaluation
 - New school funding arrangements
 - Financial Management Standard for schools

Corporate Priorities

14. The service plans funded through the Children's Services budget are derived from the Children's Services Plan 2006 - 2009, which includes a section outlining the link to the corporate priorities.

Implications

15. The report has the following implications:

- Financial

Based on the actuals to date and other information on future expenditure plans and income generation, an assessment has been made by budget managers of the likely net outturn for each service plan and cost centre. At this stage in the year there is no reason to suggest that most budgets will not come in at or about the level of the current approved budget. There are though a number of exceptions to this and these variations are summarised at beginning of Annex 1 with full details provided in the budget section of each service plan profile.

16. The original net budget for Children's Services for 2006/07 was set at £23,139k. Since then there have been a number of changes made (Annex 1 provides details) resulting in a latest approved net budget of £24,876k. In total the projected net outturn for 2006/07 is £24,540k, leaving a projected net underspend of £336k or 1.4%.
17. Members will be aware that for the first time in 2006/07 the majority of the Children's Services budget is now funded from the ring-fenced Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). As a consequence the net projected underspend for the portfolio is split:

Dedicated Schools Grant - £367k

General Fund (Council Tax) + £31k

Dedicated Schools Grant

18. The net projected underspend has reduced from £486k at monitor 1, a reduction of £119k. The major changes from the 1st monitoring report are set out briefly below with full details of all variations from the approved budget at Annex 1:
- A £103k reduction in income being generated at the Pupil Referral Units.
 - A projected underspend on Out of City Placements of £60k.
 - A reduction of £63k in the projected underspend on support required for statemented children from School Based Area Teachers and Learning Support Assistants.
 - A reduction in the projected surplus on the Inter Authority Recoupment budget of £43k.
19. Under the terms and conditions of the DSG any in year underspend can either be allocated to schools at the year end or carried forward and added to the following financial year's DSG. It is proposed to carry forward any final DSG underspend to 2007/08, subject to consulting with the Schools Forum (Overspends either have to be funded in year by a contribution from the council's General Fund budget or carried forward and funded from the following financial year's DSG).

General Fund Budgets

20. The first budget monitoring report highlighted a projected net underspend of £41k. Additional funding of £79k was then provided by the Executive to help support the overspends within Children and Families budgets. This additional allocation was conditional on £120k of the Broadband underspend being transferred to the Leisure & Culture portfolio to fund one-off overspends within the Sports Facilities budgets.
21. The individual service plan financial monitoring sheets at Annex 1 now show a total net projected overspend of £517k. To offset this mitigating action is being taken to hold back expenditure or redirect resources totalling £486k, with the details again shown in Annex 1. The result of this action leaves the net projected overspend of £31k which is a slight worsening of the position reported in the first monitoring report. The major changes from the 1st monitoring report are set out briefly below with full details of all variations from the approved budget at Annex 1:
- A net increase in Home to School Transport costs of £143k within the SEN and discretionary elements of the budget. Options for charging some of the on-going increased SEN transport costs to the DSG in 2007/08 are being explored.
 - A projected £30k underspend on SEN management staffing following the retirement of the Head of SEN and a review of senior roles within the service.

- A net projected underspend of £48k within the Youth Service, mainly due to staff vacancies but offset by unbudgeted premises costs.
 - An improvement of the position within Children and Families of £31k due to concerted effort by managers to control expenditure.
22. In the context of the overall Children's Services General Fund budget a projected net overspend of £31k is a relatively small sum and officers will continue to work to identify further savings to bridge this remaining budget gap before the end of the financial year.
- **Human Resources (HR)** – no implications
 - **Equalities** – no implications
 - **Legal** – no implications
 - **Crime and Disorder** – no implications
 - **Information Technology (IT)** – no implications
 - **Property** – no implications

Risk Management

23. All of the service plans include a section on risk management.

Recommendations

24. The Executive Member is recommended to note the performance of services within the directorate funded through the Children's Services budget.

Reason: To monitor and review performance in this portfolio area.

Contact Details

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Report Approved Date 23/8/06

Financial Implications.
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Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Annexes

Annex 1: Summary of budget position and Service plan monitoring reports