Children and Young People Scrutiny and Performance Panel
23 October 2008

Cabinet Members’ Progress Report

1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is for the Children and Young People and the Safer and Stronger Communities Cabinet Members to:

a) highlight some of the recent issues considered by the Cabinet since the last Scrutiny Committee;

b) identify some of the key issues and priorities for the coming months.

Questions, comments and views are invited from Members of the Children and Young People Scrutiny and Performance Panel on the content of this report. The Cabinet Member with responsibility for these areas will be pleased to respond and note.

2. Important Issues

a) Castlechurch Primary - Award
(Peter Beresford Cabinet Member – Children and Young People)

Castlechurch Primary School in Stafford has been named National Winner of the “Learning Outside the Classroom Award for Excellence and Innovation”.

Castlechurch won the award for its determination to give all students learning outside the classroom experiences, its innovative use of learning outside the classroom and the impact of these activities on all pupils at the school.

Good practice at the school includes using the school’s vegetable garden throughout the year. Fruit and vegetables are either used in the school kitchen or for children to share in classrooms as part of a cookery topic. Other learning outside the classroom experiences include a visit to the Beatles Story museum in Liverpool, as well as a variety of other educational visits.

The judges were impressed with Castlechurch’s inspirational approach to teaching and learning. They commented: “The judges recognised Castlechurch’s commitment to embedding learning outside the classroom into the curriculum and wider school day, as well as the breadth of provision available to children at the school. It is a shining example of the benefits learning outside the classroom can bring to young people, both in terms of curriculum-specific skills as well as life experiences and enjoyment of learning.”
The Learning Outside the Classroom awards recognise the commitment of schools in England to providing excellent and innovative experiences for young people in a wide range of learning outside the classroom settings, whether it is in the school grounds, on visits to museums, art galleries or farms, through adventure activities such as rock climbing, or on a cultural or language visit abroad.

A total of twenty-seven schools were shortlisted for nine regional awards, with the winners being chosen by the National Advisory Group for the Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto Partnership.

A recent Ofsted report stated the learning outside the classroom-centred curriculum has “a positive impact on pupils’ outstanding personal development and contributes to their enjoyment of learning.”

b) Crash Course Quarterly Update
(Peter Beresford Cabinet Member – Children and Young People)

Delivery to schools

Activity in schools diminishes over the summer because of the holiday period. Nonetheless 859 young people across seven high schools took part in the Crash Course programme. In addition six training providers also received Crash Course with 147 young people participating. The course has also been delivered to several Young Farmers Clubs and four courses have been provided for staff at Alton Towers Theme Park where very many of the staff are young people.

Driver Diversion Programmes

Staffordshire Police has encouraged use of the Crash Course as part of their driver diversion programme. In Operation Talon the Police, in conjunction with road safety partners, targeted “Boy Racers” in various locations identified as being problematic. The people who were stopped were then offered Crash Course instead of receiving a fixed penalty. Crash Course then took place at fire stations one week later. There was high take up for this and all deliveries were evening sessions and at weekends. The feedback from all who attended was profound and this was a highly successful use of Crash Course.

At the beginning of July the Police offered motorists caught using hand held mobile telephones the opportunity to take the Crash Course programme as an alternative to a fixed penalty fine and penalty points on the licence. There has been an average of fifty people on each course and the sessions have been remarkably successful and have a profound effect on the participants.

The sessions take place at Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Headquarters starting at 7.00 pm and members of the Children and Young People Scrutiny and Performance Panel are welcome to ‘sit in’ on the course.

Evaluation

An independent evaluation commissioned by Road Safety is now complete and was conducted by Brainbox Consultants. The review aimed to clarify and identify how the Crash Course and Crash Investigation Course complemented each other. The report endorsed the Crash Course as making an effective and lasting
contribution to road safety through modifying the behaviour of young drivers. A full copy of the report is available from Graham Bott, Deputy Head of the Youth Service. Whilst this piece of work emphasises the need for the Crash Course programme a further piece of work has been commissioned by the Fire and Rescue Service to look in depth at the course content and how it might be developed nationally in the light of the positive response form the Metropolitan Police and Transport for London which was reported to Scrutiny and Performance Panel in January of this year. A report from this evaluation is expected by the end of March 2009.

3. **Summary of items contained in the Forward Plan**

   - Integrated delivery of services for children and families – Cabinet will be asked to endorse an outline model for the integrated delivery of services as proposed by the Staffordshire Children’s Trust Board and to approve the wide consultation is carried to inform detailed arrangements for integration – *expected to be considered by Cabinet in November 2008*

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Mr P Beresford
Cabinet Member
Children and Young People

Carol Dean
Cabinet Member
Safer and Stronger Communities