

Comments made by Area Committees to the Children's and Young Person's Plan 2010-2013

Cowley

- Youth provision in the area was patchy;
- While the children's Centre were extremely good, there needed to be a long term commitment to funding as they were a key to reducing deprivation;
- Education attainment was low throughout the City and more funds should be made available to City schools to address this;
- Information sharing was vital between the City and County Councils and should be adopted at every opportunity;
- As part of breaking the cycle of deprivation, the provision of cheaper and better leisure facilities should be linked to the provision of more and better housing;
- There should be more emphasis on the deprivation in Oxford.

Central South and West

- The report appeared well meaning but it contains no budget requirements so it appears aspirational.
- Were housing associations involved?
- Youth service was severely underfunded.
- Some targets are unambitious; some were even lower than last year.
- Unfair distribution of money between the County and the City eg City received none of the County's £400,000 grant for children's play areas.
- Context and needs analysis top of page 5 should say "some" children from Bangladeshi / Pakistani groups are under performing.
- Query about Stay Safe "placement stability" (page 5). As it stands it seems to be saying this has got worse 15% to 9%, not better.
- There is no mention of the growing number of children of parents with no access at all to public funding in the report.
- What about ongoing central government social services cuts? Is the report realistic about what can be provided? Will it mean the funding criteria will have to narrow – greatest need gets it?
- There was no Action or Delivery Plan.

- On page 29 (District Councils) – should include in ‘expected to’ the same words that appeared against town and parish Councils.

East Parliament

- The report seemed to be largely aspirational with no firm details on how fundamental problems would be addressed and dealt with. No concrete targets were provided.
- There was a disjointed approach to strategy on dealing with key issues such as addressing equality in educational opportunities.
- There seemed to be no substance to some of the claims made such as the desire for ‘creative models of leadership’.
- Statistics were often too broad, missing out on important issues such as targeting deprivation in more affluent areas.
- The document was not easy to read, nor was it well presented.
- The meeting agreed that an integrated approach to partnership working was essential to protect the existing infrastructure and develop the various proposals for improvement, particularly on key themes such as developing educational achievement. Although these issues were highlighted in the report, no specific actions were suggested to tackle the problems.
- Both existing and potential funding streams needed to be developed as part of the strategy to enable measurable improvements in service delivery.
- The Committee noted that individual comments and observations could still be submitted to the County Council via the web site as part of the ongoing consultation exercise.

North

- It noted the high number of young people not in training or education and that this figure had increased;
- That the number of permanent exclusions from schools had doubled;
- There was a great need for more detached Youth Workers in the area;
- More should be done to ensure that opportunities were available for young people leaving care;
- More preventative youth work was needed to tackle issues before they became a problem;
- There is a need to project a positive image of young people and to provide facilities for young people to enjoy themselves;
- There was a lack of adequate facilities across the city, not just in the southeast part of the City;

- The issue of honour based violence and forced marriages also needed to be considered;
- The Plan should also be linked to the Regeneration Framework for Oxford.

North East

- The report was largely aspirational with no detail on how to tackle underlying issues. No concrete targets were provided.
- There was a disjointed approach to strategy on dealing with key issues such as addressing equality in educational opportunities.
- There was no substance to some of the claims made such as the desire for 'creative models of leadership'.
- Statistics were often too broad, missing out on important issues such as targeting deprivation in more affluent areas.
- The document was not easy to read, nor was it well presented.
- It was agreed that an integrated approach to partnership working was essential to protect and develop the range of issues, particularly key themes such as developing educational achievement. Although these issues were highlighted in the report, no specific actions were suggested to tackle the problems.
- Both existing and potential funding streams needed to be developed as part of the strategy to enable measurable improvements in service delivery.
- Members noted that individual observation could still be submitted to the County Council via the web site as part of the ongoing consultation exercise.

South East

- What efforts were made to prevent children from "falling through the gaps" and how successful were they? There was a need for one framework, and inter-agencies collaboration including system sharing and recording information. Schools did not always receive enough information from the County about vulnerable students;
- Exclusion of children from school should be examined in more detail. There was a need to ensure continuity of education especially for vulnerable children. There should be planned moves from schools rather than automatic exclusions;
- How was the Rose Hill Youth Centre service to be developed? , Was the pilot scheme for weekend opening to be extended? Commitment was needed from Oxfordshire County Council that weekend opening would continue. Sian Rodway explained that the County Council was investigating some form of weekend opening for the youth centre, as during the pilot scheme it appeared that this had a beneficial and improving effect on anti-social behaviour in the area;

- The Plan needed to focus on child poverty and support for families. Neighbourhood Advice Centres needed financial support from Oxfordshire County Council. It was felt that Oxfordshire County Council did not fully realise the role that advice centres had in relieving poverty;
- The Action Plan listed the indicators but not the level of performance. It would be useful for the Area Committee to understand what challenges had been set. Sian Rodway explained that the Children and Young People's Plan was a plan for improvement, focussed on those areas that needed the most attention in order to improve. It was agreed that more work needed to be done with the performance indicators, and Oxfordshire County Council was in the process of establishing targets, collecting base data and monitoring;
- It was intended that 3 area plans would be developed in 2010, including one for the City of Oxford and surrounding areas. It was noted that Councillor Bance was a member of the area Trust Board for Oxford;
- There was a need to recognise how housing need drove inequality, as well as the impact on health of overcrowding. The City Council had data about inadequate housing that could be used for this. There was also a need to have an income based indicator around child poverty;
- There were large areas of deprivation in Oxford. The South East area contained areas of the greatest deprivation in the City. It should be made explicitly clear which areas of the City required targeting. The focus should be on reducing deprivation amongst children and young people, as deprivation affected children more than adults. Oxfordshire County Council should attempt to break the cycle of deprivation by investing money into the alleviation of it;
- Concern was expressed that some school staff had not been police checked;
- There was a lack of leisure activities available for children and young people in Rose Hill. Concern was expressed that some of the S106 contribution arising from the Rose Hill redevelopment had not been spent in Rose Hill but in other parts of the City. A request was made for this money to be made available for use within Rose Hill;
- In order to achieve better outcomes for schools, more money needed to be sent to larger deprived schools. Smaller schools took as much funding as larger ones;
- Teenage pregnancy was different from vulnerable children having children, as some teenage parents had made a positive choice to have children and were in stable relationships;
- It was felt that Oxfordshire County Council was underperforming in providing financial support for youth services, and needed to work with City Street Wardens, not hinder them;
- Advice Centres had a real role to play in helping to alleviate poverty, yet they received very little financial support from Oxfordshire County Council. None of the advice centres within the City received funding from Oxfordshire

County Council's Children and Young People's Directorate, and a request was made for additional funding to be provided by this Directorate;

- It was important to continue support for a youth worker in Littlemore so that the youth club could expand. It was noted that Oxfordshire County Council had not been involved with helping to run the holiday play scheme, and help would be much appreciated;
- It was felt that Oxfordshire County Council did not fund sufficient initiatives in Rose Hill.