

Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee

Thursday 8th December 2011

Performance Report Quarters 1 & 2 (April – September 2011)

Report of the Chief Executive

1.0 Purpose of the report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee with a performance update for the period April to September 2011.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Performance reports provided to Scrutiny Committee throughout 2010/11 as part of quarterly performance monitoring arrangements were closely linked to performance indicators from the previous government's national indicator list, with a particular focus on those prioritised within the Local Area Agreement.
- 2.2 In October 2010 the Coalition Government announced the deletion of the National Indicator set and also announced that from April 2011 there would no longer be a requirement for council's to produce an LAA. Both announcements signalled a move towards self regulation and improvement with more flexibility to report against local priorities using a set of locally determined measures for 2011/12.
- 2.3 For 2011/12 the Council's aim is that, in future, performance reporting should be focused on the key priorities for the people, place and economy of Sunderland and should continue to be a robust appraisal of the situation resulting in actions. It should cover the main strengths, areas for improvement, outstanding risks and how these are being addressed. This is a move away from simply reporting all performance indicators with no weighting to reflect their relative importance to the Council. Instead, the aim is to draw attention to the areas that matter most and maximise improvement to deliver Value for Money.
- 2.4 It is envisaged that in 2011/12 Scrutiny will continue to have an important role to play in the authority's revised performance management framework. This will include regular challenging of heads of service and senior officers on ongoing performance issues focussing on particular areas of concern.
- 2.5 The following criteria have been taken into consideration by Heads of Service and service managers in establishing performance indicators for 2011/12
- **Council priorities** (including a City that is Prosperous; a Learning City; Healthy; Safe; and Attractive & Inclusive)
 - **Service priorities**
 - **Service/operational needs**

- **Internal management information** (including corporate health measures)
- **Value for money** – economy efficiency effectiveness
- **Customer expectations**
- **Ability to benchmark** against our peers (e.g. other local authorities). For some services, sector led consultation has been carried out through various benchmark groups to establish an agreed set of indicators which could be shared.
- **Sector led approaches**- where national frameworks have been developed by particular sectors or professional bodies

2.6 Attached at Appendix 1 is an extract (produced by *Performance Plus*, the council's corporate performance management software system) from the full set of indicators that the Council has identified so far as appropriate for local self-regulation and which would fall within the remit of this committee. It also includes any performance indicators from national frameworks relevant to this committee.

2.7 These indicators are a mixture of former national indicators (NI's) where these are thought still to be appropriate, and locally determined indicators

2.8 Members should note that some of the indicators against which the services are now measured are new or emerging and as a result baseline and benchmarking data is not available. For this reason also at this stage for some measures targets have not been set. For some measures the data has not been collected at this point in the year as the information is not due for collection until quarter 3 or quarter 4. Target setting will be revised once more data is available to inform our position. For 2012/13 performance reporting a formal target setting process is due to be undertaken later in the year as part of the service planning process.

3.0 Performance

3.1 The following section contains a summary of performance against the key outcomes for children and young people of Being Healthy, Staying Safe, Enjoying and Achieving, Making a Positive Contribution and Achieving Economic Wellbeing. There is also a performance summary of the use of libraries in the city.

3.2 A full overview of performance can be found at appendix 1.

3.3 Being Healthy

3.3.1 There has been no further performance update on Obesity among primary school age children since the last performance report as this is based on an annual survey. The last performance report indicated a slight increase in obesity with figures for Sunderland above the national average. The report outlined action being taken to tackle child obesity including the LAF Programme (Lifestyle, Activities and Food), aimed at encouraging and

supporting families to eat well, move more and live longer. A performance of 100% of schools working towards the National Health Schools standard has been maintained and the percentage of schools achieving the standard has improved significantly as at the end of September 2011 with 99% of schools achieving the standard. There has also been an improvement as at 30th September 2011 in the take up of healthy school meals in both primary and secondary schools. This has been achieved through a range of targeted actions including better marketing, menu development, theme days and consultation with children.

3.3.2 Teenage Pregnancy is measured as a conception rate per 1,000 population with performance measured against the 1998 baseline. The latest figures as at the end of September 2011 show a conception rate of 55.1 per 1,000 population which is a reduction of 12.6% against the baseline of 63.1. The reduction achieved is lower than the reduction achieved in the previous year at 17.9%. Scrutiny members should note that the latest performance update as at September 2011 relates to data for the period 18 months prior.

3.4 Staying Safe

3.4.1 Initial assessments within timescale have reduced from 83.5% in the previous year to 72.7% at the end of September 2011. This is due to a 27% increase in the number of initial assessments in the period April to September 2011, compared to the number in the same period in the previous year. Core assessments have improved, however, from 76.8% in the previous year to 81.3% at the end of September 2011.

3.4.2 For those children identified from assessment as needing Safeguarding services, above those of a child in need, a Child Protection Plan may be put in place. The purpose of a Child Protection Plan is to devise and implement a plan which leads to lasting improvements in the child's safety and overall wellbeing. The need for a child to become subject for second or subsequent time for the same category of abuse may indicate that any interventions originally provided have not been effective and therefore subsequent plans are closely monitored. However, adverse changes in children's circumstances may also lead to subsequent plans and therefore a rate of 0% is extremely unlikely. Since 1 April 2011, 267 children have become subject to a Child Protection plan, with 40 (14.98%) of them doing so for a second or subsequent time. This is an improvement on both the year end figure for 2010/11 (16.6%) and the same period last year (19.4%).

3.4.3 A consequence of ensuring that children are not de-registered from a child protection plan too soon and therefore not becoming subject to a second or subsequent Child Protection plan, may explain why there has been an increase in the number of children who have been subject to a plan for 2 or more years. Since 1 April 2011, 14 out of the 221 children (6.33%) with Child Protection plans closed during the period had been open in excess of two-years, compared to 4.48% for the same period in 2010/11.

- 3.4.4 Long-term stability for looked after children who remain in care for significant periods of time can lead to better outcomes for those children. As at 31 March 2011, 86 of the 131 (65.65%) children aged under-16 who had been looked after for at least 2.5 years had the stability of living in the same placement for at least 2 of those years. Performance has deteriorated slightly in recent months, with 84 of the 131 (64.12%) being in stable placements as at 30 September 2011, below the 2011/12 target of 75%. This, however, is slightly higher than the figure for the previous year. The current performance continues to reflect the high demand for placements and the continued priority placed on the Foster Carer Recruitment Strategy.
- 3.4.5 There are also a number of looked after children who experience instability in their placement. Of the 410 children looked after as at the 30 September 2011, 38 of them have had three or more placement moves in the previous 12-months, equating to 9.27% of the looked after population. Although the latest performance has improved on the previous month, performance remains slightly behind that achieved in 2010/2011.

3.5 Enjoying and Achieving

- 3.5.1 At the September committee Members received a detailed report on the annual attainment performance of Sunderland schools.
- 3.5.2 Sunderland schools have improved the percentage of pupils at 16 with 5 A*-C including English and maths from 28% in 2000 to 55% in 2011. Nationally, results over the same period improved from 40% to 58% showing that Sunderland has narrowed the gap significantly. Sunderland is now only 3 percentage points behind the national average. The gender gap in Sunderland is greater than the gender gap nationally, with boys achieving less well than their counterparts nationally.
- 3.5.3 The percentage of looked after children by Sunderland who attained of 5 grade A*-C GCSEs including English and maths remained at 7% in 2011. This small cohort has a high percentage (31%) of pupils with statement of special educational need and 38% of the cohorts were educated in settings other than mainstream school e.g. special school, secure units, PRU. Nationally 12% of looked after children attained 5A*-C including English and maths.
- 3.5.4 From April 2011 the Department for Education revised the method for calculating and reporting 16 – 18 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEET). NEET is now based on the residency of young people and also their 'academic age' rather than their actual age. This provides a defined set of young people to track and measure, in line with a particular school year group. Previously some young people would no longer be included in the indicator month to month once they turned 19. Significant work takes place throughout September to register those young people as NEET due to transfer of information from the education sector to Connexions, therefore the NEET position historically only starts to see improvement from October onwards.

Indicative figures show that the percentage NEET is 9.3% at the end of October 2011, compared to 9.2% at October 2010 using the new methodology.

3.6 Making a Positive Contribution and Economic Wellbeing

- 3.6.1 The government has released a new outcomes framework for Youth Justice Services delivered through Children's Services that sets down three key outcomes of First Time Entrants, Reducing Re-Offending and Custody. Although these outcomes have formed part of previous outcomes frameworks for Youth Justice Services, under the new framework there are changes to the way in which these outcomes are measured.
- 3.6.2 In 2008/9 Sunderland was ranked within the bottom quartile nationally for the rate of first time entrants to the Youth Justice System (NI 111), but has made significant improvement, improving the rate per 100,000 of the population from 3180 to 2615 to 1763 over the past three years (representing a reduction in actual numbers from 908 children and young people to 758, down to 501). This significant performance improvement has been achieved through partnership working with Northumbria Police to deliver effective diversion intervention and focused targeting of YOS prevention initiatives. There has been a further but more marginal reduction in the rate of First Time Entrants to 489 at the end of September 2011, indicating that performance reductions against this indicator are reaching a plateau.
- 3.6.3 The Youth Justice Board / Ministry of Justice (MOJ) has recently released details of a new performance measure for reducing re-offending that is not comparable with the previous measure and is prepared centrally by the Ministry of Justice. Performance for the period April to September 2011 is yet to be released.
- 3.6.4 The Youth Justice Board / Ministry of Justice (MOJ) has also released a new performance measure for custodial sentencing of children and young people expressed as a rate per 1000 population. The latest figure as at the end of September 2011 shows a rate of 0.03, which relates to one young person sentenced to custody in the period July to September 2011.
- 3.6.5 Following the presentation of the last performance report to Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee, it was requested that background of the 13 young people sentenced to custody in the performance year 2010/2011. This information has been circulated separately to Scrutiny Members.
- 3.6.6 The service has received positive results from previous external assessments around provision of intervention which is likely to be a significant factor in custodial sentencing rates, historically being kept well below the national averages. Sunderland has received praise from the Chair of the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales for performance in this area.

3.7 Libraries

3.7.1 The percentage of 4-11 year olds who are library members has improved for both boys and girls in comparison to the previous year, however, the number of overall active borrowers across Sunderland, has reduced from 181 per 1,000 population to 167. The number of physical visits to public libraries (BV117) has also reduced. There is an ongoing programme to encourage active borrowing and reading including continued development of reading groups, author visits and promotions such as World Book Day. There is an ongoing programme of activities and promotions aimed at increasing the number of visits to public libraries including outreach at non-traditional venues outside libraries. The total number of items, including books and audio-visual material, issued within public libraries has also declined. External factors including trends in downloading music and films are considered to have had a impact on the availability of sound and vision material.

4.0 Recommendation

4.1 The Committee considers the findings within this report.

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