

Item 3a

Children and Young People Board – report from Cllr David Simmonds (Chairman)

Ministerial Advisory Group and Action Learning Research

1. I attended the meeting of the Ministerial Advisory Group on the council role in education on 23 February and presented the interim report of the LGA/Department for Education (DfE) *Action Learning Research into the Evolving Council Role in Education*. It identifies the key issues facing councils and schools in nine council areas as increasing numbers of schools become academies. The headline finding of the report is that without exception, all the councils taking part in this research have recognised and sought to respond to the vision for a more autonomous and self-improving school system. The next stage of the research will look in more detail at how to tackle the specific challenges that schools and councils are facing and give participants an opportunity to trial new approaches. The LGA is organising an event for Lead Members for Children's Services to discuss the interim report on 21 March and the final report will be launched at the LGA Annual Conference in June.

Raising the Participation Age

2. On 21 February I met Tim Loughton MP, DfE Minister for Children and Families, to discuss a range of issues which could impact on councils' upcoming duty to support Raising the Participation Age (RPA), which is now one year off. It will require schools, councils, colleges and employers to come together to find local solutions to keep young 16 and 17 year olds in education or work based learning. The Minister acknowledge the key role of councils, but I wanted to make clear that recent policy changes to national careers policy and new funding announcements such as the £126 million Youth Contract for 16 and 17 year olds have a significant impact on how councils rise to the RPA challenge.
3. I made the case for local authorities to be much more involved in planning the 16-17 year old Youth Contract provision, going beyond their designated role to refer young people on to providers. I wanted to see a role for them in co-commissioning this provision, which would be more reflective of their statutory duties to track and support this age group and their RPA duties. The LGA and Association of Directors of Children's Services are taking forward discussions with DfE to discuss how councils can be more involved in the development of this provision over the next couple of months.

Early Intervention

4. On 20 February, I co-hosted a meeting with Graham Allen MP, Chair of the Government's Independent Review of Early Intervention. This meeting was a

unique opportunity and brought together elected Members and officers to discuss how an Early Intervention Foundation could best support local government to unlock the financial savings and better outcomes for communities that can be achieved through early intervention programmes. Councils at the meeting were positive about a Foundation playing a role in providing a strong evidence base to inform their decision making. Issues covered included the need for a Foundation to add value beyond existing organisations; the development of new funding models to lever investment; and engagement of other local services.

Children's Improvement Board (CIB)

5. Ministers have agreed funding for the CIB of up to £8 million for 2012-13. In confirming the funding to the Chair of the CIB on 22 February, Tim Loughton said "I am confident that, under your collective leadership, the system will make a real difference to the lives of children and young people throughout the country...I will look to the Local Government Association to continue to engage with elected members – both Leaders and Lead Members – and Chief Executives to ensure that everything possible is being done to support that implementation process".

National Foundation for Educational Research and the National Youth Agency

6. The Children and Young People Office Holders, held a meeting with both the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) and the National Youth Agency (NYA) on 29 February to discuss their work programmes and agree their RSG topslice funding for the coming year. It was agreed that Members of the Board would have greater oversight of the work of the NFER and NYA to ensure that councils and young people demonstrably benefit from their work. Funding of £900,000 for NYA and up to £500,000 for NFER was agreed for the next financial year.

Youth Summit

7. Cllr Peter Box CBE, Chair of the Economy and Transport Board, and I co-hosted a summit for young people in Local Government House on 14 February. Further details are given in Cllr Box's report.

Visits to councils

8. I am continuing to visit different councils around the country and have most recently visited both the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and North Yorkshire County Council.

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