

TRAFFIC LIGHT MONITOR INDICATORS

Report of the Director of Children, Schools and Families

Author: Richard Calvert Tel: 01992 588818

Executive Member: Robert Gordon

1. Purpose of report

To set out the process by which the Committee will receive regular performance information (through the traffic light monitor); and to provide some explanation on this quarter's monitor.

Please note: the traffic light monitor itself and explanatory report for Resources Committee will be circulated separately to all members of the County Council.

2. Summary

Following a request by the Committee at its last meeting, it will now receive (along with other Scrutiny Committees) copies of the quarterly traffic light monitor reporting progress against Best Value promise indicators. This will enable the Committee to monitor and scrutinise progress against key indicators (although in practice many of CSF's indicators change only annually).

This quarter's monitor provides final outturn data for 2002/03. This confirms strong and improving performance in many key areas, while also highlighting challenges, particularly around some small and more difficult cohorts. Initial data for 2003/04 performance will be provided in the next quarterly monitor.

3. Conclusion

The Committee is asked to confirm that it is happy with the approach proposed, and may also want to comment on the final 2002/03 outturn data.

4. **Background**

At its last meeting, the Committee considered a number of items referred to it by the Resources Scrutiny Committee. These referred to the Traffic Light Monitor submitted to the Resources Committee in January, which provided estimates of performance against promise indicators set out in the Best Value Performance Plan.

The Committee felt that it would be useful to receive this information at each of its meetings, and it has now been agreed that the Traffic Light Monitor should be made available to all Scrutiny Committees.

This is produced on a quarterly basis (though in practice the key updates tend to be in the second, third and fourth quarters of the financial year, with the first quarter covering final outturn data on the previous financial year).

This will enable the Committee to receive a regular overview of progress throughout the year. The Committee might also wish to use this as a basis for highlighting areas or promises which it would like to submit to more detailed scrutiny from time to time.

It is worth noting that many of CSF's indicators relate to annual, rather than ongoing data sets (e.g. all the educational attainment data). The Committee will therefore find that many of the indicators will change only once or twice a year, rather than each quarter. Key points in the year are as follows:

- Apr/May – final outturn data on previous year
- Aug/Sep/Oct – initial educational attainment data
- Nov – Autumn PAF statement, giving half year estimates for key social care data
- Dec/Jan/Feb – provisional data on other CSF Plan indicators, including cleaned-up educational attainment data

The monitor [to be circulated separately] to this report covers 2002/03. In practice, the Committee will have seen much of this data at previous meetings, for example when it scrutinised the draft CSF Plan. However in some cases previous forecasts will now have been converted into final data.

The overall picture for 2002/03 is of strong and improving performance in the majority of areas. In relation to the indicators where we have comparative data for 2001/02 and 2002/03, our performance has improved in 70% of cases (26 out of 37 indicators). We are already one of the strongest performers nationally on core educational indicators; and have further improved performance at all key stages. However in interpreting the data, we recognise that:

- We have set ourselves very challenging targets, particularly against some of the core educational indicators. While we continue

to make significant year-on-year improvements, and from a high base, a number of our current targets are not realistic within the timescales set; and we are now reviewing these.

- We have particular challenges around the attainment of some specific cohorts, in particular Looked After Children. This is a small cohort, where improvements are being recorded; but we recognise that further investment in this group is necessary. African-Caribbean pupils also present an important challenge.

5. Financial Implications

This report has no financial implications

6. Rural Issues

None

Background information used by the author in compiling this report.

Minutes of the meeting of the Children, Schools and Families Scrutiny Committee 19 March 2003