

TASK GROUP UPDATES

Purpose of the Report

1. This report is submitted to the Scrutiny Committee for information only, to summarise the progress made by the two Task Groups commissioned by, or connected with, the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee.

Contracted Out Placements Scrutiny Task Group

2. Following a series of evidence gathering session, both with internal officers and with representatives from other local authorities, an independent fostering provider and an independent special school, this Task Group has now begun to write its final report and recommendations.
3. This final report will be presented to the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee at its 14th June meeting.

School Catering Scrutiny Task Group

4. This Task Group continues to meet to consider the issues relating to this particular review. During the next two months, it will consider the following main issues:
 - analysis of the members' questionnaire feedback from a series of school visits
 - analysis of the implications of new standards and approach on the current contract
 - consideration of proposals to increase school meals take up, including free school meals take up
 - evaluation of options for the future procurement of the school catering service
5. On March 6th, the Task Group will host a best practice sharing exercise with a number of other local authorities and organisations which support the cause for sustainable local food procurement.
6. Whilst mindful of the broad scope of the review, the Task Group hope to be able to report back to all three Scrutiny Committees with final recommendations in June 2006.

Recommendation

7. The Committee is requested to note the Task Group updates.

IAN GIBBONS
Head of Legal & Democratic Services

Contact Officer: Karen Linaker
Scrutiny Support Officer, 01225 713056