

**CHILDRENS SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**29 November 2006**

**CABINET**  
**19 December 2006**

---

**ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT LETTER ON CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

**Purpose of Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to inform members of the Ofsted and Commission for Social Care Inspection assessment of the performance of the children's services within Wiltshire County Council.

**Background**

2. The Annual Performance Assessment (APA) process is a continuous one. Each year, the Department is required to complete a self-assessment. This begins in February, and is completed by May, when it is submitted to Ofsted and CSCI (the Commission for Social Care Inspection). Inspectors then consider the self-assessment and a range of other evidence, chiefly performance indicators across both education and children's social care. Meetings between two Inspectors and representatives of the Council take place in July, after which the first draft of the Annual letter is drawn up and sent to the Council in August. The Council then has the opportunity to comment on the letter, before its final publication in November. The 2006 letter is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

**Main considerations for the Council – Wiltshire's results**

3. The letter which includes the grades for three assessed areas:

<b>Areas for judgement</b>	<b>Grade awarded</b>
The contribution of <i>the local authority's children's services</i> in maintaining and improving outcomes for children and young people	<b>3</b>
The council's overall <i>capacity to improve</i> its services for children and young people	<b>3</b>
The contribution of <i>the local authority's social care services</i> in maintaining and improving outcomes for children and young people	<b>2</b>

The descriptors for each grade are:

Grade	Descriptor	Capacity to improve descriptors
<b>Grade 4:</b>	<b>A service that delivers well above minimum requirements for users</b> A service that delivers well above minimum requirements for children and young people, is innovative and cost-effective and fully contributes to raising expectations and the achievement of wider outcomes for the community.	Excellent / outstanding
<b>Grade 3:</b>	<b>A service that consistently delivers above minimum requirements for users</b> A service that consistently delivers above minimum requirements for children and young people, has some innovative practice and is increasingly cost-effective whilst making contributions to wider outcomes for the community.	Good
<b>Grade 2:</b>	<b>A service that delivers only minimum requirements for users</b> A service that delivers only minimum requirements for children and young people, but is not demonstrably cost-effective nor contributes significantly to wider outcomes for the community.	Adequate
<b>Grade 1:</b>	<b>A service that does not deliver minimum requirements for users</b> A service that does not deliver minimum requirements for children and young people, is not cost-effective and makes little or no contribution to wider outcomes for the community.	Inadequate

4. The grade for “The contribution of the local authority’s children’s services in maintaining and improving outcomes for children and young people” contributes its grade 3 to the CPA assessment. These grades are the same as in 2005, and the Department will now be focussing on continuing improvement to achieve higher grades when the department is subject to a Joint Area Review (a full inspection) in summer 2008 – the outcomes of the performance indicators in 2007 will be important contributors to this.
5. The assessment process highlights key performance indicators which show areas of strength, and those which especially need to improve. These are shown in the final table of the accompanying letter. A ‘Priorities meeting’, to be held on 30 November 2006, provides the opportunity for Officers and partner organisations to discuss with key government agencies the steps that are being taken to address the areas identified as in need of improvement, as well as feeding into the planning process for the next Children and Young People’s Plan.

### **Financial Implications**

6. In the Medium Term Financial Strategy, the Department has highlighted its priorities within the Children & Young People's Plan. It is important that these areas are recognised corporately if performance is to improve.

### **Environmental impact**

7. None.

### **Risk assessment**

8. The Council needs to recognise the importance of improving key performance indicators in 2007/08, and ensure that resources are carefully and fully directed at areas of underperformance.
9. The continuing work towards integrated services, together with budgetary pressures, adds risk. For example, changes to working practices through co location and shared processes in partnership working can affect performance, particularly during the development and changeover periods.

### **Options considered**

10. None.

### **Reason for Proposal**

11. The Authority is required to present this letter to an appropriate meeting of the relevant executive committee of the council, make the report available to members of the public and copy this letter and report to the council's appointed auditor, and to other partners. The latter will be done through a report to the Children's Trust Board.

### **Proposal**

12. The Cabinet is required to record its receipt of the APA letter.
- 

**BOB WOLFSON**

**DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN & EDUCATION**