

Cabinet 27th February 2007Children's Services Scrutiny Committee 8th March 2007

CHILDREN'S SERVICES ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT ACTION PLAN

Purpose of Report

1. The report provides information to consider the action plan (attached at Appendix 1) resulting from the Annual Performance Assessment of Children's Services in 2006.

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 was reported to Children Services Scrutiny Committee on 29th November 2006 (and is copied at Appendix 2 for members' ease of reference) and Cabinet at its meeting on 19th December 2006 and it was requested that the subsequent action plan for improvement be reported to future meetings.
3. The APA letter included the grades for three assessed areas:

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

Main Considerations for the Council

4. The 2006 assessment letter highlighted areas for improvement. These areas were already known to the Council and therefore plans to improve was mostly already in place and some activity underway. Appendix 1 is the high level action plan that has been drawn together to monitor progress. Further detail regarding activity can be found in other plans eg Children and Young People Plan, Service Plans and operational plans.

Environmental Impact of the Proposal

5. None.

Risk Assessment

6. 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.
7. Recruitment and retention of staff, particularly in respect of social work, is a potential risk. Plans are in place to recruit staff to fill a number of current vacancies however this requires on-going monitoring to ensure that risks are minimised.

Financial Implications

8. The Department has highlighted its priorities within the Children & Young People's Plan. It is important that these areas are recognized and sustained corporately if performance is to improve.

Options Considered

9. None.

Reason for Proposal

10. To enable the Council to consider the plan and to monitor progress achieved as at December 2006.

Proposals

11. The Cabinet is asked to endorse the plan and note the progress made.

Carolyn Godfrey

Director, Department for Children and Education

Report Author – Lynda Cox

The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this Report: None