

PLEASE NOTE VENUE

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM AGENDA



Monday, 7 January 2008

at 4.30 pm

in Red Room, Avondale Centre, Dyke House
(Raby Road entrance)

MEMBERS: CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM:

Councillors S Cook, Coward, Fleet, Griffin, A E Lilley, London, Plant, Preece, Shaw, Simmons and Worthy

Co-opted Members: Elizabeth Barraclough and David Relton

Leigh Bradley, Jonathan Simpson, Chris Lund, Kelly Goulding, Cassie Jeffries and Gillian Pounder

Resident Representatives: John Cambridge, Evelyn Leck and Michael Ward

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

2. **TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS**

3. **MINUTES**

3.1 To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2007 (*attached*)

4. **RESPONSES FROM THE COUNCIL, THE EXECUTIVE OR COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL TO FINAL REPORTS OF THIS FORUM**

No items

5. **CONSIDERATION OF REQUEST FOR SCRUTINY REVIEWS REFERRED VIA SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE**

No items

PLEASE NOTE VENUE

6. CONSIDERATION OF PROGRESS REPORTS / BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK DOCUMENTS

- 6.1 Children's Services Department: Budget and Policy Framework Consultation Proposals 2008/09 – *Director Children's Services/Portfolio Holder for Children's Services.*

7. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

- 7.1 Progress Report on the Joint Area Review 2006 - Follow-Up Action Plan - *Director Children's Services*

8. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS ARE URGENT

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

- i) **Date of Next Meeting Monday, 21 January 2008, commencing at 4.30 pm in the Owton Manor Community Centre**

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

MINUTES

10 December 2007

The meeting commenced at 4.30 pm in the Avondale Centre, Dyke House School, Hartlepool

Present:

Councillor: Jane Shaw (In the Chair)

Councillors: Shaun Cook, Mary Fleet, Sheila Griffin, Alison E Lilley, Frances London and Chris Simmons

Co-opted Members:

Elizabeth Barraclough

Resident Representatives:

John Cambridge and Michael Ward

Young People Representatives:

Leigh Bradley, Kelly Goulding, Gillian Pounder and Chris Lund.

Officers:

John Robinson, Children's Fund Manager
Peter Davies, Principal Youth Officer
Mark Gwilt, Team Manager, Children's Services Department
Pam Swainson, Social Worker, Children's Services Department
Joan Wilkins, Scrutiny Support Officer
Angela Hunter, Principal Democratic Services Officer

Also Present: Paul Thompson, Hartlepool Families First

Karen Gibson, Hartlepool Carers Positive Futures Project
Robert Clarke, Hartlepool Carers Positive Futures Project
Eileen Cockrill, Children's Fund
Laurie Dobson, Children's Fund
Susan Sotheran, Children's Fund
Liz Ford, Children's Fund
David and Veronica Gardner, Middleton/Raby Road Residents Group

48. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Michelle Plant, Arthur Preece and Gladys Worthy and Co-opted Members David Relton and Evelyn Leck, and Young People Representative Hannah Shaw.

49. Declarations of interest by Members

None.

50. Minutes of the meeting held on 5 and 19 November 2007.

Confirmed.

51. Responses from the Council, the Executive or Committees of the Council to Final Reports of this Forum

None.

52. Consideration of request for scrutiny reviews referred via Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee

None.

53. Forward Plan

None.

54. Consideration of progress reports/budget and policy framework documents

None.

55. Scrutiny Investigation into 'Access to Recreation Activities for Children and Young People in Hartlepool
(Director of Children's Services)

The Children's Fund Manager introduced the report which provided information on access to recreation for children and young people who were vulnerable due to special needs, poor life chances or disadvantage. The report examined in detail the existing statutory and voluntary sector services provided for vulnerable children.

Decision

The report was noted.

56. Access to Recreation Activities for Children and Young People in Hartlepool – Feedback from Recent Seminar (*Scrutiny Support Officer*)

A co-opted Member of the Forum gave a presentation to the Forum on a seminar she had attended on the provision of recreation activities for vulnerable children and young people on 24 November 2007 – “Everyone is Born In...”. The aim of the seminar was to examine how young people with disabilities can be included in day to day activities and ensuring access to recreation facilities was made available.

A discussion ensued in which Members acknowledged that people with disabilities should have the option to access the same recreational activities as everyone, including full integration in schools where possible. Initiatives such as person centred planning and circle of friends were discussed as ways of working with young people with disabilities. It was noted that awareness of Direct Payments should be raised to ensure a greater use of this facility.

The co-opted member of the Forum was thanked for her informative presentation and for answering Members' questions.

Decision

The presentation was noted.

57. Access to Recreation Activities for Children and Young People in Hartlepool – Evidence from a selection of groups supporting vulnerable children and their families (*Scrutiny Support Officer*)

The Scrutiny Support Officer presented a report which informed Members that representatives from a selection of groups in Hartlepool that provide support for vulnerable children and their families, together with service users, had been invited to attend this meeting to provide evidence in relation to the ongoing investigation.

The question was raised whether there was a sufficient amount of provision but not sufficient access to or advertising of these activities. The Principal Youth Officer indicated that the Youth Service was currently examining the co-ordination of recreation activities for young people.

A parent in attendance commented that support for parents was a fundamental part of young people accessing recreational activities and questioned how some 'deprived' areas of the town did not have as many recreational activities provided than other areas of the town, for example Seaton Carew. The Chair of Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny

Forum indicated that they would be examining the regeneration and investment at Seaton Carew over the coming months and extended an invitation to anyone from Seaton to come along and participate.

AT THIS POINT IN THE MEETING COUNCILLOR JANE SHAW (CHAIR) LEFT THE MEETING AND COUNCILLOR ALISON LILLEY (VICE CHAIR) TOOK THE CHAIR FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE MEETING.

The Principal Youth Officer acknowledged that a lot of the provision in Seaton Carew, in particular at the youth centre, was aimed at teenagers but added that proposals to develop the Youth Centre to deliver broader community activities were currently being examined.

The parents and representatives from the Group were thanked for their attendance.

Decision

The report was noted.

58. Access to Recreation Activities for Children and Young People in Hartlepool – Evidence from Hartlepool Constellation (*Scrutiny Support Officer*)

The Scrutiny Support Officer introduced the Co-ordinator of the Special Needs Support Group (HSNSG) along with members from the group who were in attendance at the meeting to give a presentation to Members on recreational activities undertaken by the Group. The Group were involved in a number of activities for young people with special needs including short holidays, drama and activity clubs. Members were informed that members of the Group had recently attended auditions for the television programme 'Britain's Got Talent' and were awaiting the results. Members thanked the young people for their very informative and colourful presentation.

The young people left the meeting and the Co-ordinator of the HSNG remained to participate in discussions and answer Members questions. Copies of the presentation were distributed to everyone present at the meeting and attached were comments from the young people and their parents on the benefits provided by the Group.

A discussion ensued in which the Co-ordinator of the Group commented that access requirements to recreational activities very much depended on the specific needs of an individual and whether they actually wanted to access the activity. A Member sought clarification on who organisations should contact should they wish to become involved in developing appropriate access for people with disabilities. The Co-ordinator of the Group suggested that Hartlepool Access Group should be the first point of contact in this regard. The Scrutiny Support Officer indicated that further information on the provision

of help to access recreational activities would be reported back to a future meeting and it was suggested that the Council's Disability Access Officer be invited to participate.

A representative from Hartlepool Young Carers suggested that consideration should be given during the investigation to support for carers to undertake recreational activities themselves with the provision of support for the people they cared for. The Scrutiny Support Officer indicated that this would be considered as part of the investigation and welcomed participation from any of the Groups present today throughout this investigation.

The representatives of the Groups were thanked for their attendance and for answering Members questions.

Decision

That the report and discussions that followed be used to inform Members during the investigation.

59. Access to Recreation Activities for Children and Young People in Hartlepool – Consultations with Groups representing residents from minority communities of interest or heritage *(Scrutiny Support Officer)*

The Scrutiny Support Officer indicated that views had been requested from a selection of groups representing residents from minority communities of interest or heritage as part of this investigation. Attached at Appendix A were the results of this consultation.

Clarification was sought on the view expressed by the Talking with Communities group which stated that the Council needed to have the vision to provide the quality of provision over quantity. The Scrutiny Support Officer indicated that this related to thought being given to what is provided in the right place and developing what was already in place.

Reference was made by Members to the different levels of provision across different areas in the town with some areas having more provision than others for varying reasons including access to appropriate buildings. It was commented that the extended schools initiative should be examined with the aim of enabling better access for groups. However, it was noted that a lot of groups need to be able to store equipment and that schools would not necessarily be able to provide storage facilities for this on a regular basis. The Scrutiny Support Officer indicated that the Forum would be examining the sustainability of community initiatives at a future meeting.

Decision

That report and discussion would be used to inform the Forum during its investigation.

JANE SHAW

CHAIRMAN

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

7 January 2008



Report of: Scrutiny Support Officer

Subject: CHILDREN'S SERVICES DEPARTMENT: BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK CONSULTATION PROPOSALS 2008/09

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide the opportunity for the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum to consider the Children's Services departmental pressures, contingencies, terminating grants and efficiencies, as part of the Budget and Policy framework consultation proposals for 2008/09.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 At a meeting of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee held on 2 November 2007, consideration was given to the Executive's Initial Budget and Policy Framework Consultation Proposals for 2008/09. At this meeting it was agreed that the initial consultation proposals would be considered on a departmental basis by the appropriate Scrutiny Forum. This occurred during November 2006.
- 2.2 The comments/observations of each Forum were fed back to the additional meeting of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee held on 21 November 2007 and were used to formulate the formal Scrutiny response to Cabinet on 21 December 2007.
- 2.3 The comments/observations made by the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee were taken into consideration by Cabinet during the finalisation of its finalised Budget and Policy Framework Proposals for 2008/09 on 21 December 2007. The Executive's finalised proposals were considered by the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee on 4 January 2008 and repeating the process previously implemented have again been referred to the appropriate Scrutiny Forum for consideration on a departmental basis.

- 2.4 As such attached as **Appendices A to D** are the Children's Services departmental pressures, contingencies, terminating grants and efficiencies. Any alterations / additions (following the Cabinet's meeting of 21 December 2007) will be made verbally during this meeting.
- 2.5 To assist Members of this Scrutiny Forum in the consideration of the Children's Services departmental proposals, arrangements have been made for the Director of Children's Services to be in attendance and an invitation to this meeting has also been extended to the relevant Portfolio Holder (attendance subject to availability).

3. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum:-
- (a) considers the Children's Services departmental pressures, contingencies, terminating grants and efficiencies as part of the Budget and Policy Framework consultation proposals for 2008/09; and
 - (b) formulates any comments and observations to be presented by the Chair of this Scrutiny Forum to the additional meeting of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee to be held on 18 January 2008 to enable a formal response to be presented to the Cabinet on 11 February 2008.

Contact Officer:- Joan Wilkins – Scrutiny Support Officer
Chief Executive's Department - Corporate Strategy
Hartlepool Borough Council
Tel: 01429 523 339
Email: joan.wilkins@hartlepool.gov.uk

BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES DEPARTMENT – SCHEDULE OF BUDGET PRESSURES 2008/2009

Appendix A

| | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|-----|---|--|---|
| Children and Families - placements | Costs of increased numbers of Looked After Children. (NB This funding is required for the additional net costs of children currently in care following the increase experienced at the start of the year. Due to the volatility of LAC numbers it may be prudent to provide contingency funding for further possible increases). | R | Since the 2007/08 budget was set the department has experienced an unprecedented increase in the number of children coming into care. Based on current projections of costs, which are expected to continue throughout 2008/09, additional funding will be required to cover the additional costs of these known children. The Departments placement strategy has effectively reduced reliance on external provision but additional costs are envisaged as follows; . a) In house fostering allowances - £100,000 b) External foster placement costs - £307,000 c) External residential placements - £100,000 | 507 | 0 | | D |
| Children and Families - Preventative Care | Many new cases of children coming into care are linked to drug issues within families. This priority would provide one social work post in an intensive support team to be joint funded to work with high risk families in line with the "Hidden Harm" initiative. | R | Although costly this initiative is aimed at preventing children coming into care and therefore avoiding high costs in future years. | 40 | 0 | This initiative is aimed at preventing children coming into care | D |

Appendix A

| | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|--|---|--|----|---|--|---|
| Children and Families - placements | Shortfall in Special Guardianship Order Savings (2007/08 budget) | R | Savings envisaged from the reduction in payments to independent agencies arising from long term matched foster carers obtaining SGO's have yet to fully materialise. A significant shortfall of £140,000 is projected in the current year. A number of cases are however being progressed although this involves a lengthy legal process which will delay the savings materialising. In addition the full year savings potential appears to have been overstated and for 2008/09 a £60,000 shortfall is anticipated. | 60 | 0 | | L |
|------------------------------------|--|---|--|----|---|--|---|

Appendix A

| | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|-----|---|--|---|
| Children's and Families - Placement Team staffing | Additional Social Care staffing in the Placement Team to maximise the capacity and effectiveness of in house fostering provision. Additional staffing required (Manager, 2 x Social Workers plus 0.5 admin) at an annual cost of £133,000. There would also be one off costs of £40,000 to relocate the Leaving Care Team at the Connexions office to accommodate extra staff. | R | To avoid continued reliance on the independent sector a further 30 foster carers are required but there is no capacity to recruit, train or support any further carers without additional resources as the Social Care Placement Team has reached capacity. In addition there are limits on the number of children that can be placed with individual carers without detrimentally affecting placement stability. If staffing levels are not increased recruitment will not be possible resulting in heavy reliance on the independent sector as experienced following the recent increase in the number of Looked After Children. The departments placement strategy is currently being reviewed and depending on options emerging from that review, capacity might be forthcoming in a different way e.g. via a partnership agreement but in either case additional funding will be required. | 133 | | The National Fostering Network recommend a maximum Foster Carer to Social Worker ratio of 15:1. The local Independent Sector ratio is 12:1 whilst the Children's Services department ratio is currently 20:1 having historically been approx 18:1. Additional funding would allow 30 extra foster carers to be recruited bringing the total up to 120. This will generate capacity to improve placement stability for existing children in care and provide new short term placements in house which is substantially cheaper than external provision. | D |
| | | | TOTAL RED PRESSURES | 740 | | | |
| | | | TOTAL ALL PRESSURES | 740 | 0 | | |

CHILDREN'S SERVICES DEPARTMENT – SCHEDULE OF 2008/09 BUDGET PRESSURES TO BE TREATED AS CONTINGENCY ITEMS

Appendix B

| | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|---|----------|---|-----|---|--|---|
| Children and Families - placements | A pressure of £0.507m has been identified for Looker After Children. This additional amount is included to address the volatility of LAC numbers. | R | Expenditure would exceed budget as the Council has duty to provide care. | 250 | 0 | | H |
| Performance and Achievement | School Improvement Partners | A | School Improvement Partners (SIP's) were introduced into secondary schools in 2006 and primary schools in 2007 as part of the DCSF "New Relationships with Schools" requirement. Grant funding support (£37k) does not meet actual costs. School Improvement services are being reconfigured to accommodate changes in the longer term but pressure exists for 2008/09. Risk of not funding includes service disruption and reducing front line support to schools. | 20 | 0 | | H |
| | | | TOTAL AMBER PRESSURES | 270 | | | |

CHILDREN'S SERVICES DEPARTMENT – SCHEDULE OF GRANT REGIMES TERMINATING DURING 2007/2008 - PROBABILITY 3

Appendix C

| Grants Terminating during 2007/2008 | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|--------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|---|---|---|
| Grant Title | Does Council need to consider mainstreaming the grant? Please state Yes/No and provide brief justification. | Risk - Red, Amber, Green | Probability 1 = Likely to continue, 2 = may continue, 3 = Unlikely grant may | Risk Impact of not funding Pressure | Value of Grant terminating in 2007/2008 £'000 | Value of resulting budget pressure in 2008/2009 £'000 | Total number staff employed (permanent contract/ permanent owing to roll forward of contract/fixed term) | Provisional estimated cost of making staff redundant based on HBC employment £'000 | Funding available to fund redundancy costs £'000 | Service improvement to be achieved by funding grant (including details of current performance and target for 2007/2008 performance) |
| Human Resources & Developing Services (HRDS) Grant | Yes - to maintain services | R | 3 | Supports workforce planning for Social Care Workers in Local Authority and Independent Sector to get workforce to National Minimum Standards (NMS) | 40 | 40 | 0 | 0 | NA | To recognise the shortfall in training and support for Social Care Staff and to maintain statutory requirements of the National Minimum Standard for Social Care workers. |
| Parenting Commissioners Grant | Yes - This is a role that is now expected of the Council. Set up grants have been available in 06/07 and 07/08. No ongoing funding has been identified. | R | 3 | This role is part of the government's wider strategy. We have been able to integrate the role with other duties but a budget will be required to continue service development. | 14 | 14 | 0 | 0.0 | NA | This is an expanding area of work and commissioner's role is important to ensure co-ordination of various parenting initiatives to ensure efficient use of resources. |
| | | | | SUB-TOTAL - CHILDREN'S | 54 | 54 | | | | |

CHILDREN'S SERVICES DEPARTMENT PROPOSED EFFICIENCIES/SAVINGS

APPENDIX D

| Budget Heading | Description of Efficiency/Saving | Risk - Red, Amber, Green | Risk Assessment of implementing efficiency/saving | Impact of efficiency/saving service performance) | Value of efficiency/saving £'000's |
|----------------------------------|--|--------------------------|---|--|------------------------------------|
| Home to School Transport | Full year savings arising from 1st September 2007 renewal of home to school and school to swimming pools transport contracts including agreed rationalisation of escort service LESS £100,000 allocated against the corporate efficiency target. | G | The exact transport requirements of children varies from year to year depending on pupil numbers. In addition the requirements of special needs pupils can vary at any time. Projected savings are based on the costs of current needs and provide limited scope to absorb increases above inflation. | This will have a positive effect on VFM indicators | 61 |
| Advisory Service | Part saving on Senior Adviser salary following recruitment to a lower graded redesigned post. Savings assume regrade from Soulbury sp 27 to Soulbury sp 13. | G | Re-allocation of responsibilities to Assistant Director and other Senior Advisers required. | | 20 |
| Premature Retirement Costs | Reduced base budget to meet level of current spending on former employees and their dependants deleting scope to fund new costs. | A | The department has a PRC budget which funds the ongoing added years element of early retirement costs. Reducing the base budget will delete any contingency for new cases. Over time the departments commitments will reduce as former teachers/staff and their dependants die. | The departments policy since 2002 has been that schools must meet the costs of any premature retirements from their delegated budgets. Schools can however, in exceptional financial circumstances, approach the department to request financial assistance. | 60 |
| Carlton Outdoor Centre - Usage | Increased income assumption from Hartlepool schools and other customers following reopening of the centre. | A | The budgeted level of income from Hartlepool schools attending the Centre was set pessimistically due to concerns that customers may not return following closure during refurbishment. Increased income of approximately £15,000 will be received if schools take up their full allocation of days and the centre's external income target for summer and weekend customers is achieved. | If this increased income is sustainable the Council's net cost of running the centre would reduce by 25%. | 15 |
| Carlton Outdoor Centre - Charges | 13% Increased charges to Hartlepool schools for attendance at the centre (up to the levels charged by Redcar and Cleveland) will reduce the net costs of Hartlepool's subsidy. | A | Increased charges to schools could lead to reduced demand which would adversely affect overall income levels - see above | Although joint user authorities pay proportionate contributions towards Carlton centre costs each Council sets its own charges for schools in their areas. Hartlepool charges are currently substantially below Middlesbrough and Redcar. | 5 |
| Youth Service | Review of Service Level Agreements to provide savings on overheads with minimal impact of front line delivery. | A | It is envisaged that savings can be achieved on repairs and maintenance and that better value for money can be achieved from more robust monitoring of some SLA's | There is a risk of a reduction in service delivery depending on how services are reconfigured. | 10 |

APPENDIX D

| | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|---|---|---|------------|
| Departmental Contingency | Delete contingency fund held by Director | A | During setting of the 2007/08 base budget, within the departments overall cash limit, all uncommitted budgets were deleted to create one strategic contingency against unexpected departmental costs. This budget is held by the Director and is allocated out to meet identified pressures as part of the departments monthly monitoring procedures. | If deleted the department will be unable to absorb any unexpected cost pressures | 64 |
| Departmental Administration | Reduction in admin support | A | Reduced admin support will have an impact on the operations of various departmental teams and some areas of work will have to be absorbed. It may be possible to automate some functions via use of ICT. | | 110 |
| Children and Families Admin | Reduction of admin support in Social Care | A | A reduction in staffing levels has already been committed relating to the new ICS system | The new ICS system will streamline the administration of care records and as this is embedded admin support will be reviewed. | 40 |
| Department wide Salaries | Increase to salary abatement target from 2.4% to 3.0% | A | Over recent years the department has achieved its salary abatement target (currently £160,000 equating to approximately 2.4%) through natural vacancy savings. All vacant posts are reviewed by CSMT prior to submission to the MOV panel and "forced delays" in the recruitment process may need to be made to maximise vacancy savings. | The projected saving assumes a 25% increase in vacancy / turnover savings, requiring savings of 3.0%. CSMT would try to focus this on (non grant funded) support services rather than frontline services wherever possible. | 40 |
| Childcare - Summer Play scheme | Deletion of the summer play scheme. | A | The existing provision for play schemes is not necessarily targeting those most in need. Managers will be assessing the need within the Children's Centres localities and will commission new summer activities from the voluntary and community sector funded from Sure Start grant. | Overall provision may be slightly reduced but should be better matched to local need. | 65 |
| TOTAL OF 3% EFFICIENCIES | | | | | 490 |

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM REPORT

7 January 2008



Report of: Director of Children's Services

Subject: PROGRESS REPORT ON THE JOINT AREA
REVIEW 2006 FOLLOW-UP ACTION PLAN

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update on the progress that has been made in completing the activities identified in the follow-up action plan which was prepared in response to the Joint Area Review of Children's Services conducted in November and December 2006.

2. BACKGROUND

Following the publication of the Joint Area Review report in March 2007, a follow-up action plan was compiled. This was based on issues identified by the review for action in the immediate, short term and longer term. The deadline for submission of the plan to the OfSTED inspectorate was 17th July 2007.

The draft of the action plan was circulated as part of the review of the Children and Young People's Plan that was completed in May 2007. Further work was undertaken on the draft between May and July and the final version was submitted by the due deadline. This was circulated to all partners and stakeholders who contributed to the Joint Area Review and to the delivery of outcomes in the Children and Young People's Plan.

The action plan was drawn up by the Children's Services Department Management Team working with their divisional teams, the Children's Services Planning and Evaluation Group and the Children and Young People's Plan Outcomes Steering Groups.

The action plan is structured in five sections:

- Immediate action
- Action for the next six months
- Action for the longer term

- Areas for development from the Hartlepool Youth Service inspection report
- Strategy for monitoring and evaluation

The plan identifies actions, timescales, responsible officers, linkages to other plans and has space for progress updates. The plan with its most recent update is attached at **Appendix 1**. Progress is marked as green (action completed), amber (in progress, expecting to complete on time) or red (not expected to be complete within timescale). A summary of progress is attached at **Appendix 2**.

3. ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT 2007

Scrutiny of progress on the Joint Area Review 2006 recommendations action plan formed part of the 2007 Annual Performance Assessment of services for children and young people. OfSTED inspectors visited Hartlepool in September 2007 as part of this process and their findings were summarised in a letter published on 26th November 2007. Children's Services received a Grade 3 (good) overall. The letter comments specifically on the Joint Area Review report, "The Council has responded positively to the recommendations raised in the Joint Area Review report and has made good progress since that time." The OfSTED summary is structured around the five Every Child Matters outcomes and within the letter the following specific comments are made under those headings in relation to recommendations from the Joint Area Review. A further section comments on capacity to improve and management of services.

Being Healthy

For action over the longer term:

- Improve the provision of occupational therapy and speech and language therapy services.

"Since the Joint Area Review, the Council, working with schools and its own Special Educational Needs service, has increased the provision of occupational therapy and speech and language therapy services."

Staying Safe

Two recommendations emerged from the Joint Area Review.

For immediate action:

- Develop inter-agency guidance in relation to thresholds for referrals for children's social care.

For action in the next six months:

- Improve joint commissioning and contracting arrangements in relation to out of authority placements for looked after children.

“The Council has made very good progress and has effectively addressed these two Joint Area Review recommendations. Since the Joint Area Review, the Council has developed and implemented guidance in relation to thresholds for referrals to children and young people’s social care. A comprehensive review has been undertaken of joint commissioning and contracting arrangements and budgets for out of borough placements have been aligned.”

Enjoy and Achieve

Two recommendations emerged from the Joint Area Review.

For action in the next six months:

- Improve the quality of provision for children and young people with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties in order to meet their needs.
- Improve the quality of provision for pupils excluded from secondary schools and the rates of reintegration into mainstream schools.

“The Council has taken urgent and appropriate action to meet the findings of the Joint Area Review and significant improvements have already been made in relation to both recommendations.”

Making a Positive Contribution

No recommendations emerged from the Joint Area Review for this area.

Achieve Economic Well Being

One recommendation emerged from the Joint Area Review.

For action in the longer term:

- Develop a wider range of courses for post-16 young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

“Although some of the work is at an early stage, much has already been done to improve provision for young people aged 16 and over who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The Council has consulted parents about possible developments and acquired additional funding from a number of organisations to support a range of appropriate projects and initiatives.”

Capacity to improve and management

Three recommendations emerged from the Joint Area Review for action in the next six months:

- When the Children and Young People's Plan is reviewed, a high level assessment of its financial implications should be incorporated.
- Undertake benchmarking of costs on a systematic basis.
- Engage service users in the evaluation of services they receive on a systematic basis.

“The Council has responded promptly and directly to these recommendations and has taken appropriate action in respect of all of them.”

4. SUMMARY OF PROGRESS

Within the main report, one recommendation was identified for immediate action and this was completed in May 2007. Six issues were identified by the inspectors for action over the next six months. Five of these are currently rated as amber, indicating that actions are progressing within identified timescales and one has been completed. Two actions were identified for the longer term and these have been identified as amber.

The Annual Performance Assessment process did not look specifically at the areas of development which have been included in the follow-up action plan from the Hartlepool Youth Service inspection report. Five specific issues were identified in the separate report on the Youth Service and three of these are currently rated amber and two green.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to note the progress to date in relation to completion of the actions identified within the Joint Area Review recommendations action plan and, where felt appropriate, seek clarification about these.

6 CONTACT OFFICER

Sue Johnson, Assistant Director Children's Services
Telephone (01429) 523773



Joint Area Review 2006

Recommendations Action Plan

December 2007 Review

CHILDREN'S SERVICES in Hartlepool

SECTION 1: IMMEDIATE ACTION

Issue 1: Develop inter-agency guidance in relation to thresholds for referral into children's social care

| Actions | | Timescale | Responsible officer(s) | Linkages | Progress (Dec 07) |
|---------|--|--------------|---|---|--|
| 1. | Develop inter-agency guidance in relation to thresholds for referrals into children's social care. | Jan – May 07 | Margo McIntosh, Assist. Dir. Safeguarding & Specialist Services (SSS) | Integrated Working & Information Sharing (IWIS) programme | Green - written guidance issued May 07. It should be noted that GONE are planning a 'Thresholds' conference/ workshop in Feb 08 to facilitate regional agreement. We will contribute. |
| 1.1 | Convene a Performance Management Workshop. | Mar 07 | | ↓ | |
| 1.2 | Develop draft guidance. | Mar 07 | MM | | |
| 1.3 | Consult on draft guidance. | Apr 07 | MM | | |
| 1.4 | Issue guidance. | May 07 | MM | | |

Success Criteria

- Inter agency guidance issued and operating successfully, monitored by Business Unit Managers as part of self assessment process – **ACHIEVED** May 07.

SECTION 2: ACTION FOR NEXT SIX MONTHS

Issue 2: Improve the quality of provision for children and young people with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties in order to meet their needs.

| Actions | | Timescale | Responsible officer(s) | Linkages | Progress (Dec 07) |
|---------|--|-----------------|--|--|---|
| 2. | Improve the quality of provision for children and young people with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties in order to meet their needs. | Apr 07 – May 08 | John Collings, Assist Dir. Performance & Achievement (PA) Sue Johnson, Assist Dir. Planning & Service Integration (PSI) | Planning & Service Integration (PSI) Divisional Plan | Amber overall: |
| 2.1 | Establish a Service Level Agreement (SLA) for secondary aged children with Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD) with Catcote Special School as an initial step. | Apr 07 | PSI | ↓ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green - SLA with Catcote in place. |
| 2.2 | Consult on a prescribed alteration to Catcote School to accommodate secondary age BESD pupils. | Oct 07 | SJ | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green – formal consultation completed |
| 2.3 | Issue formal notices of proposals for the prescribed alteration. | Dec 07 | SJ | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amber |
| 2.4 | Seek Cabinet approval for the prescribed alteration. | Feb 08 | SJ | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amber |
| 2.5 | Notify the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families. | Mar 08 | SJ | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amber |
| 2.6 | Implement the prescribed alteration. | Apr 08 | SJ | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amber |

| Actions | | Timescale | Responsible officer(s) | Linkages | Progress (Dec 07) |
|---------|--|--------------|--|----------|--|
| 2.7 | Work with primary schools to agree a range of provision for primary age pupils with BESD and implement agreed proposals. | Apr – Oct 07 | Zoe Westley School Improvement Adviser (Social Inclusion) | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amber – Formal consultation in October. Proposals to be drawn up in favour of locality based model. Proposals in place and to be agreed at Directors meeting on January 15th. |

Success Criteria

- SLA with Catcote operational – **ACHIEVED**.
- Catcote School re-designated to include pupils with BESD by Mar 08 – SLA in place pending formal process for redesignation.
- Primary behaviour group established by Apr 07 - **ACHIEVED**.
- Proposal for primary aged pupils agreed by Dec 07. - **ACHIEVED**
- Quality of provision for BESD improved.

Issue 3: Improve the quality of provision for pupils excluded from secondary schools and the rates of reintegration into mainstream schools

| Actions | | Timescale | Responsible officer(s) | Linkages | Progress (Dec 07) |
|---------|---|-----------------|------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| 3. | Improve the quality of provision for pupils excluded from secondary schools and the rates of re-integration into mainstream schools. | Apr 07 – May 08 | JC/SJ | PSI Divisional Plan ↓ | <p>Amber overall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green – new model for Sept 08 agreed. Transitional model for 07 in place. BESD pupils under management of Catcote deputy head. • Amber - Re-integration of permanently excluded pupils has continued. In/Outreach Service now in operation. Only six pupils on roll at A2L in Nov 07. • Amber – Supporting Headteacher in place who has revised the action plan supported by SIP (School Improvement Partner). OfSTED monitoring visit was successful. • Green. • Amber – new Management Committee structure agreed. |
| 3.1 | Work with the newly formed Behaviour & Attendance Partnership to ensure services for permanently excluded pupils and those at risk of permanent exclusion are planned to reflect identified need. | Jan - Jul 07 | ZW | | |
| 3.2 | Agree and implement a new structure and strategy for service delivery. | Sept 07 | ZW | | |
| 3.3 | Update A2L/School Improvement Plan in light of Ofsted Notice to Improve. | May 07 | ZW | | |
| 3.4 | Report termly to Management Committee setting out progress against the success criteria. | Mar 08 | ZW | | |

Success Criteria

- Agreed new structures in place for Sept 07 – **ACHIEVED**
- Notice to Improve removed by Jun 08.
- The number of permanently excluded pupils from secondary schools remains below 10 for 07/08 – **No permanent exclusions to date.**
- All permanently excluded pupils are re-integrated into a mainstream school within appropriate timescales - **Only 4 permanently excluded pupils remain on roll at A2L.**
- Permanently excluded pupils re-integrated into mainstream provision attend and achieve - **All positive to date.**

Issue 4: Incorporate a high level assessment of financial implications when the Children & Young People’s Plan (CYPP) is reviewed.

| Actions | | Timescale | Responsible officer(s) | Linkages | Progress (Dec 07) |
|---------|---|-----------------|------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| 4. | Incorporate a high level assessment of financial implications when the Children & Young People’s Plan (CYPP) is reviewed. | Apr 07 – May 08 | SJ | PSI Divisional Plan ↓ | Green overall: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review undertaken with steering group. Stakeholder event 24/04/07 • Revised section on financial management / commissioning included. • Review published May 07. |
| 4.1 | Undertake a review of the CYPP in accordance with DfES regulations and Annual Performance Assessment (APA) guidance. | Apr/May 07 | SJ | | |
| 4.2 | Refresh actions as determined by the review and include financial implications. | May 07 | SJ | | |
| 4.3 | Publish the review . | Jun 07 | SJ | | |

Success Criteria

- Review published in line with Jun 07 APA deadline - **ACHIEVED**.
- Financial implications embedded in CYPP and other plans – **ACHIEVED** – High level financial implications in CYPP Review . Operational plans include financial resource available to each function for 07/08.

Issue 5: Undertake benchmarking of costs on a systematic basis

| Actions | | Timescale | Responsible officer(s) | Linkages | Progress (Dec 07) |
|---------|---|-----------------|--|--|--|
| 5. | Undertake benchmarking of costs on a systematic basis. | Apr 07 – May 08 | SJ/JC/ Steve Haley (SH) Senior Finance Officer | Children's Services Departmental Plan and all associated Divisional Plans ↓ | Amber overall: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green - Agreed by Association of Directors of Children's Services Group for implementation in March 08. Project group established. Regional comparisons available from Apr 08 (all 12 LAs engaged) • Green - First meeting of group held in Jun 07. • Amber – SH has met with each assistant director and identified priority areas for benchmarking. • Amber – budget book ready. |
| 5.1 | Investigate the use of a cost calculator toolkit (placement costs) to enable benchmarking to develop. | Oct 07 | | | |
| 5.2 | Convene a working group to look at cross-departmental benchmarking activity. | Jun 07 | SJ | | |
| 5.3 | Identify key areas for regular benchmarking and implement mechanisms to achieve this. | Aug 07 | SJ/SH/JC | | |
| 5.4 | Implement new departmental system for financial monitoring (Budget Book). | Oct 07 | SH | | |

Success Criteria

- NE regional comparisons in use – **ACHIEVED** Mar 07.
- Cross departmental working group established – **ACHIEVED** Jun 07.
- Key areas for systemic benchmarking agreed by CSMT.
- Regular reporting in place via routine departmental systems.

Issue 6: Improve joint commissioning and contracting arrangements in relation to out of authority placements for Looked After Children

| Actions | | Timescale | Responsible officer(s) | Linkages | Progress (Dec 07) |
|---------|--|-----------------|--|--|---|
| 6. | Improve joint commissioning and contracting arrangements in relation to out of authority placements for Looked After Children. | Apr 07 – May 08 | JM | Children's Services Departmental Plan and SSS Divisional Plan ↓ | <p>Amber overall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amber - current -v- anticipated expenditure being mapped. Joint commissioning model being developed for Children's Trust. New target date to align with this Mar 08. • Amber - Sub-regional discussion with PCT has taken place. Strategic Health Authority want to develop regional agreement on criteria and have started that work. • Amber - Comprehensive Review and Project Plan in place. Presentation to providers has been done and informal discussions are ongoing. Formal tender process planned for Nov 07. • Amber - Needs analysis in progress. |
| 6.1 | Create single budget code for Children with Disabilities (CwD) care packages. | Mar 08 | Sheila O'Connor (SO'C) Head of Business Unit | | |
| 6.2 | Establish consistent criteria for funding with Primary Care Trust (PCT). | Oct 07 | JM | | |
| 6.3 | Review Placement Strategy and commissioning/containing arrangements for placements. | Mar 08 | JM Head of Business Unit | | |
| 6.4 | Review residential care needs and implications for commissioning placements. | Mar 08 | JM | | |

Success criteria

- Aligned budget in place by Apr 08.
- Clear criteria for joint funding agreed and operating.
- Arrangements in place to retain children and young people in local placements.
- Arrangements in place to access appropriate residential placements.
- More cost effective placements being used.

Issue 7: Engage service users in the evaluation of services they receive on a systematic basis

| Actions | | Timescale | Responsible officer(s) | Linkages | Progress (Dec 07) |
|---------|---|-----------|------------------------|---|--|
| 7. | Engage service users in the evaluation of services they receive on a systematic basis. | Jan 07 | JR/SJ | | Amber overall: |
| 7.1 | Continue with current good practice, e.g. annual Tellus survey, Participation Strategy, parental surveys, Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) workshops, engagement with Children's Trust and its working groups. | Mar 08 | SJ | Participation Strategy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amber – Young people on Scrutiny Parenting Strategy Launch in Oct 07. New Local Area Agreement – consultation through LSP workshops. Building Schools for the Future (BSF) participation plan agreed Oct 07. Extended schools in North Hartlepool considering Community Interest Company. |
| 7.2 | Develop a commissioning strategy for the Children's Trust which includes policies and procedures for the engagement of service users. | Mar 08 | Ian Merritt (IM) | Children's Services Departmental Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amber - First of a series of "Commissioning Workshops" held in Apr 07. OPM Workshop Feb 08. |
| 7.3 | Children's Trust to lead the systematic engagement of service users in evaluation of services. All agencies working with children and young people adopt the participation strategy vision statement. | Mar 08 | SJ | Policy Dev & Strategic Man Operational Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amber - Participation Strategy of seven vision statements endorsed by Cabinet Jun 07. Dissemination to Departmental Management Teams Oct 07. |

Success criteria

- Policy and procedures for engagement of service users in evaluation of services in place.
- Joint commissioning arrangements in place for the Children's Trust.
- Adoption of the seven vision statements by agencies working with children and young people – **Cabinet endorsement Jun 07.**

SECTION 3: ACTION FOR LONGER TERM

Issue 8: Improve the provision of occupational therapy and speech & language therapy services

| Actions | | Timescale | Responsible officer(s) | Linkages | Progress (Dec 07) |
|---------|---|-----------------|------------------------|---|--|
| 8. | Improve the provision of occupational therapy and speech & language therapy services. | Apr 07 – May 08 | SJ | Children's Services Departmental Plan | Amber overall: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 23 schools contributing to pooled funding for up to two fte Speech and Language Therapists. • SEN funding employing Occupational Therapist assistant. • SJ met with PCT lead officers Jul 07. • Green - Commissioning Strategy for Children's Services Department agreed • Amber – report on Commissioning Strategy to Trust PMG on 2nd Oct 07. • OPM Seminar scheduled for Feb 08. |
| 8.1 | Develop a Commissioning Strategy for the Children's Services Department. | Mar 07 | SJ | Children's Services Departmental Plan & Policy Dev & Strategic Man't Operational Plan | |
| 8.2 | Develop the Commissioning Strategy for the Children's Trust. | Mar 08 | SJ | | |
| 8.3 | Set up working group with PCT to Commission therapy services in line with agreed, overarching commissioning strategy. | Mar 08 onwards | SJ | | |

Success criteria

- Commissioning strategy for therapy services in place by Mar 08.
- Agreement on provision for children and young people in place by Mar 08.
- Outcomes for children and young people accessing therapy services improve.

Issue 9: Develop a wider range of courses for post-16 young people with learning disabilities and difficulties

| Actions | | Timescale | Responsible officer(s) | Linkages | Progress (Dec 07) |
|---------|--|-----------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| 9. | Develop a wider range of courses for post-16 young people with Learning Disabilities and Difficulties. | Apr 07 – May 08 | SJ/JC | Children's Services Departmental Plan | Amber overall |
| 9.1 | Raise the aspirations of vulnerable children and young people through Aimhigher and other targeted initiatives. | Mar 09 | TA | Departmental Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green - HOT project implemented at Catcote School |
| 9.2 | Implement with partner agencies the wider local and regional 14-19 strategies which will deliver a wider range of courses and opportunities for LDD. | Mar 09 | TA | ↓ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green - September Guarantee implemented. |

Success criteria

- Children and young people receive the advice they need for education, employment and training post 16, are properly prepared and given support they need.
- All young people leaving statutory education aged 16 have access to the September Guarantee. - **ACHIEVED**
- Wider range of courses delivered. **Amber - Ongoing**

SECTION 4: AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT FROM THE HARTLEPOOL YOUTH SERVICE REPORT

Issue 1: Very low numbers of young people achieve accredited outcomes

| Actions | | Timescale | Responsible officer(s) | Linkages | Progress (Dec 07) |
|---------|--|-----------------|---------------------------------------|--|--------------------|
| 1. | Increase the number of young people achieving accredited outcomes. | Mar 07 onwards | Peter Davies (Principal Youth Worker) | Children's Services Departmental Plan ↓ | Amber overall: |
| 1.1 | Develop, implement and review strategy to tackle low accreditation. | By Apr 07 | AH/PD | | • Green: complete. |
| 1.2 | Deliver training programme to staff during development week. | May 07 | AH/Steve Sproston (SS) | | • Green: complete. |
| 1.3 | Introduce project specific targets for outcomes based on staffing allocations. | Jul 07 | PD | | • Green |
| 1.4 | Support and monitor effectiveness of outcomes. | Jul 07 – Feb 08 | All supervisory staff. | | • Green |

Success criteria

- Reviewed strategy developed – **ACHIEVED**
- Training delivered - **ACHIEVED**
- Targets introduced - **ACHIEVED**
- Outcomes increased. Target for:
06/07 = 10% - **ACHIEVED**
07/08 = 15%
08/09 = 20%;
09/10 = 25%.
(BVPI for accredited outcomes).

Issue 2: Curriculum management is weak

| Actions | | Timescale | Responsible officer(s) | Linkages | Progress (Dec 07) |
|---------|--|----------------|------------------------|--|--|
| 2. | Strengthen curriculum management. | Jan 07 onwards | D | Children's Services Departmental Plan ↓ | Amber overall: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green – Document produced and distributed widely. Now January 08. Interviews for lead post scheduled. Further documents on Commissioning and Standards revised and developed. |
| 2.1 | Set up working group to review curriculum and management thereof. Re-write curriculum document to reflect current situation and future requirements. | By Aug 07 | PD | | |
| 2.2 | Introduce new document to service during development week. | Sept 07 | PD | | |
| 2.3 | Support implementation of document throughout service. | Sept-Mar 08 | All supervisors | | |
| 2.4 | Review and underpin management responsibilities for curriculum. | Dec 07 | PD | | |
| 2.5 | Revise other policy documents on a rolling programme. | Annually | PD | | |

Success criteria

- New curriculum document completed - **ACHIEVED**
- Document introduced to service – **AMBER** - Consultation
- Staff deliver curriculum effectively. Measured by impact on ECM outcomes and review of curriculum breadth.
- Improved management of curriculum in place by Mar 08 - **AMBER**
- Policies reviewed and revised as appropriate – **AMBER**, revised once curriculum document complete
- New responsibilities agreed with staff by Dec 07 – **AMBER**

Issue 3: The service's strategic plans and priorities are insufficiently defined

| Actions | | Timescale | Responsible officer(s) | Linkages | Progress (Dec 07) |
|---------|--|----------------|--|---|-------------------|
| 3. | Develop and clarify the service's strategic plans and priorities. | Apr 07 onwards | PD | Children's Services Departmental Plan ↓ Project Plans | • Green |
| 3.1 | Develop service's needs assessment and strategic priorities. | By Apr 07 | PD | | • Green |
| 3.2 | Establish operational plan to reflect the priorities established. | Apr 07 | PD | | • Green |
| 3.3 | Youth project leaders develop plans to reflect needs and priorities. | Jun 07 | Professional workers and Project leaders | | • Green |

Success Criteria

- Service plans in operation and monitored/ revised as part of self assessment process.
- Plans in operation and monitored/ revised as appropriate.

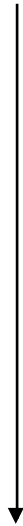
Issue 4: Strategies and plans to support equality, inclusion and diversity are underdeveloped

| Actions | | Timescale | Responsible officer(s) | Linkages | Progress (Dec 07) |
|---------|---|------------------|------------------------|--|---|
| 4. | Strengthen strategies and plans to support equality, inclusion and diversity. | Apr 07 onwards | PD | Children's Services Departmental Plan ↓ | Green |
| 4.1 | Review and develop strategies to work with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT), Looked After Children (LAC), Learning Disabilities / Difficulties (LDD), Black Minority Ethnic (BME) and Young Women's groups. | Sept 07 | PD/ AH/SMc/ HW | | Amber - Front line youth service has delivered work to specific groups e.g. LGBT, Deaf. |
| 4.2 | Develop contacts and partnership working. | Mar 08 | PD/ AH/SMc/ HW | | Green Amber Amber Green Amber |
| 4.3 | Positively promote race and "difference" issues in all projects. | Mar 08 | All staff | | Amber |
| 4.4 | Pilot and roll out "Starpower" exercise appropriately in schools. | Sept 07 - Mar 08 | Full time team | | Amber |

Success criteria

- Stronger strategies and plans developed which support equality, inclusion and diversity - **ACHIEVED**
- Partnerships are more effective in implementing strategy to support equality, inclusion and diversity - **AMBER**
- All projects promote race & difference – **AMBER**
- Pilot established and rolled out appropriately to schools - **AMBER**

Issue 5: The involvement of young people in planning and evaluating youth service provision at strategic and operational level is limited

| Actions | | Timescale | Responsible officer(s) | Linkages | Progress (Dec 07) |
|---------|---|----------------|--|---|--|
| 5. | Increase the involvement of young people in planning and evaluating youth service provision at strategic and operational levels. | Apr 07 onwards | PD | Children's Services Departmental Plan  | Amber overall: |
| 5.1 | Each project to develop its own youth "voice". | By Dec 07 | Helen White (HW) lead supported by all staff | | Amber - Training input delivered to staff in May 07. |
| 5.2 | Each project to develop and support a min. of two young people as their reps. for a town wide youth service forum. | Dec 07 | | | Amber - Young people are being invited to planning events in the local provision. Green |
| 5.3 | Each project to involve young people in the planning and evaluation of the programme. | Dec 07 | | | Amber |
| 5.4 | Develop young persons' groups for the self-inspection and positive activities processes. | Mar 08 | | | Green |
| 5.5 | Extend and implement the service User Survey and develop and implement a Non-User Survey. | Oct 07 | | | Green |
| 5.6 | Continue development of Youth Opportunities Fund/Youth Capital Fund, UK Youth Parliament, North East Regional Youth Assembly, International work and the involvement of under represented groups. | Mar 08 | | | Green |

Success criteria

- Projects have their own Young People "voice", a minimum of two representatives on town wide forum, and involve Young People in the planning and evaluation of their programmes – **AMBER**
- YP part of self-assessment and positive activities processes - **AMBER**
- Involvement of young people measured through user and non-user surveys implemented - **GREEN**
- Development continues positively with a broader representation established.

SECTION 5: STRATEGY FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATION

MONITORING OF THE ACTION PLAN

The monitoring of the plan will be led by the identified lead officer(s). Progress will be checked at six monthly intervals and reported to Children's Services Management Team, the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services and the Children's Trust (Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership).

The monitoring process will consider the following questions:

- Are the planned activities relevant/valid?
- Are there gaps?
- Do the activities reflect national/local priorities?
- What impact have the activities had on the outcomes for children and young people.

A progress report will detail those activities that are completed (green), those expecting to meet target with some progress made (amber) and those where no progress has been made and where targets are not expected to be met (red). Where no or only some progress has been made, explanations will be required. In light of these progress checks, activities may be amended. These amendments will be written into linked strategic and operational plans.

Children and young people will be central to the process of monitoring the implementation of the plan, and most particularly the progress which is being made towards achieving targets.

EVALUATION OF THE ACTION PLAN

The LA has established an evaluation group for each of the five outcomes for children and young people that make up the CYPP. This JAR Recommendations Action Plan should be seen as part of the CYPP framework and will be evaluated as such.

In addition and where appropriate, independent consultants with appropriate credentials and credibility will be used to evaluate the successful implementation of the plan or aspects of it, against criteria which will include actual improvement in outcomes for children and value for money. Reports will be produced for the CYPSP, Portfolio Holder and Director of Children's Services.

Where external consultants are used for evaluation they will be responsible for:

- Gathering and collating information from relevant services including the Children Services Department and other stakeholders.
- Writing reports for the Director of Children's Services and other appropriate audiences.

As well as being part of the CYPP evaluation strategy this plan is also subject to the evaluation requirements of the LA Performance Management Framework and will feature in returns to Corporate Strategy. In addition and where appropriate, aspects of the plan will be evaluated and reported as part of the Local Strategic Partnership monitoring and evaluation strategy, four times a year.

A range of measures will be used in evaluating the plan, including service performance; changes in attitude and findings identified during monitoring or external inspections.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

7 January 2008

Joint Area Review Action Plan

Summary of Progress

| | Rating Green = completed Amber = on target Red = not on target |
|--|--|
| <u>Immediate action</u> Develop inter-agency guidance in relation to thresholds for referral into children's social care | Green |
| <u>Action for next six months</u> Improve the quality of provision for children and young people with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties in order to meet their needs Improve the quality of provision for pupils excluded from secondary school and the rates of reintegration into mainstream school Incorporate a high level assessment of financial implications when the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) is reviewed Undertake benchmarking of costs on a systematic basis Improve joint commissioning and contracting arrangements in relation to out of authority placements for Looked After Children Engage service users in the evaluation of services they receive on a systematic basis. | Amber Amber Green Amber Amber Amber |

APPENDIX 2

| | |
|---|--------------|
| <u>Action for longer term</u> | |
| Improve the provision of occupational therapy and speech and language therapy services | Amber |
| Develop a wider range of courses for post-16 young people with learning disabilities and difficulties | Amber |

What the inspectors said when they visited in September 2007:

“The Council has responded positively to the recommendations raised in the Joint Area Review report and has made good progress since that time.”