

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**CABINET****MONDAY 29th JANUARY 2001 at 10.00AM****COUNTY COUNCIL****THURSDAY 15th FEBRUARY 2001 AT 10.30AM****EARLY YEARS DEVELOPMENT AND CHILDCARE PLANS 2001/4**Report of the Director of Education

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Executive Member:- Derrick Ashley

1. Purpose of the report

To propose to the County Council the Early Years Development and Childcare Plans for Hertfordshire 2001/4, that have been prepared by Young in Herts, the County's Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership, in the light of comments from the Children, Schools and Families Select Committee.

2. Summary

This report gives the background to the requirement for Early Years Development and Childcare Plans and sets out the planning process. It presents the Strategic Plan for 2001/4 and the Implementation Plan for 2001/2.

The Plan describes how we will work towards universal high quality integrated early years, childcare and family support services in Hertfordshire.

The Strategic Plan sets three year goals and targets that show, how, in Hertfordshire, we will contribute towards the Department for Education and Employment's (DfEE) national strategic goals and targets. It describes our current position with regard to the targets.

The Implementation Plan outlines progress since April 2000, it sets objectives for each of the targets in 2001/2 and describes future steps in broad terms.

3. Conclusions

The Plans received the approval of Young in Herts on January 10th 2001. After taking account of the Select Committee's comments, Cabinet are asked to propose the Strategic Plan for 2001/4 and the Implementation Plan for 2001/2 to County Council.

1. Background

- 1.1 Under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, local authorities are required to produce an Early Years Development and Childcare Plan through the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership, according to guidance issued by the DfEE.
- 1.2 Hertfordshire's Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (Young in Herts) has produced three annual Plans. The current Plan for 2000/2001 sets a target to create 3,000 new childcare places this year. The Funding Strategy outlined in Annex Seven of the Plan sets out how the Childcare Grant allocation of £983,000 will be combined with other funding streams to deliver the Plan.
- 1.3 In July last year, the DfEE wrote to Lead Officers and Chairs of Partnerships with a proposal for change to the annual planning process. Many Partnerships, including Hertfordshire, have regarded the amount of time spent on writing and re-writing plans as being at the expense of development, implementation and evaluation. The new streamlined planning process has been positively received.

2. New planning process

- 2.1. The DfEE Planning Guidance 2001/2 requires Young in Herts to produce a Strategic Plan for the County Council. This covers a three year period from 1st April 2001 but will be submitted once every two years to the DfEE for approval in line with the government's spending and review cycle.
- 2.2. The Strategic Plan is a visionary document, setting the scene both in terms of achievements to date and the global aims and priorities for the next three years. It is based on the DfEE's national strategic goals and targets for the coming three years.
- 2.3. Hertfordshire is also required to submit an annual Implementation Plan. This reviews the Partnership's progress towards meeting last years targets and objectives and set new ones for the coming year in line with the broad aims and objectives set out in the Strategic Plan.
- 2.4. The Plans have been drawn up following consultations in the County Partnership and the Sub Groups. Ten district open meetings were held around the County in November. Schools, providers of early education and childcare and the general public were invited as well as local partnership members. The Plans were approved at the County Partnership meeting on January 10th.
- 2.5. Some advanced Childcare Audit information was required by the DfEE for October 31st 2000 to determine elements of our allocation of Childcare Grant for 2001/2. Childcare Audit requirements are reduced this year pending a review.

- 2.6. Guidance on some targets is still awaited from DfEE and where this is the case this is indicated in the text.
- 2.7. Information on the composition of the Childcare Workforce for the table on page 14 of the Implementation Plan is still being collated and will be available from the Early Childhood Unit in February on 01992 556132.

3. Summary of the Plan

- 3.1. The Plans set out how we will contribute in Hertfordshire towards the national strategic targets in a format prescribed by the DfEE.
- 3.2. The Strategic Plan describes where we are currently with regard to the national targets, sets targets for Hertfordshire to be achieved by 2004 and in broad terms how they will be delivered. A final section on resources gives the funding available.
- 3.3. The Implementation Plan outlines progress since April 2000, sets objectives against each target for 2001/2, identifies funding for the activity and describes future developments.
- 3.4. The key national targets to be achieved by 2004 are as follows:
 - Universal free nursery education for 3 year olds
 - 360,000 new out of school places
 - Maintaining existing childcare provision
 - Recruiting new childminders and developing childminder networks
 - Affordable childcare provision in areas of disadvantage
 - Integrated care and education
- 3.5. The targets we have set for Hertfordshire are listed below. Childcare “places” represents the number of children that can be provided for in a childcare setting at any one time according to the DfEE definition. Where a target is expressed in “places” and “children”, the number of children is calculated on a DfEE formula of 1 place to every two children for children aged 3-14 and one place for every 1.5 children for children aged 0-2.

Early Education and Childcare Places

1. To provide a free part time early education place for all three year olds whose parents want one by 2004.
2. To have set up at least 6,441 out of school childcare places for 12,882 children by 2003
3. To ensure a minimum of 80% of all NOF sponsored out of school childcare places remain viable and available 5 years after being established.
4. To ensure that, on average, new childcare places created between April 2001 and March 2004 add significantly to the local stock for the relevant category:

- For every 10 new out of school childcare places that open no more than 1 should close
 - For every 10 new childcare places for pre school age children no more than 3 should close.
 - For every 10 new childminder place created no more than 9 should close.
5. To have set up by 2004 a minimum of 2,232 new childminder places in addition to those in target 6.
6. *Further guidance awaited from DfEE on this target.*
To have set up, by 2004 a minimum of x childcare places for pre school aged children in areas of disadvantage. An estimated x group care places and 584 childminder places.
- 6a. To create 33% of all new childcare places in wards where over 25% of children are living in low income families. In Hertfordshire this amounts to 55 of the 199 wards.
7. To have set up 2004 6 formal childcare networks and to provide 100 school based networks with co-ordinator support.
8. To have aided the conversion by 2004 of at least 960 pre school places to wrap around care.
9. To monitor the take up of Childcare Tax Credit and to improve take up.
10. To boost recruitment over the next three years so as to expand the workforce for early education childcare and playwork to meet the demand of the expanding service.
11. To increase the recruitment of the following under represented groups to the levels below to contribute to the national target by 2004.
- Men 6%
 - People with disabilities-15%
 - Ethnic minorities-4%
 - People aged 40 and over- 40%

Raising Quality: A skilled and competent workforce

12. To raise the quality of childcare and early education by raising training levels with specific targets for the level of qualification to be achieved to be set by September 2001.
13. To ensure that all practitioners delivering Foundation Stage education under the EYDCP have access to an average of 4 days relevant training and development per year by 2004.

14. To ensure that all settings that deliver a Foundation Stage curriculum have access to the input and advice from a QT teacher. The ratio for involvement should be 1 teacher to every 10 non- maintained settings.
15. To ensure that by 2004, all qualified teachers delivering the foundation Stage have undertaken appropriate training and development to improve their specialist knowledge of early education.
16. To ensure that at least 40% of providers have been accredited by a quality assurance scheme by 2004.
17. To ensure that 94% of all Foundation Stage settings inspected by OFSTED to be satisfactory or better by 2004 and for section 122 inspections 94% will be inspected at 2-4 year intervals by 2004.
18. To ensure that by 2001-2 all settings delivering the Foundation Stage have identified and trained a SEN co-ordinator (SENCO) responsible for establishing and implementing the settings SEN policy, with a target that all settings based SENCO's should have benefited from an average of 3 days relevant training by 2004.
19. To put in place a network of area SENCOs, with a target ratio of 1 area SENCO to 20 non maintained settings delivering funded early education by 2004
To put in place a network of area SENCOs, with a target ratio of 1 area SENCO to 20 non maintained settings delivering funded early education by 2004.
- 20 To ensure all sectors of the community have equal access to childcare and early years services, regardless of their gender, age, special educational needs, disability, background, religion, ethnicity or competence in spoken English.
21. Young in Herts to monitor its equal opportunities strategy annually and to ensure that all settings identify and train someone to take responsibility for establishing and implementing the settings equal opportunities strategy by 2004.
22. By 2004, to significantly increase the amount of support employers give their employees on childcare, working through Partnerships and other organisations

Choice and Diversity

23. To review information for parents on early education places annually and to ensure that parents have the information they need to enable them to express clear preferences for an early education place from amongst the settings available.
24. *Targets to be set for 2004 by September 2001 for the number of early education places for 3 and 4 year olds which have (a) wrap around facilities and (b) fully integrated facilities for 0-4 year olds.*

Information Strategy

25. To ensure Young in Herts CIS meets the 14 minimum service standards, which include accuracy and confidentiality, and are integrated with the national regulatory system set up by OFSTED's Early Years directorate by September 2001.

Better Partnership Working

26. Young in Herts will keep membership, working practices and progress under review so that the Partnership is able to monitor progress to successfully deliver the strategic plan and annual objectives.

27. To ensure Young in Herts works effectively with other strategic partnerships including the local Strategic Partnerships where this is appropriate to ensure consistency, sensible community planning and efficient use of resources and to contribute to other plans such as the Education Development plan, Quality Protects, Health Improvement Plans and Children's Services Plans.

28. Young in Herts will work with the County and District/Borough Councils to derive benefit from Best Value for young children and parents in Hertfordshire and apply the principles of Best Value to their own activities and processes.

29. Young in Herts together with Ofsted's Early Years Directorate, Children's Information Service and appropriate Local Authority Staff will develop a clear protocol for working together effectively so as to deliver coherent training, advice and information services that build capacity and strengthen the quality choice accessibility and diversity of provision locally.

4. Financial Implications

4.1. There are no additional financial implications for the County Council in delivering the Plans. Childcare Grant has doubled to £1.8million for the coming year and there is access to up to £1.3 million of grants from the New Opportunities Fund for developing out of school childcare.

5. Conclusion

5.1. This year has been a successful year for Young in Herts with the achievement of the "Partners in Excellence" national award for excellent practice in integrating early education and childcare, good progress towards universal nursery education for three year olds and our targets for new childcare places.

5.2. Early years education and childcare are a high priority both for Government and the County Council. The proposed Plans set ambitious targets for the coming three years and will ensure further development of the excellent work already going on.

Background information referred to by the author

DfEE Guidance on Early Years Development and Childcare Plans 2001/2
Young in Herts, Early Years Development and Childcare Plan 2000/1

Young in Herts, Childcare Audit Information prepared for DfEE 31/10/00