

CHILDREN SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES SERVICE PLAN 2004/5

Report of the Director of Children, Schools and Families

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1. Purpose of Report

- To seek comments on the Children Schools and Families Service Plan for 2004/5 (attached as an Annex) which has been revised in the light of public consultation and significant developments that have emerged since the draft was compiled.

2. Summary of Report

- 2.1 2004/5 will be the third year of the Children Schools and Families Service Plan (CSF Plan). The Consultation Draft was issued to CSF staff, all Hertfordshire schools and to all CSF stakeholders. In addition, a range of different consultation events and exercises have been held, which are outlined in the report. The Plan has been positively received and there has been a high degree of consensus in the feedback from a wide range of stakeholders. A folder containing all the feedback from the public consultation is available in the Members' room.
- 2.2 Most of the revisions to the Plan have been made in response to one or more of the following:
- feedback from consultation
 - emerging Government legislation or initiatives, in particular the Green Paper "Every Child Matters"
 - service and/ or strategic developments that have been firmed up since the Plan was first drafted
- 2.3 A "track-changes" version of the revised CSF Plan 2004/5 is attached as an Annex. In addition, a chart is attached (Appendix 1) which outlines the changes that have been made, with a brief explanation about the reasons.

3. Conclusion

Members are invited to provide their comments on the content of the revised Plan. The Plan will be presented for formal agreement by Cabinet on 9 February 2004, and County Council on 12 February 2004.

4. Background

- 4.1 2004/5 will be the third year of the Children Schools and Families Service Plan (CSF Plan). The CSF Plan brings together all the major service plans for children and has been recognised nationally for the way in which it brings together the wide range of planning requirements so that all the energy and resources of the service are focused on our priorities for children.
- 4.2 A “track-changes “ version of the revised CSF Plan 2004/5 is attached as an Annex. Actions that have been removed or amended from the original draft version are shown as “~~strikethrough text~~”, and additions or revisions are shown as “**bold italics**” text. Where actions have been removed it is indicated in the margin whether they have been deleted, or moved to another part of the Plan. In order to assist understanding of the changes, a chart is attached to this report (Appendix 1) which outlines whether changes have been made to each individual action sheet, with a brief explanation about the reason for the changes.

5. Consultation Process

- 5.1 The Consultation Draft was issued to CSF staff, all Hertfordshire schools and to all CSF stakeholders. It was presented to CSF Scrutiny Committee on 15 October 2003. The Plan has been positively received and there has been a high degree of consensus in the feedback from a wide range of stakeholders.
- 5.2 In response to last year’s feedback, the consultation event process was streamlined this year. This entailed having a smaller number of specific consultation events and a greater use of existing panels and partnership groups to seek feedback.
- 5.3 There were four major consultation events for stakeholders, attended by a total of 138 people:
- Two general events for strategic partners, schools and other major stakeholders, which focussed on key themes in the Plan
 - A specific event for voluntary and community organisations that also updated them on the HCC Funding Prospectus for next year
 - New this year was an event for Black and Ethnic Minority (BME) groups and stakeholders who work closely with them.
- 5.4 Around 1,400 children and young people - 650 primary and 750 secondary – were consulted using the “Viewpoint” consultation software. In addition, 43 children and young people attended a “Make It Happen” event that was held on 9th November at Trestle Arts Theatre, St Albans, in which their views were sought via a variety of creative media and inter-active drama workshops.
- 5.5 Parents were consulted through two focus groups organised by MORI, held in Watford and Hitchin.
- 5.6 Key stakeholders were also consulted through the following partnerships:
- Children and Young People’s Strategic Partnership (CYPSP)
 - Black and Minority Ethnic County Education Forum

- Headteachers and governors through the Strategic Management Partnership Group, the Governors Forum, Herts Association of Secondary School Heads, and the Primary heads Forum

5.7 Members were consulted through Scrutiny Committee and the following Member Panels:

- Children and Families Panel
- Achievement Panel
- Special Needs Panel
- Corporate Parenting Panel
- School Resources Panel

5.8 In addition, we received 35 responses from individuals or organisations, either through the response forms that were included with the draft or via the on-line electronic response facility.

5.9 A folder containing all the feedback from the public consultation is available in the Members' room.

6. Main Revision Themes

6.1 Most of the revisions to the Plan have been made in response to one or more of the following:

- feedback from consultation
- emerging Government legislation or initiatives, in particular the Green Paper "Every Child Matters"
- service and/ or strategic developments that have been firmed up since the Plan was first drafted

6.2 The following themes have been revised primarily in response to consultation, although in some cases they reflect Green Paper themes and/ or strategic developments as well. The main sources of the consultation feedback about each item are put in brackets:

- School improvement and increased support for schools causing concern (Members) - in Priority Areas/ Action Sheets 1.7 and 8.4.1
- Different and more inter-active ways of promoting creativity and enjoyment in learning and out of school activities (young people, parents) - in Priority Areas/ Action Sheets new 1.5.2, 3.3 and 3.4
- Developing services to black and minority ethnic groups, particularly around raising achievement and reflecting the cultural diversity of the County (BME); this also a Green Paper theme and has been subject to further development around the implementation of the Race Relations Amendment Act - in Priority Areas/ Action Sheets 1.1, 1.3.1, 1.6, 2.1.3, 2.2, 3.1.1, 3.2.2, 3.3.1, 3.4, 4.2.2, 4.4, 6.3.1, 7.1.2, and 7.1.4

- Health developments with partners, to improve lifestyle and fitness and reduce childhood obesity, as well as improving children's mental health and emotional wellbeing (general, parents); these also reflect key Green Paper themes and significant strategic developments sponsored by the CYPSP - in Priority Areas/ Action Sheets 3.3, 3.3.1, 3.3.2, 3.5, 3.5.1, new 3.5.2, 5.4, 5.5.2
- Bullying (young people, parents, Members, general) - in Priority Areas/ Action Sheets 3.3.1, new 4.3.3, 5.3.3, and 5.3.4
- Involving and informing parents, and developing support for parents and families (parents, general, BME); this is also a major theme of the Green Paper - in Priority Areas/ Action Sheets new 1.1.3, 3.1.2, 3.2, 4.3.6, 4.6.1, 4.6.3, 5.5, 6.1, and 7.1
- Developing sustainable funding for voluntary organisations (Voluntary Organisations, BME) - in Priority Areas/ Action Sheets 3.3 and 3.3.3

6.3 In addition, the following have been revised in the light of the main initiatives or proposals highlighted in the Green Paper:

- More joint working and greater integration with partner agencies - in Priority Areas/ Action Sheets 3.3, 3.3.2, 3.4.1, 4.2.4, new 8.2.2, 8.5.4
- Information sharing with partners - in Action Sheets 3.2.3, 3.3.2, 4.2.2, 5.1.4, 6.2.1, and new 6.4.1
- Extended schools; this has also been a major strategic development this year - in new Action Sheet 1.6.6
- Child protection and Children's Safeguarding Boards - in Action Sheet 5.1.1
- Homeless young people and families; this is also a CYPSP initiative - in Action Sheets 5.2.2 and new 5.2.3
- Permanence and adoption - in Action Sheets 5.3.2 and 5.3.3
- Education of looked after children – in Action Sheets 3.1.1 and 5.4.1

6.4 Finally, the following have been revised primarily because of strategic developments since the Plan was first drafted:

- Inclusion Strategy - in Action Sheets 4.2.2 and 4.3.1
- Joint Disability Strategy - in Action Sheet 4.3.2
- Looked After Children/ Placements Strategy - in Priority Sheets 5.3 and 5.4
- Building Schools for the Future Initiative - in new Action Sheet 8.3.1

7. Performance Indicators

7.1 The Plan includes forecasted outcomes for 2003/4. We have also revised a few of the targets for future years in the light of past performance and planned development actions.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 The work set out in the draft plan will be funded by County Council budgets and central government grants. However, the outcome of the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review means that HCC will face an even more challenging financial situation next year than this. Although we will continue to undertake new development activities next year, we have had to think carefully about the prioritising of non-school resources to ensure that we are doing things as efficiently as possible. In the light of this, we are currently completing a "budget pressures" exercise as part of the preparation for the 2004/5 budget. This may involve further changes to some of the tasks or to the scale of proposed actions. The CSF Proposed Resource Budget is the subject of a separate report to this meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.

7. Conclusion

Members are invited to provide their comments on the content of the revised Plan. The Plan will be presented for formal agreement by Cabinet on 9 February 2004, and County Council on 12 February 2004.

If you would like to know more about the issues referred to in this report please contact Andrew Wellington (Tel: 01992 556980)

Background papers

Report to CSF Scrutiny Committee 15 October 2003: Children Schools and Families Service Plan 2004/5

CSF Plan 2004/5: revised draft - attached as an Annex

CSF Plan 2004/5: Draft for Consultation

CSF Plan 2003/4