

**HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL****THURSDAY 15 FEBRUARY 2001 AT 10.30 AM****EARLY YEARS DEVELOPMENT AND CHILDCARE PLANS 2001/2004***Report of the Director of Education considered by the Cabinet on 29 January 2001*

Executive Member:- Derrick Ashley

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.

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 7 of the Plan sets out how the Childcare Grant allocation of £983,000 will be combined with other funding streams to deliver the Plan.

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.

The DfEE Planning Guidance 2001/2 now requires Young in Herts to produce a Strategic Plan for the County Council. This covers a three year period from 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

**1. The Plan**

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.

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.

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 10 January, and

endorsed by the Children, Schools and Families Select Committee on 24 January.

**2. CABINET PROPOSAL FOR COUNTY COUNCIL APPROVAL**

That the Early Years Development and Childcare Plans for Hertfordshire 2001/2004 and the Implementation Plan for 2001/2002 be approved.