

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
TUESDAY 25 NOVEMBER 2003 at 10.30am

REPORT OF THE CHILDREN, SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
15 OCTOBER 2003

NOTE: A copy of the report mentioned below has been sent to all members of the Children, Schools and Families Scrutiny Committee and other members who have requested it. Further copies are available from Julia Harries, Room 222, County Secretary's Department, County Hall, Hertford. (Telephone: 01992 555563)

DRAFT CHILDREN, SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES SERVICE PLAN
2004/05

The Scrutiny Committee have considered the draft Children, Schools and Families Service Plan for 2004/05 and a report setting out the timetable for the consultation and approval process. All members of the County Council and all added members of the Children, Schools and Families Scrutiny Committee have received a copy of the draft Plan; further copies are available from Janice Mottram, 01992 558757.

2004/5 will be the third year of the Children Schools and Families Service Plan (CSF Plan). The Plan 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. The Plan for 2004/5 introduces some refinements to take into account the changing national and local situation with regard to strategic planning.

The overall structure of the Plan is as in previous years, with eight Strategic Areas including priorities and actions designed to ensure that CSF continues to progress towards achieving its published targets:

- a Raising pupil achievement and school standards
- b Recruiting, retaining and investing in staff
- c Using prevention, early intervention and early years services to help children succeed
- d Delivering services which respond to the needs of every child and promote social inclusion
- e Providing for the needs of vulnerable children
- f Exploiting Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to support learning and improve services

- g Involving users and stakeholders in the development of the Service
- h Maximising user satisfaction and securing best value from all services

The closing date for consultation is Friday 14 November 2003.

There will be a further report to the Children, Schools and Families Scrutiny Committee on 21 January 2004, which will include feedback from the consultation, as part of the process leading to approval of the Plan at Cabinet and County Council in February 2004.

The Committee's comments on the draft Plan

The Committee welcomed the draft Plan as an excellent foundation stone for the work of CSF and made the following suggestions for improvement:

- future drafts should track changes
- there should be increased focus on collaboration in the area of the 14-19 Strategy
- the Plan should reflect the joint working set out in 'Every Child Matters'
- good practice in feeding back to partners should not be lost
- the profile of the issue of bullying should be raised

Other comments arising during consideration of the draft Plan included:

- members continued to be concerned that schools causing concern were still taking too long to turn round and urged the Director to focus on improving the speed and effectiveness of intervention
- there was an awareness of the increasing need to support and train governors, particularly as governing bodies would be graded in future inspections
- there was a suggestion that a Herts Awards Scheme for Children be introduced to encourage and support individual achievement.

TANIS KENT
CHAIRMAN
County Hall
Hertford

15 October 2003