

SURE START (WHOLE COUNTY) – 2 YEAR PLAN

Report By: HEAD OF POLICY AND RESOURCES

Wards Affected

Countywide

Purpose

1. To provide information about the two-year action plan for early years provision and the development of early years services in the County.

Financial Implications

2. The costs of the plan will be contained within the approved budget for Education, as supplemented by relevant specific grants.

Report

3. The DfES have relaunched all early years work under the general title of Sure Start. All early years work in the DfES is now dealt with in the Sure Start Unit. Instead of having to develop Early Years Strategy Plans, LEAs are now expected to have a Sure Start Plan covering the whole of their area for the 2-year period 2004-06. Confusingly the new title also covers the two area based projects in Herefordshire known as the Kington-Leominster Sure Start project and the mini Sure Start Project in Bromyard.
4. This report outlines the action plan for the whole of the County. It is intended as a working document, and does not need to be submitted to the Secretary of State, though it does need to be approved and monitored by the Early Years Development and Childcare Plan (EYDCP). It is a 75-page document, much of it in the tabular form required for plans. A copy can be provided on request.
5. Within the Plan, 5 major goals are identified within which actions have been grouped under a number of sub-headings. They are as follows:

(i) Better Strategic Planning and Partnership Working

(ii) Integrating services for young children and families:

Early education – to ensure that there is a place for every 3 and 4 year old

Children's Centres – to develop three children's centres

Kington/Leominster/Bromyard Sure Start local programmes – to deliver the national Sure Start targets

Developing existing provision – to create 166 full day-care places

(iii) Creating and sustaining childcare:

Creating new childcare places – to create 856 new childcare places

Retained functions and pathways to registration – to maintain effective liaison with Ofsted who are responsible for registration as well as inspection

For further information on the subject of this report is available from
G. Salmon, Head of Policy and Resources, (01432) 260802

Out of school places and extended schools – to create 718 out of school places
Childcare in FE and HE – to ensure allocated funding is used for this purpose
Childcare for teenage parents – to provide childcare for every teenage parent
Childminders – to create 120 new childcare places
Home child carers – to raise awareness of home childcarers scheme (i.e. childminding at child's home)
Sustainability for childcare provision – to develop preventative support
Business support – to develop support for out of school provision
Promoting affordability and helping parents into work – to develop information system
Children's Information Services/Information to parents – to continue to improve service

(iv) Ensuring quality, access and inclusion:

Support children's learning and development – to improve quality through various new and existing initiatives
Children with special needs and disabled children – to improve SEN support
Using libraries – to encourage use of libraries by families and children
Listening to children – to expand "bookstart", a scheme for introducing children to books
Working with minority groups

(v) Developing in the workforce

Recruitment and retention – to offer taster courses for potential staff and training to develop skills among existing staff
Workforce training and development – to support a variety of courses offering accreditation to individual staff.

6. Under each goal, details are given for specific objectives or targets and actions are identified with timescale, resource implications and responsibility. All the relevant information is set out in a 75 page document which can be made available to any member wishing further detail.
7. At the strategic level, the delivery of the action will depend on continued improvement of inter-agency working. Delivery of the plan is also likely to be influenced by the legislation expected from the Green Paper, 'Every Child Matters'.
8. There will be continued pressure on resources to fund all the desirable activities. Given that the level of demand for expenditure on early years puts pressure on the allocation within the Education Funding Spending Share (EFSS), this will be easy to achieve.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Committee note the report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS