

INTEGRATED INSPECTION OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES – THE JOINT AREA REVIEW

Report By: George Salmon, Head of Policy and Resources

Purpose

1. To inform the Partnership of the Joint Area Review of Children's Services.

Background

2. In parallel with the drive to integrate the provision of services for children and families, an inspection regime has been created which combines the activities of the Audit Commission, the Commission for Social Care Inspection, Ofsted and the Health Care Commission.

Herefordshire has been included in the first wave of authorities to experience this new form of inspection, which has adopted the title of Joint Area Review. Inspectors will be present in the County in September 2005.

The approach is set out in the attached document. The preparations for inspection have already begun, as the Inspection team require a local self-assessment to be returned to them in June 2005. There is greater emphasis on asking children and young people for their views on the services offered to them and this has already been instigated.

In terms of the services offered in early years, the self-assessment is very positive, but the potential for further improvement, particularly in terms of effectiveness of early interventions to minimise later problems in a child's life, is being noted.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Partnership is asked to note:

1. **the fact that a Joint Area Review is under way with "fieldwork" due in September;**
2. **the approach being adopted by the Inspection Teams; and**
3. **the intention to submit a further report to the Partnership when the outcome of the Inspection is known.**