

CABINET MEMBER'S BRIEFING

Report By: Cabinet Member - Children's Services

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

1. To advise the Committee of issues within the Children's Services portfolio.

Financial Implications

2. Service changes will need to be delivered on a robust invest to save basis in order to manage down the high costs of placements for children with complex needs.

Background

3. The priorities for the Children & Young People's Plan in Herefordshire are currently being shaped and will be subject to consultation, as per guidance, before going to the Children's & Young People's Partnership Board in February for confirmation.
4. The Children's and Young People's plan is for the area so includes partners and has to be ready for April 2006. The Children's and Young People's Partnership Board membership is outlined in Appendix 1 attached.
5. The draft priorities are:-

	Children's & Young People's Partnership Board Priorities	Key Priorities based on Needs Analysis
Be Healthy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving mental health outcomes. • Improving physical health outcomes. • Improving outcomes for children with LDD. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission more family support services, therapy support and a comprehensive CAMHS.
Staying Safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving outcomes for children Looked After. • Further implementation and adaptation of the Child Concern Model. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission enhanced family support service (families with older children). • Integrating services for common assessment and improved performance management of the Child Concern Model.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from Councillor Don Rule, (Cabinet Member Children's Services) on 01531 633703

Staying Safe (cont.)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission enhanced foster carer capacity sub-regional resource for children with complex needs. • Commission enhanced shared care service.
Enjoy and Achieve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extending services in Early Years/Sure Start. • Improving standards in schools. • Improving outcomes for underachieving groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission 6 "children's centres" and extended schools • Improved educational achievement for under performing groups. • Improved access/transport for recreation/learning.
Positive Contribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving learning and recreation opportunities. • Reducing anti-social behaviour. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Herefordshire Youth Council and LAC reference group given a structured voice on the C&YP Partnership board. • Ensuring joined up support services to improve the reduction of offending and anti-social behaviour.
Economic Well-Being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving opportunities for economic well-being. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission more supported housing for young people, including those leaving care. • Improve transition planning.

6. These priorities have been based on needs analysis and anticipated outcomes from the Joint Area Review (JAR) inspection.
7. The Council's contribution to these priorities is significant.

Current Challenges

8. The resources in 2005-06 are stretched in relation to:-
9. Children's social care - end of September monitoring showed £382,000. potential overcommitment although we are actively working to reduce this to a minimum.
10. This is largely due to out of area placements, secure orders and payments for bed and breakfast for homeless young people leaving care.

11. Out of area placements for specialist education resources are also high cost and this is showing a projected overspend of £427,000. Further placements will be required before the year-end resulting in greater budget pressures in future years.
12. The inclusion policy in the school sector is supported by a banding policy for additional needs resources in schools. This is an important policy to support but the funding is stretched. The current position is that the budget is projecting a small overspend of up to £20,000 for primary schools which is likely to be offset by a similar underspend in banding for high schools.

Improvement Priorities

13. It is also anticipated that the "Staying Safe" systems will require improvement following the JAR assessment. Key Stage 4 outcomes for underachieving groups will require more focus. In addition, the Council will need, in partnership with the LSC, to ensure the 14-19 provision action plan is delivered, alongside improving supported housing, particularly for young people leaving care. The integration of services for children with disabilities will need significant attention. These areas for improvement are already integrated into the Children & Young People's Partnership Board priorities.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Children's Services Scrutiny Committee note the Cabinet Member's report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None identified.