

CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

20TH JANUARY 2011

**REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

CABINET DECISION

Children & Young People – Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Mrs McCoy

2010 ANNUAL ASSESSMENT OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

1. Summary

The attached letter from Ofsted provides the 2010 annual assessment for Children's Services in Stockton-on-Tees. The Council is rated as performing well.

2. Recommendations

Cabinet are recommended to receive the report and note the outcome of the 2010 annual performance assessment.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision(s)

The Children's Services annual assessment is reported to Cabinet as part of the arrangements for informing members of the outcomes of significant assessments and inspections of services.

4. Members' Interests

Members (including co-opted Members with voting rights) should consider whether they have a personal interest in the item as defined in the Council's code of conduct (**paragraph 8**) and, if so, declare the existence and nature of that interest in accordance with paragraph 9 of the code.

Where a Member regards him/herself as having a personal interest in the item, he/she must then consider whether that interest is one which a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest (**paragraphs 10 and 11 of the code of conduct**).

A Member with a prejudicial interest in any matter must withdraw from the room where the meeting considering the business is being held -

- in a case where the Member is attending a meeting (including a meeting of a select committee) but only for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence, provided the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose whether under statutory right or otherwise, immediately after making representations, answering questions or giving evidence as the case may be;
- in any other case, whenever it becomes apparent that the business is being considered at the meeting;

and must not exercise executive functions in relation to the matter and not seek improperly to influence the decision about the matter (**paragraph 12 of the Code**).

Further to the above, it should be noted that any Member attending a meeting of Cabinet, Select Committee etc; whether or not they are a Member of the Cabinet or Select Committee concerned, must declare any personal interest which they have in the business being considered at the meeting (unless the interest arises solely from the Member's membership of, or position of control or management on any other body to which the Member was appointed or nominated by the Council, or on any other body exercising functions of a public nature, when the interest only needs to be declared if and when the Member speaks on the matter), and if their interest is prejudicial, they must also leave the meeting room, subject to and in accordance with the provisions referred to above.

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2010 ANNUAL ASSESSMENT OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

SUMMARY

The attached letter from Ofsted provides the 2010 annual assessment of Children's Services in Stockton-on-Tees. The Council is rated as performing well

RECOMMENDATION

Cabinet are recommended to receive the report and note the outcome of the 2010 annual performance assessment.

DETAIL

1. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 charges Ofsted with providing an annual assessment of children's services for each local authority. In 2009, Ofsted introduced a new approach to assessing children's services based on a performance profile of the quality of services and outcomes for children and young people in each local authority area. The profile covers three main areas:
 - the findings from regular and ongoing inspection and regulation of services, settings and institutions;
 - findings from safeguarding and looked after children inspections; unannounced inspections of contact, assessment and referral arrangements for children in need and children who may be in need of protection; evaluations of serious case reviews; safeguarding and looked after children findings from recent joint area review inspections; and findings from triggered inspections;
 - progress in a range of national performance indicators.
2. The Ofsted performance profile was further refined for 2010, placing a greater focus on the findings from the inspection and regulation of the full range of services, settings and institutions for which local authorities are responsible, either alone or in partnership with others. The assessment takes account also of the local Children & Young People's Plan (CYPP) and the self-evaluation of progress in delivery of the plan.
3. The assessment identifies a number of strengths and a few areas for development. The overall 'performing well' rating, although the same as the 2009 annual assessment, reflects the progress made since the Unannounced Inspection of Contact, Referral and Assessment in January 2010 when 'Areas for priority action' were identified which could have resulted in an annual assessment of 'performing poorly'. The findings of the Safeguarding and Looked After Children Services Inspection undertaken by Ofsted in September 2010, along with the overall good or better quality of many of our schools, children's homes, and other inspected provision, have contributed to the 'performing well' rating which reflects the breadth of universal, targeted and specialist services.

4. This annual assessment report contributes to the ongoing review of performance and improvement plans by the Council and partners in the Children's Trust Board. The CYPP provides the strategic framework for improvement in services, and includes a range of actions already in place to address areas for development.
5. Ofsted has issued a summary of annual assessments nationally. It is interesting to note that the key areas for development identified in our assessment report are common to many other local authorities (improving the quality of early years settings is an issue for a quarter of all authorities; and in over a half of authorities, children and young people from low income families or who have special educational needs are achieving considerably less well than others of the same age, and in many instances the gaps in performance are widening).
6. Progress in delivery and improvement of services for children and young people will continue to be monitored as part of the performance frameworks for the Children's Trust Board and the Council, with quarterly reports to Cabinet highlighting key achievements and areas for development.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. Resource issues to address areas for improvement will be managed through the annual cycle of service planning and review of the medium term financial plan.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8. There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

RISK ASSESSMENT

9. The reporting of the annual Children's Services assessment is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS

10. The performance of Children's Services impacts across the core theme of 'Children and Young People'. Addressing the areas for improvement identified in the report will support progress in achievement of the key ambitions for this theme, and will contribute to progress in other themes, as identified in the CYPP.

CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS

11. Consultation was not relevant in relation to this report.

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Background Paper

Ofsted report of 9th December 2010: Annual children's services assessment.

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:

The 2010 annual assessment of Children's Services is in the public domain and is available to all Councillors for information.

Property

The report does not have implications in relation to the Council's property.