

Meeting:	Joint Meeting of Lifelong Learning and Health and Social Care
Date:	January 18 2006
Subject:	Preparation for the Joint Area Review (JAR)
Responsible Officer:	Paul Clark, Director of Children's Services
Contact Officer:	Mark Gillett
Portfolio Holder:	Margaret Davine (Social Care and Health) and Bill Stephenson (Education and Lifelong Learning)
Key Decision:	No
Status:	Public

Section 1: Summary

Decision Required

To ask Members to support the proposed actions to prepare for the JAR.

Reason for report

To update Members on action taken to prepare for the JAR.

Benefits

Taking action to improve the service in line with Harrow's strategic priorities and national requirements, to the benefit of children and families in the borough.

Deliver improvements on key performance indicators for CPA and JAR.

Cost of Proposals

Cost of activity to deliver proposals is contained within the existing budget of Children's Services / People First.

Risks

The management of service delivery, new council wide initiatives, new information management systems and preparation for external inspection will require careful resource management and prioritisation of tasks.

Implications if recommendations rejected

The JAR is a complex and detailed assessment process, requiring thorough and advanced preparation. Failure to prepare fully will drastically reduce the quality of Harrow's submission.

Section 2: Report

2.1 Brief History

The Children Act 2004 requires local authorities to coordinate all the services provided by statutory, voluntary or private providers for children and young people aged 0-19 as part of an integrated children's service. Over the three years from September 2005, all local authority services for children and young people, and the wide range of services from other agencies and organisations, will be subject to a joint area review (JAR).

Joint area reviews: summary of key features

- Harrow's Joint Area Review is due to take place between November 2006 and March 2007.
- Reviews will be conducted by multi-disciplinary teams using a common approach based on the *Framework for the Inspection of Children's Services*.
- Reviews will take the place of separate inspections of council education and children's social care services and will cover other services provided in the local area. Evidence from other inspections, such as schools and residential settings, will contribute to the coverage.
- Normally, reviews will take place at the same time as corporate assessments of councils for the CPA, with documentation, judgements and methodology aligned to make the processes complementary.
- In those local areas where the inspection of the youth offending team has not previously taken place, this inspection will be aligned with the review so that evidence and findings can be shared.
- Reviews will take account of the views of children and young people, and of their parents and carers, and seek to involve them in other ways.
- Coverage will be organised around 36 key judgements and four judgement areas in service management, many of which can be made from performance

data, existing inspection evidence, self-assessments and documentation and will call for no new inspection enquiry.

- Any new fieldwork will be proportionate to risk and will focus on no more than 10 of the most significant key judgements for the local area and four judgement areas in service management which will always be covered, with some fieldwork always being conducted on safeguarding children and young people. Fieldwork will include tracking the experiences of individual children, young people, parents and carers, and neighbourhood studies.
- Analysis and fieldwork will be completed within six working weeks.
- Each joint area review will lead to a single published report.

Preparation for the Joint Area Review

- The Joint Area Review will draw upon the Annual Performance Assessment (APA) of Children's Service which will be submitted on 31 May 2006, although there will be an opportunity to revise this prior to the JAR.
- Leads have been identified to contribute to the preparation of the APA and an initial briefing session will be taking place on 19 January. Identified themes and leads are as follows:

Theme	Lead
Be Healthy / NSF	Jean Bradlow & Hayley Bath
Stay Safe	Paul Wedgbury
Enjoy and Achieve	Heather Clements
Make a Positive Contribution	Richard Segalov
Achieve Economic Well-being	Claire Kentish
Children with Disabilities	Roger Rickman & Gladys de Groot
Children Looked After	Paul Wedgbury
Service Management	Mark Gillett
Change for Children Programme	Betty Lynch

- The APA will be subject to external challenge to ensure that it is focused on outcomes for children and young people and conveys accurately the experience of being a child or young person in Harrow.
- Preparation for the JAR will be aligned with preparation for the Corporate Performance Assessment and will build on experience gained through recent inspections across the Council. The Group Manager (Strategy and Performance) is a member of the Officer group overseeing the preparation for the APA.
- A project manager will need to be appointed to lead on preparation for the JAR including
 - Coordinating arrangements for the JAR including liaison with the inspection team
 - Briefing and preparation of staff across partner agencies
 - Preparation of updated APA and portfolio of evidence
 - Preparation of documentation for inspection including case files and area profiles
 - Final briefings for members, staff, young people who will be seen by inspectors.

2.2 Options considered

Employment of external consultants to manage whole process (neglected as costly and would not embed ownership and learning in staff group)

2.3 Consultation

The CYPSP, Health, voluntary sector, schools, police and young people will be involved in the preparation for the JAR.

2.4 Financial Implications

Cost of activity to deliver proposals is contained within the existing budget of Children's Services / People First.

2.5 Legal Implications

The preparation of the JAR documentation will require clear audit trail in the event of use in any legal challenge.

2.6 Equalities Impact

Preparation for JAR will focus on the quality of services for all our diverse community.

2.7 Section 17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Considerations

The improvement of crime prevention is part of JAR process.

Section 3: Supporting Information/Background Documents

Every Child Matters (DfES 2004) and *The National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services* (DOH 2004) - both are supported by the *Children Act 2004* and *Children Act 1989* as legislative frameworks. *Every Child Matters: Joint Area Reviews of Children's Services* (Audit Commission, 2004).