

Meeting:	Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee
Date:	18 October 2006
Subject:	Final Report of the Light Touch Review of the Education of Looked After Children
Responsible Officer:	Paul Najsarek - Director, People, Performance and Policy
Contact Officer:	Nahreen Matlib – Senior Scrutiny Officer
Portfolio Holder:	People First
Key Decision:	No
Status:	Part 1

Section 1: Summary

Decision Required

The Sub-Committee is asked to:

1. Note the final report of the light touch review of education of looked after children.
2. Endorse the report's findings and recommendations.
3. Forward the report to Cabinet for consideration at the next available opportunity.

Reason for report

At its last meeting on 27 June 2006, the Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee agreed to establish a group to conduct a light touch review to examine the education of looked after children.

The review group met on two occasions to consider evidence from officers and

the People First Portfolio Holder. The final report of the review group is attached.

Benefits

Approval of the report and its recommendations will allow the Sub-Committee to influence the development of provision for looked after children in Harrow's care. In particular, the report addresses fulfilling statutory duties as 'corporate parents' as given by section 52 of the Children Act 2004 and should help inform the authority's preparations for CPA and JAR.

Cost of Proposals

There are no immediate financial implications contained in this report, although some of the recommendations if approved could involve expenditure for Children's Services and Member Development for which funding would need to be identified.

Risks

Not applicable.

Implications if recommendations rejected

1. Scrutiny will be unable to impact upon a statutory responsibility for members and an important area of service provision.
2. Scrutiny will limit the ways in which it influences the preparations for the authority's CPA and JAR.

Section 2: Report

Brief History

Section 52 of the Children Act 2004 places a duty on the local authority in its role as corporate parent to promote the educational achievement of looked after children.

At its meeting on 27 June 2006, the Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee commissioned a light touch review of the education of looked after children in Harrow's care, to report back to its next meeting on 18 October.

The scope of the review examined the way in which the council and its members fulfill the role of corporate parents and in doing so, promoted better

understanding of the roles and responsibilities as well as assessing the adequacy of services to looked after children.

Following an initial meeting to set its terms of reference, the Review Group conducted much of its evidence gathering and analysis in an 'online' fashion, culminating in a 'Question and Answer Session' with the People First Portfolio Holder and the Director of Children's Services.

Consultation

Members of the Review Group and officers directly involved its work have been consulted on the findings and recommendations in the report.

Financial Implications

This report is not seeking any additional financial resources. Review expenses will be met from the agreed scrutiny budget for 2006/07 which is £340,400. Of this, £266,050 is paid in salaries and £74,350 is available for projects and other expenditure. There were no further costs of this review, in addition to scrutiny resources (i.e. officer time and printing).

Some of the recommendations if approved could involve expenditure for Children's Services and Member Development for which funding would need to be identified.

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Equalities Impact

None specific to this report.

Section 17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Considerations

None specific to this report.

Section 3: Supporting Information/ Background Documents

- Final report of the Light Touch Review of the Education of Looked After Children
- Appendices