

Item No. 3	Classification: Open	Date: December 5 2006	Meeting Name: Children's Services and Education Scrutiny
Report title:		Annual Performance Assessment 2006 and preparation for the Joint Area Review	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Director of Children's Services	

RECOMMENDATION

1. Members are invited to note and comment on this report outlining the result of the Annual Performance Assessment 2006 and the preparation for the Joint Area Review to be held in March 2008.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

2. The letter from Ofsted and CSCI setting out the conclusions of the 2006 Annual Performance Assessment (APA) of children's services was published on November 1 2006. The judgements are based on a self-assessment submitted in May and audited performance data. These were scrutinised by inspectors who visited Southwark in July, and there was then a national moderation. The full text of the letter is included at Appendix A.
3. Southwark has been awarded a "good" rating (3 out of 4) in each of the three main areas of judgement: the overall contribution of children's services to improving outcomes for children and young people; capacity to improve; and the contribution specifically of social care services. We know we came close to the top rating in two of these areas and the letter overall is very positive and encouraging. Strong partnership practice and good progress in the integration of children's services are particularly highlighted. Other key strengths include:
 - Delivery of health care in a wide range of settings and improving outcomes
 - The range of preventative services
 - Timeliness of assessments and cross-agency monitoring of thresholds
 - Healthcare, education and stability of placements for looked after children
 - The "team around the child" approach for children with disabilities
 - Well integrated child care and early education, well matched to local needs
 - Better targeted support to schools leading to improved achievement at KS3-5
 - Systematic participation of children and young people
 - Strong focus on anti-social behaviour and crime reduction
 - Flexible pathways for 14-19 year olds and improving vocational programmes.
4. The areas for improvement identified in the letter are:
 - Reduction of teenage conceptions
 - Access to specialist substance misuse treatment for young people

- Repeat referrals and management of the child protection register
 - Adoptions of children looked after
 - Attainment at all key stages and for particular groups of pupils
 - High youth service costs compared to take up of young people
 - Further development of YOT early intervention work
 - High proportion of young people not in education, employment or training
 - Progress in establishing children's centres and extended schools.
5. The letter also picks out three areas for focus in a future Joint Area Review (JAR) or the next APA.
- Progress in improving overall school standards
 - Progress with children's centres and extended schools programmes
 - Progress with Information Sharing/Child Index.

We will now make sure that the areas identified for improvement are reflected in our business planning for the coming year, and will continue to monitor progress in these areas. We are determined now to build on the momentum of improvements and we are setting our sights on the levels of excellence required to secure the top ratings.

6. Southwark children's services will be the subject of a Joint Area Review (JAR) in early 2008, and implementing the findings of the APA will form a key part of our preparation.
7. JAR takes 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. It aims to describe what life is like for children and young people in Southwark; and to evaluate the effectiveness of Southwark services in improving the outcomes for children and young people. It is different from other inspections in that it focuses on the outcomes for children, young people and their families and covers all publicly funded services. It also involves extensive fieldwork including a neighbourhood study and case tracking and incorporates the views of children and young people and their parents and carers. Scrutiny members may be interviewed as part of the inspection process.
8. Planning for the JAR is already underway and we intend to appoint a full time project manager shortly. We are also developing a detailed project plan and separate communications plan and will return with further details in the near future.

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix A	2006 Annual Performance Assessment Letter

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Romi Bowen, Director of Children's Services	
Report Author	Stuart Edwards, Every Child Matters Project Manager	
Version	Final	
Dated	November 27 2006	
Key Decision?	No	
Consultation with other officers/ directorates /executive member		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Borough Solicitor	No	No
Finance Director	No	No
Executive Member	No	No
Date final report sent to Constitutional/Community Council/Scrutiny Team	November 27 2006	