

**COMMITTEE:** SOCIAL INCLUSION SCRUTINY

**DATE:** 3<sup>RD</sup> FEBRUARY 2005

**SUBJECT:** SOCIAL SERVICES JOINT REVIEW ACTION PLAN

**REPORT BY:** DIRECTOR OF HOUSING AND SOCIAL SERVICES

**CONTACT OFFICER:** JO CLEARY

**IMPLICATIONS:**

LEGAL	✓	COMMUNITY SAFETY	
EQUALITIES	✓	ENVIRONMENT	
FINANCIAL	✓	CONSULTATIONS	
STAFFING	✓	OTHER	✓

**WARDS AFFECTED:**

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**PURPOSE**

1. The purpose of this report is to update Members on progress in implementing the action plan to deliver the Joint Review of Social Services.

**RECOMMENDATION(S)**

2. **Scrutiny is recommended to note progress on the Action Plan to deliver the Joint Review of Social Services.**

**REPORT**

3. Members will be aware that a Joint Review of Luton Social Services was carried out by a team working on behalf of the Audit Commission and the Social Services Inspectorate with six weeks of on-site work taking place in May and June 2003.
4. The Report set out the Joint Review's assessment of the Authority, which was that Social Services serve most people in Luton well and the prospects for improvement are promising. The report highlighted areas where we are doing particularly well in comparison with other similar authorities and

identifies the key issues that need to be addressed for Social Services to improve further.

5. The key issues have been examined and an Action Plan outlining the tasks that require to be taken to address the issues has been formulated. Since its approval by the Executive on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2004, the Action Plan has been agreed, and has been formally handed over to the Commission for Social Care Inspection who are monitoring its implementation. Our progress on delivering the action plan was critical in determining our Social Services performance assessment in November 2004 and the Corporate Performance Assessment in December 2004.
6. There is ongoing work with partner organisations to ensure their co-operation and implementation of the Plan
7. The Executive agreed the prioritisation of the issues to be addressed arising from the Joint Review into two phases. The first phase concentrated on:
  - Reviewing and developing overall management capacity
  - Addressing statutory issues eg. Children's caseload management
  - Addressing and improving performance measured through Key Performance Indicators (direct payments, reviews and carer assessments).
  - Completing current organisational change in partnership with Health through Section 31 agreements
8. This report which is in Appendix B notes that considerable progress has been made to deliver the above.
9. The progress report was discussed with CSCI at the quarterly monitoring meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2004.

#### **STAFFING IMPLICATIONS**

10. The Action Plan contains some tasks that relate to staff recruitment and retention, and HR policies and procedures. Any proposals arising from work to be undertaken will be subject to further reports.

#### **EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

11. Information about services, access to services and the assessment for and delivery of quality services all have equalities implications that have been taken into consideration when implementing the Action Plan.

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

12. The Action Plan contains some tasks that carry financial implications. Any proposals to direct resources into particular services will be undertaken within approved budgets and agreed by the departmental Finance Manager with

reports to the Executive where necessary. This report was agreed by the Head of Resources & Performance Review on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2005.

### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

13. The Action Plan contains some tasks that carry financial implications. These will be addressed in due course as and when appropriate. Save for this there are no legal implications to this report and this has been agreed with the relevant solicitor in Legal Services on 24 January 2005.

### **RISK IMPLICATIONS**

14. The Joint Review has identified some aspects of our work that need to be improved. The tasks undertaken to address these aspects will be rigorously monitored by the CSCI and our ability to improve will be reflected in the annual Star Ratings. These actions are therefore not only crucial for the development of our services to the people of Luton but also any future assessment of Luton as a caring and progressive authority.

### **STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTATIONS**

15. Our key partners are involved in delivering many of the recommendations in the action plan.

### **OPTIONS**

16. The Executive could disagree/change any of the progress listed in the Action Plan or change the priorities.

### **APPENDIX**

Appendix A: Joint Review Action Plan.

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Report of the Joint Review of Social Services in Luton Borough Council – SSI/Audit Commission.

### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS** **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972, SECTION 100D**

Report of the Joint Review of Social Services in Luton Borough Council published February 2004.