

This report may be of interest to: Neighbourhood Services Committee, Children's and Youth Committee and Community Learning Committee

## SOCIAL SERVICES ISSUES

Accountable Officer: David Jones (Strategic Director Neighbourhood Services)

Author: David Jones (Strategic Director Neighbourhood Services) - MK253357

### 1. Purpose

1.1 To inform the Committee of some Government announcements with important implications for Milton Keynes and to report on local issues including the performance of some key services.

### 2. Summary

2.1 This report summarises:

- (a) Developments since the publication of the Social Services Paper
- (b) The response, six months after publication, to the recommendations of the local SSI report (**Annexed** to the report)
- (c) The local social care key performance indicators as of 1 June 1999.

### 3. Recommendations

3.1 The Committee is asked to:

- (a) Consider the responses to the local SSI report; and
- (b) Comment on the local performance information.

#### 4. **Background**

4.1 This is the regular report which the designated Director of Social Services provides to this Committee covering strategic issues, matters of particular concern and policy, performance monitoring and review information relating to the Council's Social Services functions. It seeks to cover some notional issues of relevance to the Council as well as some matters specific to Milton Keynes.

4.2 The main proposals of the **Social Services White Paper 'Modernising Social Services'**, published in November 1998, have previously been reported to your Committee.

4.3 Although some changes will require primary legislation, others are already being implemented.

#### 5. **Issues and Choices**

5.1 Recently, all Social Services Authorities were required to complete a **Performance Assessment self evaluation schedule**.

5.2 This covered sections on:

(a) National Priority Guidance

(i) Overall position

(ii) Children's welfare

(iii) Interagency working

(iv) Regulation

(v) Mental Health

(b) promoting Independence: Partnership, prevention and carers grants; and

(c) making the best use of Social Services resources (including examples of possible efficiency and value for money gains and comments on how well the Authority assesses and monitors the use of resources available to Social Services).

5.3 Submissions are being analysed and a monitoring meeting has been arranged for 13 July 1999.

5.4 Feedback has been received on **Milton Keynes Quality Protects Management Action Plan (MAP)**

5.5 The SSI concluded it was a "well evidenced MAP that has based plans on a clear analysis of strengths and weaknesses of the service measured against all the quality protects sub-objectives. Although Milton Keynes described significant gaps in the areas

of management information, the detailed strategy outlined comprehensively addressed the issues to be dealt with”.

- 5.6 Areas requiring specific attention are building a compliance culture to deal with inconsistent application of assessment policy and procedures and developing publicity and information material building on the views of children and young people.
- 5.7 The Service’s strengths were the integration of Quality Protects with the Best Value agenda of the Council, the commissioning arrangements and partnerships with the voluntary sector and the range of initiatives for listening to children.
- 5.8 It is too early for feedback on the **Adult Social Care grant plans**. The partnership grant submission has been made but the deadline for prevention and carer grants has not yet been reached.

### **Milton Keynes SSI Report**

- 5.9 This report, which one of four inspections of Local Authorities where social services are combined with other functions, was published in November 1998.
- 5.10 It was generally a positive report although the SSI recognised it would be some years before services were fully developed.
- 5.11 A six month progress report on the eight recommendations was required. This was sent in May and is reproduced in an Annex to this report.
- 5.12 The responses are largely self explanatory. Some work will be ongoing such as the production of information to the public.
- 5.13 At the time of writing, the timescale for the work on the Saxon Court reception area had not been finalised.
- 5.14 Proposals on changes to joint planning and commissioning with the Health Authority were not presented to the recent Health Forum meeting. It was agreed that more consultation with stakeholder, including users and carers was necessary, prior to finalising proposals.
- 5.15 Information on **Local Social Care Key Performance Indicators** continues to be produced on a monthly basis and circulated to all Members of the Council.
- 5.16 The headline information as of 1 June 1999 has already been circulated.
- 5.17 The main points were:
  - (a) There continues to be a high proportion of Looked After Children places with foster carers or adoptive parents and 70% are placed locally.
  - (b) There has been a further reduction of older people awaiting residential care placements.
  - (c) There has been a steady increase over recent months in the number of people over 65 supported at home by Home Care.

- 5.18 Information on the position as of 1 July 1999 should have been published by the date of the meeting.
- 5.19 The Council responded to the consultation on the **'key statistics' to be part of the Performance Assessment framework** outlined in the Modernising Social Services White Paper. 46 Performance Indicators were proposed covering the full range of social care activity.
- 5.20 The local PI s will be amended soon so they are in line with the new national requirements.

## 6. **Implications**

### 6.1 Environmental

There are no direct implications.

### 6.2 Equalities

Equalities must have a central place in the delivery of quality services.

### 6.3 Financial

Officers are seeking to achieve the maximum benefit from the new Quality Protects and Modernisation Grants.

### 6.4 Legal

Some of the White Paper proposals will require primary legislation.

### 6.5 Staff and Accommodation

Some additional staff will be employed funded by the new grants.

## 7. **Conclusions**

- 7.1 Milton Keynes Council has continued to give high priority to the implementation of the modernisation agenda and to the recommendations of the local SSI report.

Background Papers: Inspection of Local Authorities where Social Services are combined with other functions: Milton Keynes Unitary Authority (November 1998)

Modernising Social Services (White Paper – November 1998)