

**THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA****CABINET - 22 FEBRUARY 2007****REPORT BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR FAMILY AND  
CHILDREN'S SERVICES****JOINT AREA REVIEW AND ENHANCED YOUTH INSPECTION**

This report informs the Cabinet of the outcome of the recent Joint Area Review of Children's services and the related youth service inspection. The Joint Area Review rates services as outstanding in almost all respects.

**FOR INFORMATION****1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 Joint Area Reviews are a novel approach to inspecting children's services as a whole in local areas, introduced as part of the national *Every Child Matters* change programme. They cover all services for children and young people, not just those delivered by the Council, but also schools, the police, health services and the voluntary and community sectors. Joint Area Reviews (JARs) are undertaken by teams of inspectors representing all the relevant inspectorates. The outcome contributes the children's services block score for Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) of the Council as a whole, but the JAR also feeds directly into the corporate CPA inspection.
- 1.2 There is a three year programme of JARs which will cover every principal local authority in England between 2006 and 2009. JARs are carried out simultaneously with CPA corporate inspections and with enhanced inspections of youth services by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted). There is a related programme of inspections of Youth Offending Teams.
- 1.3 The Kensington and Chelsea JAR was conducted by a team of ten inspectors who were on site for three weeks in September and October 2006. The reports of the JAR and Enhanced Youth Inspection were published by Ofsted on 6 February 2007.

## **2. INSPECTION METHODOLOGY**

2.1 Joint Area Reviews employ a comprehensive approach and collate a vast amount of information and evidence. The main sources of evidence are:-

- A large data set of statistical and performance information benchmarked against comparable councils
- A survey of 600 children aged nine to 15 years who attend a sample of local state funded schools
- An Audit Commission survey of the views of head teachers
- A detailed self assessment supported by case studies
- An analysis of a standard set of documents such as policies, procedures, management minutes and strategic plans
- A sample of 100 cases of children in need, including child protection and looked after children cases
- Detailed work on a random selection of ten of these case, including questionnaires to all the professionals involved with the child, reading the files of all agencies involved in the case, and follow up interviews with parents, children (if appropriate) and the professional network.
- A week on site to analyse documentary evidence and read case files
- Two weeks of fieldwork, including visits to services, observation of a 'duty' social work team, interviews and focus groups with children, young people, parents, staff, elected members and partner organisations. This included a 'neighbourhood study' of north Kensington.

2.2 The enhanced youth inspection employed a similar range of evidence but particularly focused on direct observation of youth work practice in the full range of settings. In total 22 youth work sessions were observed involving more than 500 young people.

2.3 In total the JAR inspectors visited 80 locations, conducted 35 individual interviews, and 26 focus groups involving over 160 parents, young people, staff and representatives of partner organisations. The inspection team compiled over 3000 separate records of evidence to inform their conclusions.

## **3. REPORTS AND FINDINGS**

3.1 Copies of the JAR and enhanced youth inspection reports are appended to this report. Also appended is a report for children and young people produced by the JAR inspection team. This is a summary of the messages from children and young people which informed the conclusions.

- 3.2 The headline findings of the JAR are summarised in the grades set out on page 11 of the report. Not only were children's services in Kensington and Chelsea rated outstanding overall, the inspectors rated Kensington and Chelsea outstanding in ten out of a possible 12 aspects.
- 3.3 Outstanding grades were awarded for:
- Children's services overall
  - Education services
  - Social Care services
  - Being healthy
  - Staying safe
  - Enjoy and achieve
  - Making a positive contribution
  - Service management
  - Overall capacity to improve
  - Capacity to improve council services
- 3.4 The two other grades, for economic well-being and health services were both 'good.'
- 3.5 These grades are by far the best achieved in any Joint Area Review to date:
- Only one other council – the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames - has achieved an overall 'outstanding' in a Joint Area Review.
  - Nationally, 52 councils have been inspected and overall 624 grades have been awarded.
  - Of the 624 grades, 25 are 'outstanding;' ten of which are awarded to Kensington and Chelsea.
  - Kensington and Chelsea is also the only council to date to be graded as 'outstanding' for the crucial outcome areas of 'staying safe' and 'being healthy.'
- 3.6 The enhanced youth inspection report concludes that Kensington and Chelsea has 'a good youth service with many strong features'. There were many examples of outstanding work noted. All four aspects inspected are graded as good: standards of young people's achievements; quality of youth work practice; quality of curriculum and resources; and strategic and operational leadership and management.
- 3.7 This represents significant improvement since the last full inspection of youth services and compares very favourably with the results of such inspections in other areas. The report notes that Kensington and Chelsea allocates a relatively high proportion of funding to

youth work compared to similar authorities but concludes that 'the service provides good value for money for this investment'.

3.8 The Joint Area Review report makes three recommendations. These are:

- Agreed plans to establish a joint commissioning business unit should be accelerated to ensure greater consistency in purchasing placements and services, to facilitate the aggregation of needs data and the collation of local intelligence on effective working.
- Strengthen services to support the economic wellbeing of families and young people. This should include adult and community learning, level 2 and 3 achievement rates for young people by 19 years of age and the full implementation of the 14-19 strategy.
- The council and PCT should develop a formal process to regularly evaluate the impact of the PCT deficit on the development and implementation of joint services for children and young people in RBKC to ensure this does not have an adverse impact on outcomes.

3.9 Three areas for development are identified in the enhanced youth inspection report:

- Improve the way that young people's progress is recorded and develop the use of accreditation.
- Meet the training and supervision needs of all part-time staff.
- Further develop measures to assess value for money and the impact of improvement activities.

#### **4. NEXT STEPS**

4.1 The Council is required to produce a written statement or action plan, setting out how it will respond to the JAR recommendations, within 70 days of receipt i.e. by 18 May 2007. This document must be sent to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills and the Chief Inspector of Schools.

4.2 The requirement to produce an action plan will help maintain the focus on continuously improving outcomes for children and young people, which has been fundamental to achieving such pleasing and positive outcomes to the inspections.

4.3 The recent White Paper on Local Government indicated that Joint Area reviews are unlikely to continue beyond 2009. Instead the assessment of children's services will be incorporated in new Comprehensive Area Assessments. It may therefore be many years before such a comprehensive inspection of children's services in Kensington and Chelsea is undertaken again.

**FOR INFORMATION**

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