

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Inspection of West Berkshire Children's Services by the Commission for Social Care Inspection</b>	<b>Item 4</b>
<b>Report to be considered by:</b>	<b>Executive</b>	
<b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>	EX0841	

<b>Corporate Plan Priority:</b>	<b>S4: achieving better and fairer outcomes for children and young people by delivering high quality integrated services through partnership</b>
The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the above Corporate Plan priority by: <i>Continuing to improve social care, and integrated, services to vulnerable children and families in West Berkshire</i>	

**Purpose of Report:** To inform the Executive of the findings of the CSCI following its inspection of Children's Services, and of the Action Plan developed to address the Commission's recommendations.

**Recommended Action:** To accept the CSCI report, and to approve the Action Plan.

**Reason for decision to be taken:** To respond to the CSCI inspection of Children's Services.

**List of other options considered:** N/A

**Key background documentation:**

- CSCI Inspection Report
- Action Plan

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### Implications

**Policy:** The report confirms the Council's policy direction for Children's Services, and makes recommendations for further areas of development

## Supporting Information

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### 1. Background

- 1.1 The Commission for Social Care Inspection was set up in 2003 to replace the Social Services Inspectorate. It is responsible for inspecting and approving all social care services in England
- 1.2 Children's Services in West Berkshire were last inspected in July 2001. They were judged then to be **“serving some children well, with promising capacity for improvement.”**
- 1.3 Since then the service has undertaken a significant development and improvement programme, as part of the integrated Children & Young People Directorate.
- 1.4 This inspection examined in detail every aspect of Children's Services, against the following standards:
- National Priorities and Strategic Objectives
  - Effectiveness of Service Delivery & Outcomes
  - Quality of Services for Users and Carers
  - Fair Access
  - Cost & Efficiency
  - Management & Resources
- 1.5 This inspection took place in July 2004, during which time officers, partner agency representatives, stakeholders, members and service users were interviewed, policies and services examined, and a revised judgement formed as to the current performance of children's social care services.
- 1.6 This judgement will feed into the revised annual “star rating” for social care services published by Government in the Autumn, and subsequently into the refreshed C.P.A. judgement for the Council
- 1.7 The report recognises a number of strengths in the political, strategic and operational management of the service, and acknowledges considerable progress made over the last three years, particularly in the development of preventative and restorative practice and services, aimed at keeping families together and supporting families to meet the needs of their children. Our work on family support, Family Group Conferences and Kinship Care was recognised as of high quality.
- 1.8 The practice of front-line social workers in the service was seen as a real strength, valued by children and families, and focussed on the best interests, and achieving the best outcomes, for children.
- 1.9 The inspection has also recognised the significant steps taken already towards effective integrated services for children, as mandated in the recent Green Paper and the Children Bill currently before Parliament.
- 1.10 A number of areas for development have helpfully been identified, and these will be taken forward, through the appended action plan, to bring about further improvements in the Council's services to vulnerable children and their families.

## Appendices

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Appendix 4(a) - CSCI Inspection Report (*please note that this report is embargoed until 9<sup>th</sup> September*)

Appendix 4(b) – Action Plan (*please note that this report is embargoed until 9<sup>th</sup> September*)

## Consultation Responses

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<b>Local Stakeholders:</b>	Interviewed during the inspection, and will continue to be involved in service development
<b>Officers Consulted:</b>	Involved in the inspection, and will continue to be involved in service development
<b>Trade Union:</b>	N/A