

# MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

## Corporate Parenting Board

<b>LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN STATISTICAL UPDATE</b>
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**Executive Member for Children, Families & Learning: Cllr Mike Carr**

**Director of Children, Families & Learning: Gill Rollings**

**7 July 2011**

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### **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1. To provide the Corporate Parenting Board with statistical information regarding Looked After Children in the care of Middlesbrough Council.

### **SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

2. It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Board advise the Executive to note the statistical update on children looked after.

### **IF THIS IS A KEY DECISION, WHICH KEY DECISION TEST APPLIES?**

3. It is over the financial threshold (£75,000)   
It has a significant impact on 2 or more wards   
Non Key

### **DECISION IMPLEMENTATION DEADLINE**

4. For the purposes of the scrutiny call in procedure this report is

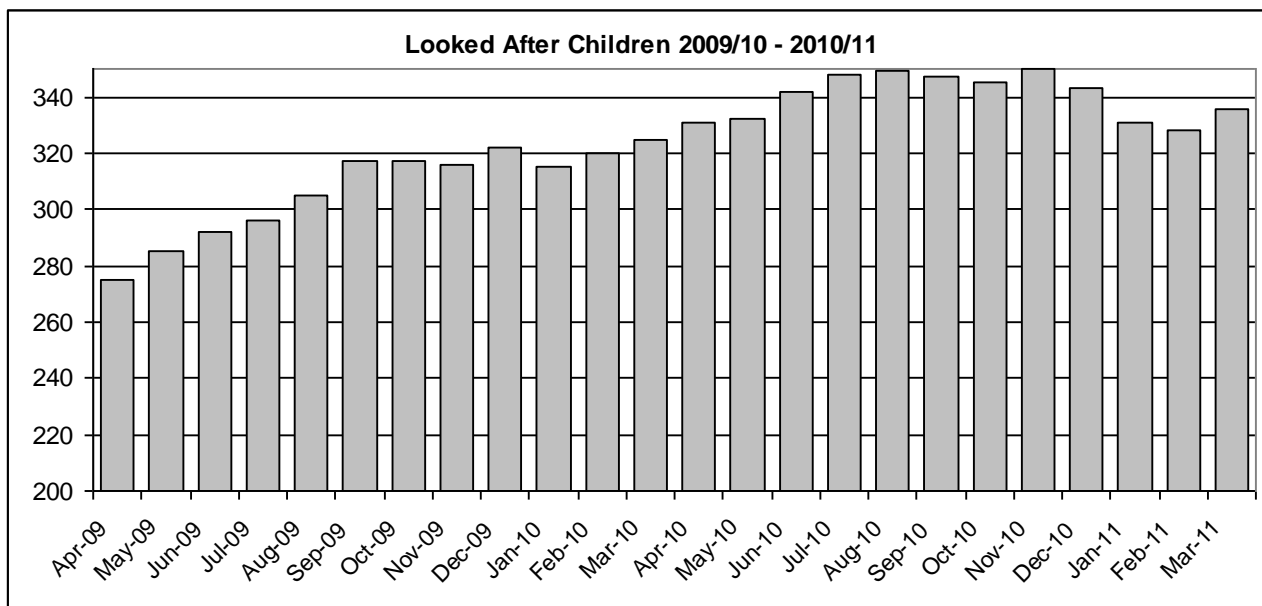
Non-urgent   
Urgent report

### **BACKGROUND & EXTERNAL CONSULTATION**

5. The provision of services to looked after children is a core statutory function and corporate responsibility. For over a decade, the government has maintained a clear focus on improving services for this group of young people. This is reflected in the range of local government targets and performance indicators relating to looked after children.
6. Government guidance for elected Members on corporate parenting identifies the need for Members to receive regular statistical updates on the numbers of children being looked after by the authority.

## NUMBERS OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC)

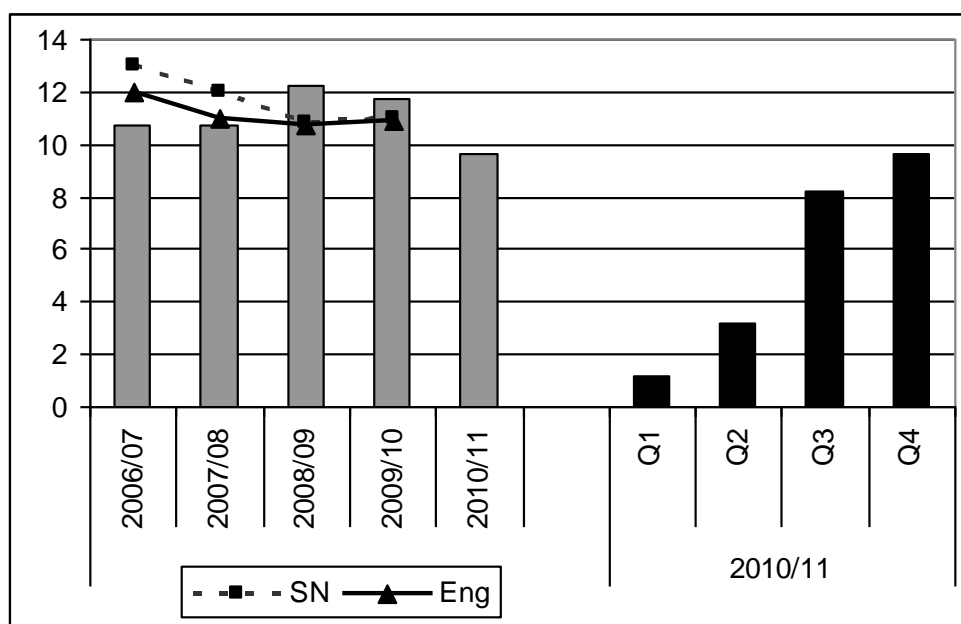
7. The number of LAC showed a 3.4% increase between March 2010 (325) and March 2011 (336). The number has continued to rise into 2011/12, reaching 349 at the end of May, which represents a return to the very high levels experienced in the period July - November 2010.



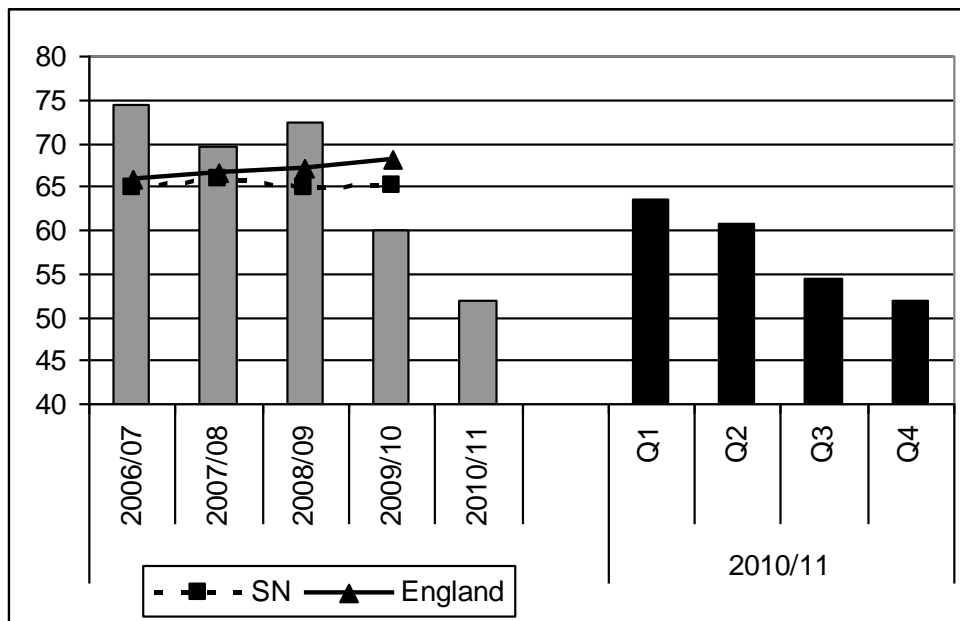
8. The rate of LAC per 10,000 under-18s increased in 2010/11 from 103 to 107 compared with a national average of 58 and an average for Middlesbrough's statistical neighbours of 84.

## STABILITY OF PLACEMENTS

9. The percentage of LAC who had three or more separate placements during the year (NI 62), reduced from 11.7% to 9.6% in 2010/11, which is better national and statistical neighbour averages.



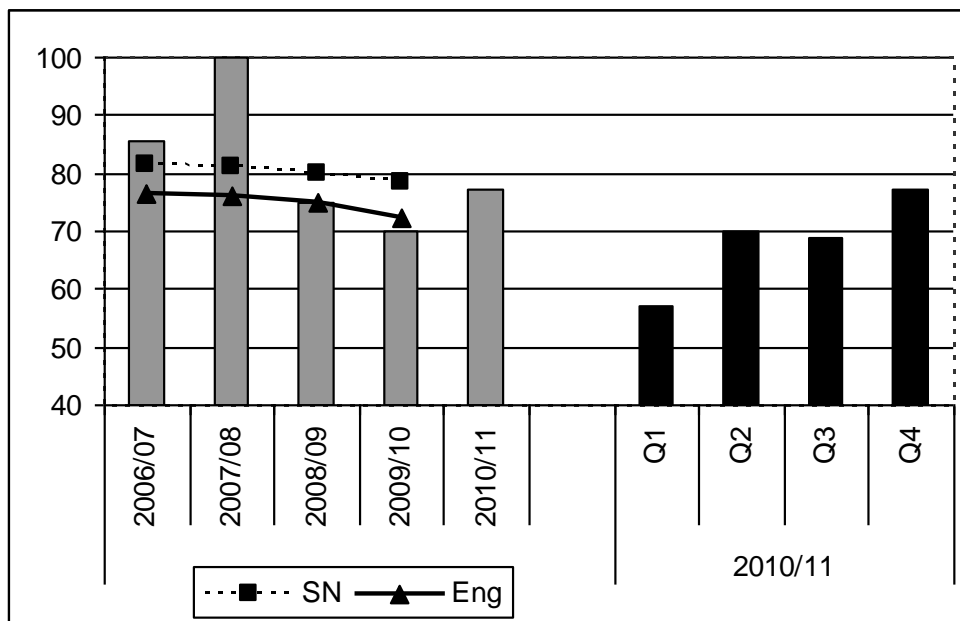
10. The percentage of children looked after who had been living in the same placement for at least two years (NI63) declined in 2010/11 from 60% to 52%, which is well below all comparator averages.



11. Despite the reported trend for this indicator, individual case information indicates that there have been positive outcomes for a number of children as they have moved into adoption placements.

### ADOPTION PLACEMENTS

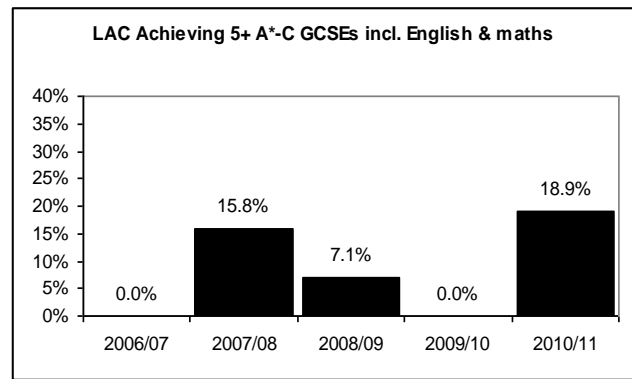
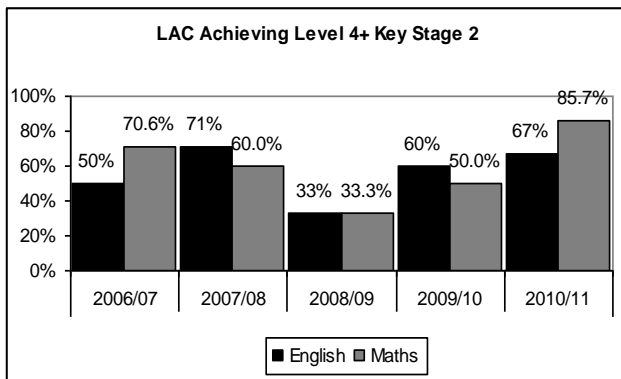
12. The percentage of looked after children placed for adoption within 12 months of the decision being made improved significantly in 2010/11, rising from 70% to 77.3%, which is well above the national average of 72.4%. The 2010/11 out turn is also better than local performance in 2008/09.



13. The cohort of children for this indicator is typically small and can vary significantly from year to year, e.g. there were 10 cases in total during 2009/10 whilst there were been 22 cases in 2010/11. This can cause significant swings in the percentages reported year on year and it does not accurately reflect the number of children being placed for adoption, e.g. the 7 children placed for adoption within the timescale in 2009/10 produced a performance figure of 70% whilst the 77.3% reported for quarter three relates to 17 children having been placed for adoption so far this year, a 143% increase in the number of placements.

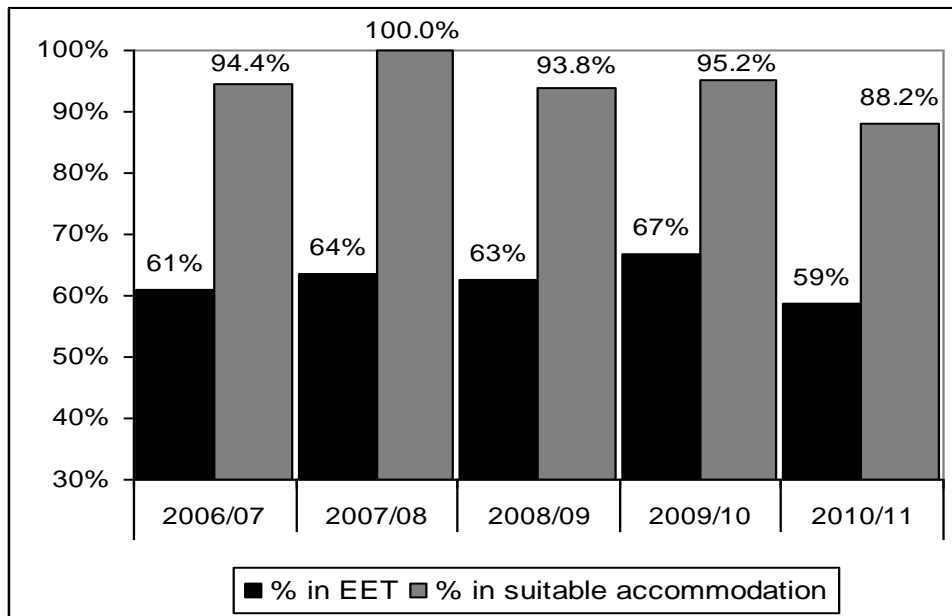
**EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT OF CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER**

14. The Corporate Parenting Board received a detailed report on the educational achievement of children looked after at its January 2011 meeting. Summary details are provided below.
15. LAC achievement at Key Stage 2 and at GCSE level showed significant improvement year on year, taking local performance well above the national and statistical neighbour comparators.



**CARE LEAVERS**

16. Outcomes for care leavers showed a decline year on year.



17. The percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation (NI 147) fell from 95.2% to 88.2% in 2010/11, which is below national and statistical neighbour averages. Two young people in the cohort were in prison at the end of the year and these were the only care leavers who were not in suitable accommodation.
18. The percentage of care leavers in employment, education or training (NI 148) declined from 67% to 59% in 2010/11, falling slightly below the statistical neighbour average (60.8%).

### **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

19. All social care services are delivered within a framework of anti-discriminatory practice and there are no specific issues arising from the information presented within this report.

### **OPTION APPRAISAL/RISK ASSESSMENT**

20. The sustained high numbers of children looked after by the local authority continues to put increased pressure on the services providing support for children and their families. New front of house arrangements to improve the quality of assessments and referrals to support services are now in place and there has been sustained progress in reducing the number of children who are subject to a child protection plan, which is expected to have an impact on LAC numbers.

### **FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND WARD IMPLICATIONS**

21. There are no immediate implications arising from this report.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

22. It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Board advises the Executive to note the statistical update on children looked after by the local authority.

### **REASON**

23. To ensure that elected Members are aware of current information regarding outcomes for children looked after by the local authority.

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

24. The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:
  - CFL's Safeguarding Performance Workbook for quarter 4 of 2010/11

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