

## OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY BOARD

20 NOVEMBER 2007

### CHILDREN AND LEARNING SCRUTINY PANEL

#### - PROGRESS REPORT

#### PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. To provide members of the Overview and Scrutiny Board (OSB) with an update on the work of the Children and Learning Scrutiny Panel.

#### BACKGROUND

2. The Children and Learning Scrutiny Panel is continuing its investigation of “early years outcomes and Surestart”. Since the panel’s last update to OSB, the panel has met once (17<sup>th</sup> October 2007) and has also visited a Sure Start scheme (31 October 2007).
3. The 17 October meeting considered information in respect of the following term of reference:  
  
*“To assess the impact of key plans and strategies and national guidance on early years learning outcomes and service provision.”*
4. Officers from Children, Families and Learning presented information in respect of the main directives, plans and strategies that are driving early years service provision nationally, and also in relation to developments in Middlesbrough. The panel found that there is a large number (over 60) early years projects and schemes that are currently being delivered directly by Sure Start, or in partnership with a wide range of external agencies. Examples were considered of schemes that have been developed specifically in Middlesbrough.
5. In terms of national guidance and initiatives, the panel heard that there have been numerous developments over the last ten years which have resulted in a constantly changing picture in respect of early years service provision.

6. Members of the scrutiny panel visited the Abingdon Sure Start scheme on 31 October. The panel also took the opportunity to visit the linked private day nursery and Abingdon Primary School. The purpose of the visits, which provided some very useful information for the panel's investigation, was to speak to service users and staff and to see first hand how the service operates and links with other early years provision.
7. The panel's findings will be included in its final report on this topic, which will be submitted to OSB in due course.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

8. That the Overview and Scrutiny Board notes the updated position in respect of the work of the Children and Learning Scrutiny Panel.

**COUNCILLOR TONY BISHOP  
CHAIR OF THE CHILDREN AND LEARNING SCRUTINY PANEL**

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