

## **Children's Services Scrutiny Committee – 16 November 2011**

### **Report of the Acting Director of Children's Services**

#### **Directorate of Children's Services – Contextual Information regarding Performance in the Following Areas:-**

1. Number of children subject to a child protection plan per 10,000 of the child population

#### **Purpose of Report**

2. To inform members of the committee about specific performance measures, and factors affecting performance measures, in a small number of specific areas highlighted in the quarterly reporting process.
3. To inform members of actions being taken and which are planned, to improve performance.

#### **Background**

4. The Directorate of Children's Services reports regularly to Scrutiny Committee on issues where we are performing below target in order to help members understand why this is the case, and what the Directorate of Children's Services and the Children and Young People's Partnership is doing to improve. This report is based upon the performance measures within our Directorate Strategic Plan. In some cases performance measures have not changed since last time as they are based upon data that is only reported annually e.g. examination results.
5. It should be remembered that these matters are reported in the overall context of Children's Services having been judged as good in Dudley in the 2010 Annual Assessment conducted by OfSTED

#### **Number of children subject to a child protection plan per 10,000 of the child population**

6. Our target for this indicator for 2011/12 is 34.3 (per 10,000) but actual performance was 33.4. This is a relatively small variation from the target. We are seeking to bring our proportion of young people who are subject to a child

7. protection plans more into line with the national average. OfSTED judges that in Dudley Assessments undertaken as part of child protection investigations are thorough, and children and young people are seen and their views are recorded. A clear analysis of risk and protective factors inform actions and ensures that children and young people are adequately protected. We continue to ensure that every case referred to children's social care is assessed thoroughly on its individual merits.

Ensuring vulnerable children and young people are safe from maltreatment / neglect:

8. At the Members Performance Sub Group it was requested that in the Performance Management Report under section HW2.2a in relation to Ensuring that vulnerable children and young people are safe from maltreatment and neglect a response be prepared from Children's Services. A supplementary report will be provided for Children's Services Scrutiny Committee Members at the committee meeting scheduled for January 2012 which links in with the safeguarding theme for the evening.

**Finance**

8. There are no direct financial consequences arising from the information contained within the report. The work in relation to monitoring performance information from the directorate is met from existing budgets.

**Law**

9. The main pieces of legislation governing these aspects of our work are the Children Act 2004 and the Education and Inspections Act of 2006.

**Equality Impact**

10. OfSTED judges that Dudley's Services for all children and young people are good but agrees with our self assessment that the progress of children in care and those with learning difficulties/disabilities should continue to be seen as priorities for improvement.

**Recommendation**

11. That the report be noted by the committee.



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**Jane Porter**  
**Acting Director of Children's Services**

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# **Quarterly Corporate Performance Management Report**

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## **Summary for Scrutiny Committee on Children's Services**

**Quarter 1 (April to June 2011)**

# Quarterly Corporate Performance Management Report

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## Section 1: Introduction

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This is the first Quarterly Corporate Performance Management Report of 2011/12 highlighting performance for the period April 1<sup>st</sup> 2011 to June 30<sup>th</sup> 2011.

The report represents local people matters and priorities contained within a number of key activities and indicators. This report is the first under the new streamlined performance reporting regime, following the abolition of CAA and the national performance indicator framework. There has been a radical reduction in the number of indicators in the Council Plan, and a determination to operate a revised, slimmed down performance reporting system that focuses on the key local outcomes. Our aim is to reduce the bureaucracy of performance reporting but to make our local priorities and our performance more open and transparent.

Following consideration by Corporate Board, the Cabinet Performance Management Sub-Group and Cabinet, this report will be made available to the public via the internet.

A performance summary, incorporating the key service achievements and issues affecting Dudley MBC during quarter 1, is included in **Section 2**.

The main body of the report focuses on the seven priorities contained in the Council Action Plan and progress against the key performance indicators and activities used to determine our delivery of these priorities is included in **Section 3**.

**Section 4** includes current sickness absence information for the year to date, together with trend data for comparison.

## Section 2: Performance Summary Quarter 1 2011/12

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This section summarises the performance information and key achievements and issues affecting children's services in Dudley that are addressed in detail in the main body of the report.

There follows a brief summary of performance for each Council Plan priority, including any significant achievements and challenges. The detail behind these headlines is included in Section 3 of the report.

### Individual and Community Learning Performance Review

**Spot Light: - Page 6 – HW2.2a:**

**Ensure that vulnerable children and young people are safe from maltreatment and neglect:**

There has been an increase in numbers of children with child protection plan and significant challenges around children and young people who are victims of sexual exploitation which is the focus for sub regional work. Children's centre specifications have been reviewed to ensure that we are able to identify families in need at the earliest opportunity and target interventions.

## Section 3: Reporting on Council Action Plan Priorities

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The Council Plan 2013 sets out the Authority's priorities for the three year period 2010-2013. It provides a focus on where we want to be over the next three years and outlines how we are planning to meet a combination of key drivers:

- National priorities set by Central Government
- Aspirations of the Dudley Community Strategy 2020
- Issues that matter most to local people
- The unique challenges arising from the economic climate

This section provides a detailed review of the progress of the key performance indicators and activities contained within the Council Action Plan.

Traffic light status indicators are used to denote performance as follows:

In terms of the **key activities** they represent the following progress:

- ★ Good (ahead of schedule)
- Fair (on schedule)
- ▲ Poor (behind schedule)

For **key performance indicators** they represent performance as:


- ★ Better than target limits
- Within target limits
- ▲ Worse than target limits


Comments are included for key performance indicators where performance is below target limits or where additional, useful intelligence is available.

Scrutiny Committees receive a summary of this report based on their areas of interest. For clarity, key performance indicator scorecards include reference to the Scrutiny Committee monitoring its performance.



## Health and well-being

Priority HW2 Tackle inequality in physical health and mental well-being				
Objective 1 Improve people's physical health				
ref	Key Activities	Status	Progress	Lead Officer
HW2.1b	Reduce harm to children by limiting the access to alcohol and tobacco		For the first quarter 20 test purchases for alcohol were carried out with 1 sales and 6 test purchases for tobacco were carried out with no sales.	Nick Powell DUE

Priority HW2 Tackle inequality in physical health and mental well-being				
Objective 2 Improve people's mental health and well-being to ensure vulnerable people are safeguarded				
ref	Key Activities	Status	Progress	Lead Officer
HW2.2a	Ensure that vulnerable children and young people are safe from maltreatment and neglect		Director of Children's Service (DCS) is working effectively with partners through the Dudley Safeguarding Children's Board (DSCB) and Directorate safeguarding boards to implement strategies to keep children and young people safe from harm .We have a specific focus on neglect and training has been delivered to social work teams and partners to assist in the identification and management of neglect. A draft threshold document to assist partners in accessing "Right services, right time Right place "has been produced and will be rolled out to all partners in the Autumn. There has been an increase in numbers of children with a child protection plan and significant challenges around children and young people who are victims of sexual exploitation which is the focus for sub regional work .Children's centre specifications have been reviewed to ensure that we are able to identify families in need at the earliest opportunity and target interventions.	Pauline Sharratt DCS

HW2.2b	Ensure looked after children have good care, security, stability and achieve the best possible outcomes	●	Performance on placement stability has been maintained at a high level and has been assisted by the provision of KEEP which is an approach which supports foster carers in managing challenging behaviours .All of our children's homes are rated good or outstanding for the care they deliver Adoption service was rated 'good' in its last inspection. Educational performance at GCSE level is good with a significant rise in numbers of young people moving on to further education.	Pauline Sharratt DCS
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### Key Performance Indicators

Direct	Ref	Definition	10/11 Target	10/11 Actual	11/12 Target	Q1 Actual	Q2 Actual	Q3 Actual	Q4 Actual	Select Committee
DCS	DCS NI 148	Care leavers in employment, education and training	-	Available in July	60%	57.1% ●				Children's Services
DCS	DCS NI 59	% of initial assessments for children's social care carried out in less than 7 working days	-		67%	59.1% ●				Children's Services
DCS	XXX 71	Number of looked after children per 10K of the child population		94	94	95 ●				Children's Services
DCS	XXX 72	Number of children subject to a child protection plan per 10K of the child population		34.6	34.3	33.4 ● ● ● ▲				Children's Services

## Individual and Community Learning

Objective 2 To improve numeracy, literacy and life skills of children and adults to improve life chances.				
ICL1.2a	Improve outcomes for children aged 0-11 (early years and primary)	●	Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) monitoring of schools in OfSTED categories (notice to improve or special measures) are making good progress. Early results for the Early Years Foundation Stage suggest Dudley's recent improvements are set to continue.	Dave Perrett DCS
ICL1.2b	Improve outcomes for children and young people aged 11-19 years (or aged 25 for those with disabilities)	●	It is hoped the new strategic improvement plan will help all schools to sustain their recent levels of progress.	Dave Perrett DCS

### Priority ICL2 Remove barriers to learning and supporting local people, particularly vulnerable groups, to raise their aspirations and to realise their potential

Objective 1 To narrow the gap in educational achievement between vulnerable key groups of children and young people and the borough average				
ICL2.1a	Improve outcomes for children aged 0-11 (early years and primary)	●	Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) monitoring of schools in OfSTED categories (notice to improve or special measures) are making good progress. Early results for the Early Years Foundation Stage suggest Dudley's recent improvements are set to continue.	Dave Perrett DCS
ICL2.1b	Improve outcomes for children and young people aged 11-19 years (or aged 25 for those with disabilities)	●	It is hoped the new strategic improvement plan will help all schools to sustain their recent levels of progress.	Dave Perrett DCS

### Key Performance Indicators

Direct	Ref	Definition	10/11 Target	10/11 Actual	11/12 Target	Q1 Actual	Q2 Actual	Q3 Actual	Q4 Actual	Select Committee
DCS	DCS NI 117	16-18 years olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)	n/a	4.1%	To be set	Not yet Available				Children's Services

## Community Safety

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Objective 5 Children and young people substance misuse: Increase the number of young people leaving specialist treatment in a planned way				
CS1.5a	Ensure that a referral process is in place and implemented for those children and young people leaving specialist treatment and in need of other services on exit	★	Implementation of Common Assessment Framework (CAF) process and protocols now signed off by Children & Young person substance group. (C&Y PSM) Being embedded within the Zone together with step down process for those, being referred on to receive other targeted or universal services.	Audrey Heer CEX
CS1.5b	Ensure that there is an effective transition process in place for those young people leaving specialist treatment at the Zone and entering treatment with CRI (Adult Drug Service) or Aquarius (Adult Alcohol Service)	★	Referral pathways agreed and implemented with Aquarius. Transitional policy with CRI now updated and signed off.	Audrey Heer CEX

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## **Meetings of Scrutiny Committees – November 2011**

### **Report of the Chief Executive and Treasurer**

#### **Update of the Council's Capital Strategy**

##### **Purpose of Report**

1. To consider the update of the Council's Capital Strategy.

##### **Background**

2. The Strategy describes how the deployment of capital resources contributes to the achievement of the Council's goals, and to help ensure that assets - and the resources tied up in them - are efficiently and effectively used.
3. It forms an integral part of the strategic financial and service planning within the annual budget setting process and supports decisions on the Council's capital investment.
4. The Capital Strategy also forms part of the Council's Budget and Policy Framework, and can therefore be amended only by the full Council following consideration by the Scrutiny Committees. The attached draft was approved by Cabinet on 26<sup>th</sup> October as the basis for consultation.
5. It sets out the key Capital Investment Priorities for each Directorate over the next five years, linked to the relevant Council Plan theme(s).
6. The paragraphs within the draft Strategy covering services falling within the terms of reference of each Scrutiny Committee are:

##### **Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education Scrutiny Committee**

*Para 15: Urban Environment – Culture and Leisure*

*Para 17: Adult, Community & Housing - Libraries, Archives and Adult Learning*

*Para 18: Urban Environment – Transport*

*Para 19: Urban Environment – Regeneration*

*Para 21: Chief Executive's – Other Services*

*Para 22: Corporate Resources*

##### **Community Safety and Community Services Scrutiny Committee**

*Para 20: Chief Executive's – Community Safety*

##### **Environment Scrutiny Committee**

*Para 13: Adult, Community and Housing – Housing*

*Para 14: Urban Environment – Environment*

## **Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee**

*Para 12: Adult, Community and Housing - Adult & Community*

## **Children's Services Scrutiny Committee**

*Para 16: Children's Services*

### **Finance**

7. As described above, the Capital Strategy forms an integral part of the Council's strategic financial and service planning and supports decisions on capital investment.

### **Law**

10. Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 enables the Council to do anything which is calculated to facilitate or which is conducive or incidental to the discharge of any of its statutory functions.

The production of the strategy is incidental to the Council's various functions outlined in the strategy which are undertaken by the Council pursuant to a range of Local Government related legislation.

### **Equality Impact**

11. The proposed Capital Strategy complies with the Council's policy on equal opportunities.
12. With regard to Children and Young People:
  - The Capital Investment Priorities for Children's Services wholly relate to improving services for children and young people. Other Directorates' investment priorities will also have a significant impact on this group.
  - Consultation is undertaken with children and young people, if appropriate, when developing individual Capital projects.
  - There has been no direct involvement of children and young people in developing the proposals in this report.

### **Recommendation**

13. It is recommended that the Scrutiny Committees consider the attached draft Capital Strategy and raise any issues they wish to be taken into account when the Strategy is re-considered by Cabinet, and full Council.

John Polychronakis

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**John Polychronakis**  
**Chief Executive**



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**Iain Newman**  
**Treasurer**

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**List of Background Papers**  
Community Strategy  
Council Plan



# Capital Strategy

2012 - 2017



### Introduction

- 1 Dudley has a strong reputation for being an outward-looking Council, working with its diverse communities, customers and other partners to identify and work together on local priorities to improve quality of life. We have recognised that tackling crosscutting issues such as regeneration, social exclusion and sustainable development needs a joined-up approach across Council services, and between the Council and its partners. Our key priorities and targets are set out in the Dudley Borough Community Strategy. This Strategy sets out a vision for our community over a 15-year period. It agrees the most important areas for us to work together with our partners, and sets out what we need to do to achieve that vision.
  
2. At the heart of the Community Strategy is our aim of working together to achieve Stronger Communities. The strength of our community, including its future success requires that everyone has the opportunity to contribute to and achieve their full potential. The Community Strategy outlines six priorities through which progress towards a Fairer Society will be led. These are:
  - **Creating a prosperous borough**
  - **Promoting a sense of well-being and good health for everyone**
  - **Celebrating our heritage and local cultural life**
  - **Safeguarding and improving the environment**
  - **Promoting individual and community learning**
  - **Making Dudley a safe and peaceful place in which to live**
  
3. We recognise that these six priorities do not stand in isolation. Success in one area often depends on success in one or more of the others, but by highlighting them as key issues, the Community Strategy provides a clear signpost to the areas that we intend to concentrate upon.
  
4. Within the framework of the Community Strategy, the Council has also adopted a 3 Year Council Plan, which focuses the overall strategic direction of the authority on a clear set of priorities for deployment of resources. The Council Plan contains seven key themes, which meet the aspirations of the council's overall vision Local People Matter. It clearly sets out the key priorities, objectives and targets for each theme and its local impact. These themes are:
  - **Health and Wellbeing**
  - **Environment and Housing**
  - **Heritage, Culture and Leisure**
  - **Individual and Community Learning**
  - **Jobs and Prosperity**
  - **Community Safety**
  - **Quality Service**
  
5. The Capital Strategy is one of the means by which the priorities of the Community Strategy and Council Plan will be achieved. We recognise that to accomplish our goals, best possible use needs to be made of existing public sector assets, while resources available for new investment must be deployed as efficiently and effectively as possible. The Council's Constitution also recognises the importance of the Capital Strategy by making it one of the key documents which can be revised only by the Full Council.

6. The Capital Strategy itself was developed, and is reviewed annually, by a working group of senior officers including representatives of all Directorates, with input from Directors, and Cabinet & Select Committee members, prior to consideration by the Full Council.
- 6a. *"The Capital Strategy and its priorities recognise current and anticipated demographic changes, including in particular the ageing population in Dudley and its impact on the pattern of demands on services in the future."*

### **Links to other Strategies and Plans**

7. Under the umbrella of the Community Strategy & Council Plan, the Capital Strategy, like the Best Value Performance Plan is one of the key overarching policy documents of the Council that form a framework for the more operational strategies within particular spending or service areas. These include:
  - Corporate Property Policy, Office Accommodation Strategy, Commercial Property Policy and Directorate Asset Plans.
  - Our approved Local Area Agreement (LAA)
  - Children's Services Asset Management Plan
  - Housing Strategy and Housing Investment Programme (HIP)
  - Housing Asset Management Strategy
  - DACHS Asset Management Plan (Draft)
  - Children and Young People's Plan
  - Local Transport Plan (LTP) and Transport Asset Management Plan
  - Economic Strategy
  - 5 Year ICT Strategy
  - Directorate Strategic Plans
  - Procurement Strategy
  - 30 Year Waste Strategy
  - Local Development Framework
  - Health Inequalities Strategy
  - Corporate Health and Safety Strategy
  - Directorate Equality and Diversity Plans
  - Obesity Strategy
  - Strategy for Vulnerable People

The Capital Strategy is consistent with these and other Council plans and policies but should be specifically considered in conjunction with the Corporate Property Policy. The Corporate Property Policy pulls together the Council's various objectives for property and its impact on the wider role of the Council into a coherent framework of values.

8. The Council's Procurement Strategy is also fundamental to Capital Investment processes, and sets out how best value will be achieved in this and all other areas of procurement activity.
9. The Council now has five year Directorate Asset Plans in place for each Directorate. Reviewed annually these documents consider the needs and aspirations of all services in the context of current and future accommodation needs. They are consistent with strategic plans and policies and inform the capital programming process.
10. As these and other policy or strategy documents are developed or revised, they will show clearly how they contribute to the Capital Strategy. The cross-departmental

management framework established to develop the Capital Strategy will ensure that the necessary consistency and feedback into service strategies is achieved.

## **Key Capital Investment Priorities**

11. Key Capital Investment priorities and how they contribute to the Council Plan themes (recognising that many priorities contribute to multiple themes), are as follows.

### **Health and Wellbeing**

#### ***Adult, Community & Housing - Adult & Community***

12. Maintaining and developing an asset base which allows the directorate to modernise and improve social care services, further securing high quality and relevance. The changing policy environment for the most vulnerable groups in contact with the Directorate focuses on promoting independence and providing community-based and person-centred solutions. The need for capital to be used to support this focus drives our capital strategy.

In addition, there is a clear expectation locally and from the Government that services need to be seamless and, wherever appropriate and in the best interests of Dudley citizens, integrated with health care services.

These four goals - community based, person centred, seamless and integrated - also drive our approach to effective partnership working as a vehicle for enhancing limited mainstream capital resources.

For adult social care, developments will be required that meet the aims and ambitions of the Community Services White Paper "Our Health, Our Care, Our Say". Aspects of this include continued close working with the local PCTs and linkage with other solutions such as Extra Care Housing.

Current investment priorities are therefore:

- People with Disabilities: work is continuing with partners in the NHS in using the 'flexibilities' of the Health Act 2006 to secure progress on our shared agenda.
- Older People: our residential home provision must comply with care standards and be appropriate to the needs of residents. Continued investment to comply with the various legislative requirements will continue for the foreseeable future. Extensive public consultation and engagement for service transformation and modernisation has been undertaken through the Dudley Older Peoples Board, the Physical Disability and Sensory Impairment Board. A delivery of adult social care and support model (Access, Reablement, Care and Support) has been developed inclusively with key stakeholders and partner organisations. Budgets and resources have been identified as a part of the three year Council Strategy. Care home provision is planned to be modernised with a re-alignment plan to provide a multi-disciplinary reablement service.
- Extra Care Housing: engaging with the Council's strategic partner Midland Heart to deliver up to five schemes, with one facility being provided in each of the five townships of the Borough - the first two facilities in Russells Hall Dudley (a £20m development of 132 units at Broad Meadow) and Whitehouse St., Coseley (a £7m

- development of 72 units at Willowfields) commenced in 2009. Broad Meadow completed July 2011, with Willowfields programmed for completion later in 2011.
- Day Services: most people with a learning disability will receive their day opportunities in the community and for people with very high dependency, improved centre facilities are required. Over £1m of investment has already been provided at the Unicorn Centre in Amblecote, (the former Amblecote SEC).
  - ICT: is continuing to be developed so that it further enhances service delivery for all the vulnerable groups, e.g. through closer working with health services, and ICT-supported assessment processes.
  - General Accommodation: improving accommodation for staff and where possible integrating these facilities with relevant partners. For example, the Stourbridge Local Improvement Finance Trust (LIFT) facility opened in October 2007 and will house the Community Team for Learning Disability. Building work on the Brierley Hill LIFT facility commenced in June 2007 with completion February 2010. This facility provides accommodation for the Older People/Physical Disability Team which will be co-located with PCT staff. The Council has also now signed up to the Strategic Partnering Agreement for LIFT on a non-exclusive basis and is continuing to explore options for further LIFT facilities within the borough. Asset management plans continue to address streamlining accommodation to meet realigned service delivery requirements.

Prioritisation of resources between schemes is informed by legislative requirements, as well as property and service related data related to schemes under consideration.

The Council's vision for social care provision is based on a mixed economy of care, and decisions on capital expenditure are taken in this context.

## **Environment and Housing**

### ***Adult, Community & Housing - Housing***

13. Ensuring everyone has access to a home that is warm, dry and affordable in a secure environment and that homes are compatible with people's needs. Following a rigorous appraisal of the options available to finance a modern housing service by the Council and its stakeholders, in July 2005 Government Office West Midlands signed off the Housing Option Appraisal report which recommended the 'Stay with the Council' option. This provided a clear endorsement that the key investment priorities for Housing up to 2010/11 were to provide a repair service to maintain and improve the Council's housing stock to ensure that Government Decent Homes standards and targets are met.

The Government's Decent Homes Standard was achieved by December 2010 and It should be noted that the proposed investment from 2012/13 onwards should be considered with caution at this stage since there is uncertainty around levels of future funding of the HRA after 2011/12. The Government proposes to abolish the current HRA subsidy system with effect from 2012/13, and to replace it with a new system of HRA funding. Whilst the impact of these proposed changes are clear any forecasts and investment plans should be treated as provisional, significant Housing investment priorities for the next 5 years are:

- Continuing the investment to target maintaining decent homes;
- Improving energy efficiency, combating climate change and reducing fuel poverty by maximising potential resources to reduce the impact of climate change

- and carbon emissions through accessing Carbon Emission Reduction Target (CERT) and Community Energy Saving Programme (CESP) funding;
- Exploring and maximising opportunities that arise from the Government's Energy Bill, specifically through Green Deal and ECO (Energy Company Obligations), Feed-In-Tariff (FIT) and the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI)
  - Providing additional new housing for larger families and persons with special needs.
  - Maintaining responsive repairs at their current levels to ensure that current service standards can be met and ensuring that a future backlog of routine repairs will not develop;
  - Undertaking all required cyclical statutory responsibilities such as servicing of gas appliances, water hygiene testing, warden call equipment and alarms, and lift servicing;
  - Maintaining current levels of cyclical maintenance such as external painting of properties, communal decorations to high rise and sheltered accommodation;
  - Improving energy efficiency, combating climate change and reducing fuel poverty, targeting those homes with poor energy performance;
  - Maintaining current waiting times for adaptations for persons with disabilities;
  - Maintaining community safety and environmental budgets at current levels;
  - Maintaining other environmental and social programmes to reflect the priorities of the Council Plan and the views of Area Housing Panels, e.g. replacement of Warden Call systems with modern equipment compatible with Telecare technology;
  - Maximising the use of grant and loan assistance to improve and repair non decent homes in the private sector;
  - To sustain our improved performance in providing Disabled Facilities Grants;
  - Continued direction of Homes and Communities Agency funding towards schemes that support regeneration and sustainable priorities and continuing to maximise available and appropriate resources to ensure that local needs determined from the Housing Needs Survey are met;;
  - Working in partnership with the Council's strategic partner Midland Heart for the delivery of 5 Extra Care Housing Schemes across the borough of Dudley with one facility in each of the five principal townships.

### ***Urban Environment - Environment***

14. Promoting and providing effective and efficient waste management and transport to all sections of the community and user groups in a positive, safe and sustainable manner. Key priorities are:
- Improvements to waste infrastructure and implementation of a 30 year strategy;
  - Transition to domestic wheeled bin service;
  - Additional pollution control equipment at Lister Road Waste to Energy plant;
  - Implementation of Asset Management Plan at Lister Road depot;
  - Continued investment in the vehicle fleet, exploring options that will reduce carbon emissions;
  - Identification and remediation of Contaminated Land in line with the Council's Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy, in order to meet our legal obligations under the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

### **Heritage, Culture and Leisure**

#### ***Urban Environment - Culture & Leisure***

15. Safeguarding existing culture and heritage facilities, and developing new ones where appropriate. Key investment priorities over the next 5 years are:
- Provision of replacement cremators at Gornal Wood and Stourbridge Crematoria, and provision of mercury abatement equipment at Gornal Wood.;
  - On-going upgrading of facilities and security of Parks and Open Spaces;
  - Undertake improvements to the Borough's Playing Pitches and Changing Rooms;
  - On-going restoration of the Leasowes, including the provision of a new visitor centre;
  - Provision of new Wardens Base and Visitors Centre at Saltwells Local Nature Reserve;
  - Ongoing investment in major Leisure Centres including plant modernisation and energy efficiency measures;
  - Implementation of Wrens Nest National Nature Reserve 'Ripples Through Time' project following successful HLF Stage 2 submission;
  - Submission of Stage 2 HLF bid for Mary Stevens Park;
  - ;Implementation of Priory Park and Ruins project following successful HLF Stage 2 submission;
  - Conduct Stage 2 of glass feasibility study and implementation of recommendations.

## **Individual and Community Learning**

### ***Children's Services***

16. Providing high quality accommodation with stimulating learning environments for school pupils and members of the community to ensure educational standards continue to rise whilst recognising the increasing diversity of the school estate.

Over the next five years the priorities will be to maximise external investment in the infrastructure from funding provided through the Department for Education (DfE) following radical reforms to how capital is allocated. This will build on considerable investment already made over recent years through DfE capital programmes such as the recently ceased Primary Capital Programme, Extended Schools Programme, Surestart funding and other funding whilst recognising significant reductions to both capital and revenue budgets in the education sector.

Challenges will need to be overcome in view of the proposals put forward by DfE for procurement and project management calling for a more centralised approach and standardisation of design.

Work will continue to ensure that overall patterns of investment from all sources are both "joined-up" and take account of Council priorities. In this broad context, the key investment priorities over the next five years will be:

- To address the backlog of urgent repairs and maintenance identified by condition surveys for all schools.
- To provide inspirational learning environments supported through the Directorate's Vision 2025 – A Strategic Plan for Learning including the replacement of aged mobile classroom accommodation in a number of schools

and the enhancement of existing provision to make it more appropriate for teaching and learning.

- To address the issues of surplus capacity in the both the primary and secondary sectors in line with projects arising from the review of primary and secondary school places.
- To address the issues of Basic Need requirements for additional school places in both the primary and secondary school places through place planning processes.
- To explore potential for further PFI projects to replace those school buildings with the most urgent need, as identified by the principles of Asset Management Planning, including condition and suitability of existing provision and assessment of sufficiency of pupil places.
- To continue effective bidding for external funding to replace those school buildings with the most urgent need as identified by the principles of Asset Management Planning.
- To develop the infrastructure required to deliver the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Strategy, particularly with regard to co-location of services to ensure easy access for children, young people and families.-
- To continue addressing issues regarding access for disabled persons to all buildings.
  
- To implement the outcomes of the 2010-11 Review of Education Capital ( the Sebastian James Review) for the use of innovative methods of procurement and building that will ensure better value for money whilst delivering cost-effective and high quality buildings for education and lifelong learning.
- To ensure the continuing delivery of the Directorate's asset management plan in accordance with DfE requirements especially for the collation of robust data on school places and condition
- To recognise the benefits of using a menu of standard drawings and specifications for buildings including national contract and procurement frameworks
- To ensure revisions to regulations and guidance for school buildings are adhered to and complied with..
- To address effectively issues relating to health and safety, including fire risk, asbestos, legionella and site security.

### ***Adult, Community & Housing - Libraries, Archives and Adult Learning***

17. Key priorities are:

- Provision of a modern Archives and Local History Service with plans for a £6m new build facility to be delivered on the Castle Hill site by April 2013, with works to commence autumn 2011. This will facilitate further exploring partnership arrangements for the joint facility adjacent to the site of the Black Country Living Museum;
  
- The library modernisation programme to improve and modernise the Libraries building stock was largely completed in 2010/11. This created an excellent modern library service with bright, light flexible libraries acting as a focus for their community with modern ICT such as Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) and self issue terminals. Improvements have been carried out to the town centre libraries in Halesowen, Dudley, Stourbridge, and Brierley Hill, with opportunities for delivering shared services demonstrated through partnerships with Housing, Social Care and Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB). Improvements and modernisation of other libraries will continue subject to resources and the strategic asset

management approach to shared assets and service delivery is planned to continue, with further options being explored.

## **Jobs and Prosperity**

### ***Urban Environment - Transport***

18. Implementing schemes that will support sustainable economic development, offer genuine choice in transport modes, and protect the environment. Key investment priorities set out by the Department for Transport seek to address safety, air quality, accessibility and congestion. Schemes to be delivered in the West Midlands that address these priorities have been agreed with DfT and feature in the West Midlands Local Transport Plan (LTP), including:
- The Burnt Tree island improvement;
  - Continued Local Safety, Pedestrian Crossing, Cycleway, Road Maintenance, Minor Highway Improvement, and Highway Structures strengthening and upgrading programmes including bridges, retaining walls and safety fences;
  - Completion of strengthening works to structures on the Primary Route Network;
  - Continued programme of renewing and upgrading street lighting, illuminated traffic sign and traffic signal installations;
  - Examination of options for demand management and measures to enhance network efficiency including a Quick Wins Programme and engagement with the West Midlands Urban Traffic Control major scheme;
  - Consideration of highway improvements associated with the West Midlands Smart Routes network;

and supporting:

- Extending Midland Metro from Wednesbury to Stourbridge;
- Refurbishment / replacement of Dudley and Stourbridge Bus Stations;
- Investment in high quality public transport Including consideration of public transport access to Brierley Hill;
- Re-establishment of the Walsall to Stourbridge line for rail freight.

During the period of the Capital Strategy there will be a need to engage with Centro as the Integrated Transport Authority in delivering the LTP3 (2011-16) that seeks to support regeneration and growth and deliver transport infrastructure in a challenging financial environment taking on board the Government's approach to delivering a sustainable transport system.

### ***Urban Environment - Regeneration***

19. Using the Council's enabling role to stimulate economic regeneration. Key investment priorities over the next 5 years are:
- Support to the development of the Strata vision and the Wrens Nest National Nature Reserve as a heritage destination through a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund and the identification of other appropriate funding sources;
  - Seeking resources from DEFRA to enable replacement of the Mines Drainage system at Pensnett;



- Support for New Heritage Regeneration Ltd, the Arms Length Company (ALC) remitted to deliver Borough wide regeneration, with the first priority the delivery of the Dudley Area Development Framework (ADF);
- Development and delivery of the Joint Core Strategy
- Development and delivery of Area Action Plans for the regeneration of Brierley Hill, Halesowen and Stourbridge town centres;
- Maximising use of external funding such as European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) for the delivery of key regeneration projects
- Working with partner organisations to bring forward brownfield sites for development and open space purposes;
- Redevelopment of the Castle Hill site in Dudley to transform the area into a major visitor attraction;
- Development of the Dudley Enterprise Centre to provide high quality managed business space for new and growing businesses;
- Delivering the “Dudley Business First” offer to support inward investment and existing businesses to expand and create new employment opportunities in the Borough;
- Delivery of a programme of regeneration in the Borough’s Local Centres.

## **Community Safety**

### ***Chief Executive’s – Community Safety***

20. Key priority is:

- Investment in projects directly contributing to the local Community Safety Strategy.

## **Quality Service**

### ***Chief Executive’s – Other Services***

21. Key priority is:

- Development of Customer/Citizen Access to Services. This will also give the Council an opportunity to rationalise its property usage via disposal and consolidation of properties, redevelopment of property and acquisition of new properties. These efficiencies will need to be identified at a Corporate and Directorate level.

### ***Corporate Resources***

22. Key priorities are:

- Developing ICT infrastructure to support transformation of Council Services around the needs of the citizen, including: home working; mobile working; improved information management; development of more self-service delivery opportunities; single citizen’s index; better integration of information systems.
- Renewing critical components of the existing ICT infrastructure to ensure the continued reliability of ICT applications across the council, including the Microsoft Server Platform; Microsoft SQL Server; and Microsoft Office Systems.

- Using the recently established Limited Liability Partnership, PSP Dudley LLP to support the work of its arms length regeneration company. The LLP reflects a long term strategic partnership with the private sector and will develop sites that deliver community benefit;
- Establishing a clear Estate Strategy that addresses existing accommodation problems and reflects the Council's vision following the transformation of support services;
- Proactive management of the Council's land and buildings assets, and prioritisation of the annual Repair & Maintenance resource allocation in line with the Council's Repairs & Maintenance Policy;
- A programme of Access works to ensure that the Council meets its Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) obligations.

### **Planning, Prioritisation and Implementation**

23. All capital investment and disposal decisions are consistent with the aspirations outlined within this and the Council's other key strategic plans and policies. The Council has a rolling three year capital programme setting out its detailed capital investment plans, which is driven by this Capital Strategy and is based on forecast resource availability in terms of:
- Government grants to support capital expenditure;
  - Revenue resources available for direct capital investment and to fund unsupported capital expenditure under the "Prudential Borrowing" regime;
  - Resources likely to be available from property disposals as a result of property reviews;
  - Other grants and contributions from public and private sector partners.
24. All projects included in the Capital Programme are justified against criteria set out within the Council's Financial Regulations as follows:
- a) contributes towards the delivery of the Council's strategic objectives e.g. Community Strategy and Council Plans;
  - b) contributes towards the achievement of a specific priority/objective (s) as set out in a Directorate Service Plan, and/or arises from agreed capital strategies e.g. HIP, LTP and/or assists the Council to meet its statutory objectives or respond to new legislative requirements and /or contributes to the achievements of "Best Value";
  - c) can be supported by a coherent funding strategy, which will minimise the use of the Council's own resources;
  - d) has a clear and well thought out brief which defines the objectives of the project and specifies any issues which are time critical; is otherwise achievable within the financial year concerned;
  - e) has been fully evaluated against alternative methods of achieving the same objectives, and alternative funding sources.
25. In theory, it would be possible to treat the overall SCE (and non-ringfenced capital grants) as a corporate resource in the true spirit of the Single Capital Pot, and devise a methodology for prioritising all capital "bids" against the resources available. In reality however, this would pose major problems, not least the difficulty in devising a

prioritisation methodology which could fairly compare and score bids for schemes of all magnitudes and degrees of complexity across the whole range of Council services. In addition, it would probably be seen as unacceptable, both internally and from the viewpoint of Government departments, not to spend capital resources for the purposes they were notionally allocated.

26. Therefore, the Council has resolved that for the time being each SCE (together with non-ringfenced grants) be earmarked to the relevant service, but with a particular emphasis on demonstrating appropriate prioritisation *within* service programmes, and *within* spend headings. As stated in the Financial Management Regime, it is the responsibility of the relevant Directors to make sure that such prioritisation is robust and stands up to scrutiny. Prioritisation should include formal scoring mechanisms or other objective methods wherever possible and appropriate.
27. The Council has also resolved that for the time being, Housing capital receipts should be earmarked to be spent on Housing capital schemes.
28. In addition to prioritising new capital schemes the Council also challenges retention of its existing property. This enables the Council to explore opportunities for more efficient and effective use of assets in light of changing service needs arising from Best Value reviews, property performance and the annual review of each Directorate's Asset Plan. Should there be no operational, commercial or social need for property retention, surplus assets are released through disposal.
29. Revenue implications of the Capital Programme (debt charges and other costs) are fully taken into account in the Council's annual revenue budget and medium term financial strategy. In particular, pressures and priorities that can be met by (unsupported) capital investment are considered alongside other revenue pressures in the light of overall revenue resource availability.
30. Ongoing review of the Council's activities will identify "Invest to Save" type initiatives which can generate long term net efficiencies from upfront capital investment - e.g. energy efficiency projects. The flexibility provided by the Prudential Borrowing regime will be used to implement such projects.
31. In addition to its Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, the Council has an established procurement process in place that is clearly set out within its Procurement Strategy. By improving the effectiveness of its procurement activities the Council is able to focus valuable resources where they have maximum impact. The Procurement Toolkit and Forward Procurement Plan continue to be developed to support the procurement function.
32. Detailed guidelines for the management of capital projects are set out in the Council's Project Management Toolkit.
33. The Strategy not only covers all aspects of Capital expenditure within the Council, but also those areas where the Council works in partnership - using its own resources as "matchfunding" to maximise the overall resources available for its own and its partners' priorities. It will also clearly inform the bidding for and management of additional capital resources (e.g. for Central Government, Europe and the National Lottery), together with

sources of funding not under the strict definition of Capital - such as leasing, the Private Finance Initiative (PFI), and other partnerships. A Corporate External Funding Group, which includes a representative of the Dudley Community Partnership, has been established to progress the Council's approach to bidding for external funding.

### **Links to Partners**

34. The Council will continue to work with a wide range of partners at an operational level to carry out and/or facilitate capital projects to enable the successful implementation of the Community Strategy actions. These are too numerous to list completely, but include:
- Dudley Community Partnership, and its "theme partnerships";
  - Town Centre Partnerships;
  - Neighbouring Authorities - including Police & Fire Authorities, and Centro;
  - The Probation Service;
  - Local Hospital and Primary Care Trusts;
  - Infracare (Dudley LIFT);
  - Westfield and other Private Sector Developers;
  - School Governing Bodies;
  - Colleges of Further Education;
  - The Learning and Skills Council;
  - Skills Funding Agency;
  - Local Housing Associations and Registered Social Landlords;
  - Tenant and Residents' Associations;
  - Non-statutory care providers;
  - Black Country Chamber of Commerce;
  - Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)
  - Job Centre Plus;
  - PSP Dudley LLP.

### **Consultation**

35. The new Community Strategy is the outcome of a range of consultative activities which set out a range of issues and choices facing the Borough, and generated a great deal of positive public comment from individuals, groups and agencies. The Council Plan is also subject to public consultation.
36. As the Capital Strategy is one of the means by which the Community Strategy and Council Plan priorities are implemented, any changes to the Community and Council Plans arising from the above consultation will feed through into the Capital Strategy where appropriate.
37. This is supplemented by detailed stakeholder consultation on particular aspects of the Strategy where appropriate.

### **Performance Management and Innovation**

38. The Council will continue to improve the management of its capital investment activities, and adopt innovative solutions whenever possible.
39. In particular, the Council has already:

- established improvement teams to review performance management, project management, process management, people management, planning and leadership. This resulted in a number of improvements being made such as the Corporate Project Management Toolkit. This provides structured guidance in the management of simple and complex capital projects from inception to post completion review. Use of the guide is complemented by a formal training programme and a project directory;
- in collaboration with the Black Country Authorities, supported the establishment of a Black Country Minor Works Contract to deliver on and off highway related projects across the sub region;
- adopted the Construction Best Practice Programme national key performance indicators;
- in addition to adopting the 5 high level national indicators for property management, developed local indicators aimed at measuring the performance of individual and groups of properties;
- committed itself to sharing the results of performance measurement and benchmarking with stakeholders;
- developed a "Capital Investment and Disposal Guide" which provides an overview of the capital investment and disposal process and sets out guidance to be followed by officers when planning for and undertaking capital investment, and when disposing of surplus assets. A complementary External Funding Code of Practice sets out the key procedures to be followed when bidding for external funding for capital and other projects;
- established a Procurement Strategy Group (the activity of which is currently being reviewed) and recognised the need for Sustainable Procurement and greater emphasis on Value for Money and Whole Life matters in the award of contracts, considering economic, social and environmental issues in the decision making process.

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## **Children's Services Scrutiny Committee – 16 November 2011**

### **Report of the Acting Director of Children's Services**

#### **Responses to Questions**

##### **Purpose of Report**

1. To inform the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee of the written responses or circulated documents sent to Members following questions asked at the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee on the 15 September 2011.

##### **Background**

2. As a result of questions asked at the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee on 15 September 2011 regarding the items set out in the agenda, it was agreed that these would be itemised and responses circulated to all Members for their information. Below is a brief outline of the questions asked and supplementary information provided.

##### **Questions regarding Child Poverty (item 6 on the agenda)**

How many businesses are we working with regarding wealth and job creation and how soon do we expect to get positive responses? / What targeted work is being done regarding wealth and job creation?

3. The Acting Director agreed to prepare a written response to be sent to the individual Councillors. The response provided had detailed information from the Economic Regeneration and Transportation Division and outlined the total of businesses the Local Authority are working with, the targeted work being undertaken and the link to the Council Plan 2013.

What are the different Ages of young people that fall within the government's definition of child poverty?

4. The Assistant Director of Quality and Partnership prepared a response for the above question which was sent via email distribution to Councillors. The precise definition was detailed and information on statistical measuring was also included.

How many children are currently being supported by the food bank?

5. All members of the Committee were sent details regarding the number of children who are supported by the food bank. It was outlined in the response that in terms of face to face contact the service deals mainly with adults and may not always be able to maintain a thoroughly accurate record of the numbers of children and young people who benefit from the service.

### **Questions regarding Gypsy Roma Traveller Service (item 7 on the agenda)**

What are the numbers on the distribution between travellers and other people in this category?

6. A briefing paper was prepared for the committee outlining the new arrivals of Gypsy Roma Travellers in Dudley from 2009 -11. The number of Gypsy Roma Traveller families that the Local Authority are aware of were included in the response and a break down of the families known to the Vulnerable Group Service.

### **Questions regarding the oral update on the former Pensnett High School (item 8 on the agenda)**

7. The Assistant Director for Education, Play and Learning distributed the statistics of transfers for pupils at the former Pensnett High School, which secondary schools were involved in the transfer of pupils and the results they have received whilst attending the new placements. The information on attendance figures was sent to the individual member of the committee who requested further statistics.

### **Questions regarding Children's Centre Report (item 9 on the agenda)**

How SOAs are formulated and how such areas / services provided are targeted? /How is children's centre information collected and how is the consistency in numbers monitored?

8. A response has been sent to the individual Councillor who requested the above information outlining the reach areas and how the children's centre information is collected which is via a database called Estart. Also how this systems data is monitored frequently.

### **Finance**

9. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

### **Law**

10. The statutory provisions relating to the above matter are contained in Section 111 of the Local Government Act, 1972, which enables the Council to do anything that is calculated to facilitate or is conducive or incidental to the discharge of its various statutory functions.
11. The rules of "proportionality" to reflect the political balance of the Committee do not apply to the appointments referred to in this report.

### **Equality Impact**

12. The report takes into account the Council's Policies on Equality and Diversity.

### **Recommendations**

13. The Children's Services Scrutiny Committee is recommended to note the contents of this report.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. J. Porter', is centered within a light blue rectangular background.

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Jane Porter  
Acting Director of Children's Services

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