

Buckinghamshire County Council
developing scrutiny for new and existing elected members


children's services;
 finding an effective framework for scrutiny
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this session

- whistle stop – Children Act 2004
- judging children's services – Joint Area Reviews, CPA and Annual Performance Assessment
- a new framework for thinking through integrated children's services?
- some emerging national issues presented by elected members in respect of the developing children's agenda
- application of this thinking to an effective scrutiny framework




“children wish for so much but can arrange so little of their own lives which are so often dominated by adults without sympathy for the children's priorities ”

Bruno Bettelheim, recollection and reflections (1990)



it's early morning.....

- take **2 minutes** – in pairs – (moving from left to right of the room), ask each other the question below. Be prepared to share it with the main group
- what is the key objective in Buckinghamshire, for children's services scrutiny in 2005/6 and beyond?



national outcomes – the right place to start




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    graph LR
      A[staying safe] --> B[being healthy]
      B --> C[enjoying and achieving]
      C --> D[making a positive contribution]
      D --> E[economic well being]
  
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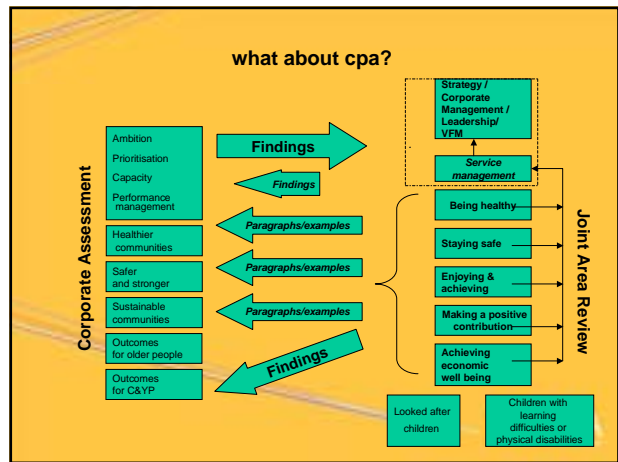
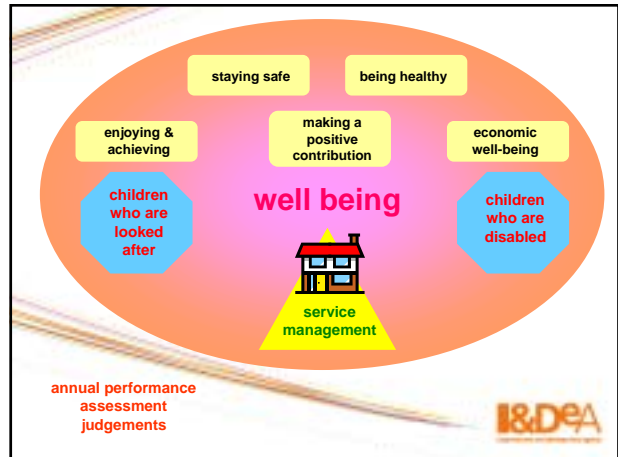
the children act 2004 (1)

- Children Act 2004 – Royal Assent last November
- **partnership arrangements** and Duty to Co-operate (April 2005).
- single statutory **children and young people's plan** for local services (April 2006).
- **director of children's services (DCS)**
- **lead member for children's services (LM)**
- **joint area reviews (JARs)** (from autumn 2005)
- new framework for **annual assessment of performance (APA)**
- **duty to safeguard** and promote children and young people's welfare
- **local safeguarding children boards**
- **duty to promote educational achievement** of looked after children



the children act 2004 (2)

- lead member and director of children's services:**
- provide a clear line of **accountability** for children's services
 - focus services on the **needs of the child**, and secure **better outcomes** for all children and young people
 - **leadership** to drive change
 - forging **partnerships** with local sector
- lead member particularly:**
- **political decision-making, strategy and leadership** for children's services
 - provide particular focus on **child protection and safeguarding**
 - to ensure that support for change and improvement is a 'cross-party' activity



annual performance assessment: managing the service

- ❑ have some approaches to service delivery been more successful than others? If so, why?
- ❑ how effective are your performance management and review processes?
- ❑ how far do local services have the capacity to improve?
- ❑ how well are you developing your workforce to manage change and how generally is change being managed?
- ❑ does the strategic plan evidence joint planning, commissioning, resources, efficiency and performance targets?
- ❑ how are governance structures operating? Are partners fully involved – voluntary, community and private sector too? (parents, carers, GPs, schools)



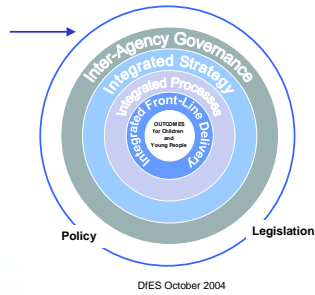
annual performance assessment: spotlight

- ambition
- priorities
- capacity
- managing performance
- analysing need to scope the service
- measuring outcomes
- making a difference
- using resources
- working with partners
- engaging with children, young people and communities



what may be a relevant “thinking framework”

- the DfES presentation of an integrated system is a helpful one
- 5 areas of focus:
 - outcomes for children, families and communities
 - the frontline
 - integrated processes
 - integrated strategy
 - inter- agency governance
- all driven by policy and legislation



DfES October 2004



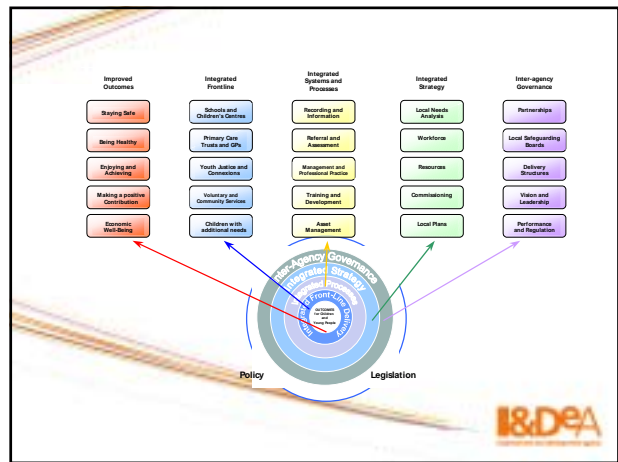
emerging issues for elected members

- resources and financial management, especially managing budget shortfalls and other people's overspends
- size of change agenda
- defining outcomes and measuring change
- specialist versus universal provision
- role definition for lead and scrutiny members
- supporting the development of the scrutiny programme
- safeguarding and safe services
- working with districts and non co-terminous PCTs
- managing the interface with adult services
- establishing equal partnerships – 'they own it too'
- knowing and learning about local need
- maximising efficiency and use of political time
- engaging all backbench members with the children's agenda in their wards



good scrutiny checklist

- ❑ What do we want to achieve and what are the limits of the role?
- ❑ What are the key issues affecting children's services?
- ❑ What are the public's main concerns?
- ❑ Who are our key partners and how can we best work together?
- ❑ What general scrutiny lessons have we learnt so far, that we can apply to scrutiny of children's services?
- ❑ What criteria should we use to select a topic for scrutiny?
- ❑ When should we work with our Council neighbours on children's issues?
- ❑ Should we have a specific and dedicated children's scrutiny function?
- ❑ What is a reasonable workload for a children's scrutiny programme?
- ❑ Do we need specific training and skills?
- ❑ How can we best involve local people in this programme?



key local questions - governance

- Partnerships
- Vision and Leadership
- Performance and Regulation



key local questions - strategy

- Local Needs Analysis
- Commissioning
- Resources



