OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY: CHILDREN'S SERVICES

POST OFSTED INSPECTION ACTION PLAN: AN UPDATE REPORT OF THE HEAD OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

October 2005

Plan 1
Ofsted Key Recommendation: Decision Making: improve the effectiveness of communication and consultation procedures to ensure that decisions made are understood by schools

Key Tasks	Officer Responsible	Comments	Target Date	Jan-05	Oct-05
1.a.1 In consultation with schools audit/review all aspects of the County Council's communication and consultation processes. From this work, propose and consult on new arrangements liaising as necessary with the cross-county consultation and communication group to ensure clarity and consistency.	David Shaw	Communication group in place. Audit phase of the work of the group complete. Consultation complete. Implementation began 1 September 2005, to be reviewed on a six month cycle.	Review Feb 2006	Green	Green
1.a.2 Ensure that all reports to Cabinet that have involved consultation include the results of the consultation in them.	Nick Powley	All reports that have gone to Cabinet following consultation have included the results of the consultation.	Ongoing	Green	Green
1.a.3 Develop good working relationships with the Schools' Forum to ensure decisions on matters of finance have been fully debated and are communicated with clarity.	Jane Brown	Schools' Forum working effectively. Teacher members value the meetings and agree that the outcomes are productive.	Ongoing	Amber	Green
1.a.4 Undertake a review of the SEN strategy and draw up an implementation plan which secures schools' commitment to the proposals.	Janet Sparrow	This task is complete. The review of the Strategy resulted in a revised Strategy being adopted by Cabinet in July 2004. The implementation plan has been in place since Sept 2004.	Completed	Green	Green
1.b.1 Describe to schools how decisions are made and how they can access these including information to support the judgement.	David Shaw	There is now a well developed Schools Intranet and this item has been subsumed within the Communications with Schools Project.	Ongoing	Amber	Green
1.b.2 Construct a framework for discussion with schools which sets out roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of schools and the Authority.	Stuart Powell	A document confirming the outcomes of the Partnership Working Group was disseminated to headteachers by the Strategic Director Schools. Headteachers welcomed the clear definition of roles.	Completed	Amber	Green
1.b.3 Publish to schools the responsibilities of key officers in the Authority and keep the list up-to-date.	David Shaw	Revised website now in place and well used by schools.	Ongoing	Green	Green
1.b.4 Clarify and ensure understanding of political processes and decision making routes and identify opportunities for schools to interact, enabling them to develop a commitment to revised structures.	Nick Powley	Extensive consultation has taken place with schools in relation to the proposed structure and organisation of Children's Services. The final outcome will be communicated to schools in December 2005.	Dec-05	Red	Amber

1.b.5 Review organisational structure, clarify roles and terms of reference of County Council groups and their strategic decision making capacity.	Chris Williams	Consultation is currently taking place, to be reported in December 2005.	Dec-05	Amber	Amber
1.c.1 Ensure that a high priority is afforded to education within corporate plans enabling a coordinated approach to secure school improvement.	Sue Imbriano	Importance of education within corporate plans has been acknowledged in discussions about the forthcoming Local Performance Plan and the Single Education Plan which will become the Children & Young People's plan (by April 2006). The new Council Plan emphasises the importance of education and sets it among key Council priorities.	Ongoing	Green	Green
1.d.1 Provide Member briefings on a more regular basis on educational issues at national and local level.	Sue Imbriano	The Strategic Director Schools regularly updates Members and the School Improvement Service stall at the new Member induction raised awareness of school issues. A Member briefing session on educational standards in Aylesbury Vale is scheduled fro October 2005.	Ongoing	Green	Green
1.d.2 Encourage Members to meet with headteachers of schools serving their constituency so that local Members are aware of issues/circumstances relevant to the provision of high quality educational opportunities in their area.	Area Advisers	A programme of visits is in place. Additionally, all Members are linked to a school as a Governor.	Ongoing	Green	Green
1.d.3 Provide Members with regularly updated briefing packs which provide information on schools in their constituency.	David Shaw	Plans are in place to produce packs on a termly basis from September 2005. A Member briefing session on educational standards in Aylesbury Vale is scheduled fro October 2005.	Sep-05	Green	Green
1.d.4 The Leader of the Council to meet with headteachers twice yearly to ensure two way communication between elected Members and schools.	Sue Imbriano	The Leader and Chief Officer will speak at the annual Buckinghamshire Academy of School Leadership conference in November.	Nov-05	Green	Green
1.d.5 Develop between Members, schools and other partners a vision for education in Buckinghamshire and understand the changed, and changing, role of the County Council in respect of its education functions.	Sue Imbriano	When the Strategic Director, Schools presented a view of the national and local landscape for education to Members, they were invited to consider what education in Buckinghamshire might look like in the future. Further, the views of headteachers are being taken into account as part of the development of Children's Services.	Completed	Green	Green

Plan 2
Key Ofsted Recommendation: Targeting resources: review the schools' funding formula and the funding of SEN in consultation with the Schools Forum

Key Tasks	Officer Responsible	Comments	Target Date	Jan-05	Oct-05
2.a.1 In partnership with the Schools Forum, carry out a fundamental review of the Schools' Funding Formula including funding of SEN based on a detailed analysis of the needs of schools and an accurate assessment of current costs.		An external consultant has been appointed. The tasks as indicated in the timescale have been completed. Task completed - link to 2.a.2	Completed	Green	Green
2.a.2 Implement the agreed proposals following consultation with schools.	Jane Brown	Financial year 2006/07 has been given as the introduction date for the agreed proposals.	Apr-06	Amber	Amber
2.a.3 Co-ordinate the targeting of capital grants to reflect strategic priorities. Provide routine support to schools submitting grant bids in line with corporate policies.	Nick Powley	Report for Cabinet has been drafted and should be signed off by the end of September 2005.	Sep-05	Green	Green
2.a.4 Define priorities and resources required for the next three years and secure County Council commitment to funding at an appropriate level.	Stuart Powell/Jim Simpson/Nick Powley	The new Council Plan is in place. Resources have been identified through the MTP process.	Ongoing	Amber	Green

Plan 3
Ofsted Key Recommendation: Strategy for school improvement: using the opportunities afforded through the development of the Single Education Plan, draw up an agreement with schools that clearly defines ways of working, expectations, roles and responsibilities for school improvement

Key Tasks	Officer Responsible	Comments	Target Date	Jan-05	Oct-05
3.a.1 Complete the development of the values and vision for the work of the County Council.	Sue Imbriano	The Vision Group (now called the Partnership Working Group) produced a vision for education in Buckinghamshire and sought comments from Members, Headteachers and Governors. There is further work now being undertaken to validate that vision against the 5 Key Outcomes from the Children Act 2004. The group has also worked on principles for partnership working (between schools and the Local Authority). In addition, a smaller project group has sought to apply the partnership principles to a specific area of work. This is the 'dependency culture' as identified by OfSTED in the report published in April 2004. This has included consultation with Heads, Members and Governors. The report was disseminated to headteachers at a Partnership Conference and working relationships have improved as a result of this work. Launch May 2005. Work above is now complete. Developing criteria for evaluating progress against action. Developing protocols and procedures.	Mar-06	Green	Green
3.a.2 Develop the Single Education Plan/Children's Plan so that it is an embodiment of how the vision will be put into practice, has a clear structure and schools have ownership of its objectives.	Sue Imbriano	SEP on target - only revision and update with no radical changes as it will be superseded by the Children and Young People's Plan from April 2006. Ed Mallam has been tasked with taking forward this work. SEP delivered. New work arising.	Apr-06	Amber	Amber
3.b.1 Develop clear guidance on the roles and responsibilities of schools and the County Council in line with the Code Of Practice and review this annually to ensure that it is effective.	David Cousins	Two updated versions of the Framework to Support School Improvement have been published (one for secondary schools and one for primary and special schools) to take account of national changes.	Sep-05	Green	Green

3.c.1 Create formal opportunities to ensure that heads and governors have a clear understanding of the respective roles and responsibilities of schools and the County Council.		Partnership Conferences were held in May. Headteachers are supportive of the defined roles.	Completed	Amber	Green
3.c.2 Ensure that an understanding of roles is included in training for all new headteachers and governors.	David Cousins / David Shaw	Revised programme of leadership training now in place.	Ongoing	Green	Green
3.c.3 Define more clearly the roles and responsibilities within the County Council and publish this annually to ensure that it is understood both within the service and in schools.	Niek Dewley /	Report of the Partnership Working Group was published at the Conferences defining roles and responsibilities. To be updates in July 2006 to take account of the implementation of Children's Services.	Jul-06	Amber	Amber
3.c.4 Create an electronic "one stop information centre" through which schools can contact the appropriate service/officer.	David Shaw	Schools Web established and linked to Bucks Online.	Ongoing	Amber	Green
3.d.1 Review the organisation of activities within the portfolio to achieve a stronger relationship with schools built on local knowledge.	Stuart Powell / Jim Simpson / Nick Powley	This task has been incorporated into the Services for Schools project and the establishment of Children's Services.	Ongoing	Amber	Amber
3.d.2 Strengthen the role of headteachers, through the Buckinghamshire Academy for School Leadership, in formulating authority policy by offering a rolling programme of secondments for headteachers. This will also increase headteachers' understanding of the wider County Council issues.	Stuart Powell / Nick Powley	Consultant headteachers are now embedded in both the primary and secondary phase.	Ongoing	Amber	Green
3.e.1 Create a two-way conversation within the Annual Dialogue that allows schools to feedback on the quality of the service provided by the County Council.		Views of schools were sough through a questionnaire in summer 2005. This will be followed up at Annual Dialogue in Autumn 2005.	Autumn 2005	Amber	Amber
3.e.2 Initiate and sustain a programme of change management which embeds policy into practice.	Stuart Powell	The Chief Officers Policy Team has agreed a change management programme. This will be further developed through Children's Services.	Jul-06	Amber	Amber

Plan 4
Ofsted Key Recommendation: Strategy for SEN: work with schools, senior managers, governors and partners to develop an understanding and consensus about SEN strategy, involving them in detailed plans to improve provision in the county.

Key Tasks	Officer Responsible	Comments	Target Date	Jan-05	Oct-05
4.a.1 Develop and consult on a revised SEN Strategy in partnership with all schools and other agencies which is linked explicitly and consistently to the Government's SEN Action Programme and the needs of schools and the Council in achieving inclusive education. The Strategy will focus on raising standards in addition to social care issues.	Janet Sparrow	Strategy Workshop took place April 2004 – draft strategy developed. Consultation took place May to July 2004. Amendments made as a result of the consultation. Strategy approved by Cabinet – July 2004.	Completed	Green	Green
4.a.2 Develop a clear strategic structure within and across aspects of the County Council work on Children Services.	Sue Imbriano	Designate Director of Children's Services named July 2004 Structure for new Portfolio is being developed.	July 2004 Dec 2005	Amber	Green
4.a.3 Implement the agreed plan following consultation with schools and other agencies.	Janet Sparrow	Implementation Workshop, made up of representatives from schools and partner agencies, took place June 2004 Implementation from Sept 2004	Completed	Green	Green
4.b.1 Develop capacity within SEN to deliver the SEN Strategy and provide financial monitoring to ensure that funds are targeted at need, deliver priorities and support both the local and national SEN imperatives.	Janet Sparrow / Caroline Grant	Funding not available to develop capacity within SEN in 2004-05 financial year Additional capacity in place Sept 2005	Sept 2005	Green	Amber
4.b.2 Funding arrangements are clarified to schools to ensure their awareness of the resources available to support particular pupils, enabling better targeting.	Janet Sparrow	Schools Forum SEN Funding Group established to take forward the recommendations of the Funding Review - consultation Autumn Term 2005	Apr 2006	Amber	Amber
4.c.1 Review current strategic management of SEN across portfolios, reviewing roles and responsibilities, to ensure that schools have confidence in the leadership of SEN issues.	Chris Williams	Ongoing work with the development of the Children's Services Portfolio Current interim arrangements to continue until December 2005	Dec 2005 - Apr 2006	Amber	Amber
4.c.2 Provide training for School Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators to develop their leadership skills of SEN issues through the Leading From The Middle Programme.	Gordon Vincent	The Leading From The Middle Programme has been established. SEN component scheduled for September 2005.	Sept 2004 - July 2006	Amber	Amber

Plan 5
Ofsted Key Recommendation: Strategy for Social Inclusion: strengthen the Council's leadership of social inclusion and appoint a strong strategic manager for the Children and Young People Portfolio

Key Tasks	Officer Responsible	Comments	Target Date	Jan-05	Oct-05
5.a.1 Review Children & Young People and Schools Portfolio structures to ensure effective planning and delivery of service across portfolios.	Sue Imbriano / Rita Lally	Links with 4a2 and 4c1 Current interim arrangements to continue until December 2005	Dec 2005	Amber	Amber
5.b.1 Develop strategies to ensure effective working relationships with schools, thereby raising schools' confidence in the Council's ability to deal with SEN issues.	Rita Lally	Acting Head of Special Educational Services involved in project with schools to define and develop working relationships	Jan 2005 - Dec 2005	Amber	Green
5.b.2 Develop a web-based directory of key contacts as part of the one-stop information centre identified in 3.c.4 to enable headteachers to quickly identify appropriate contacts/services.	Sue Imbriano / Rita Lally	Schools Web in place. Work in development phase. SEN website established with key contacts and links to other website directories.	Completed	Amber	Green
5.c.1 Appoint a Strategic Manager for Children and Young People portfolio.	Chris Williams	Rita Lally confirmed as Strategic Director for the Children and Young People Portfolio – until Director of Children's Services takes up post in December 2005.	Sept 2004	Green	Green
5.d.1 Review the Children and Young People portfolio structure to ensure effective links with schools, with particular reference to pupils at risk of social exclusion.	Chris Williams	Acting Head of Special Educational Services is a member of the Schools Portfolio Management Group Education Manager for Social Inclusion identified and in post	Dec 2004	Green	Green

Plan 6
Ofsted Recommendation: Targeting of resources: clarify responsibility for oversight of the delegated schools budget by the County Council to ensure that services collaborate in robustly challenging, advising and supporting schools with deficits and surpluses

Key Tasks	Officer Responsible	Comments	Target Date	Jan-05	Oct-05
6.a.1 Establish a framework within which the roles and responsibilities of all those working to monitor schools' budgets is clearly defined.	Jane Brown / Bob Gibbard / Nick Powley	Schools Financial Recovery Team in place and providing advice to schools on budget management.	Ongoing	Amber	Green
6.b.1 Develop a protocol, in discussion with the Schools' Forum, for intervention in schools with significant deficits or surpluses which will include a clear definition of what constitutes a significant deficit or surplus and a mechanism for feedback on the effectiveness of intervention.	Nick Powley /	Work is being undertaken by the Schools Financial Recovery Team. Colleagues on Schools Forum indicated that a more realistic timescale for this work would be September 2005. Information on intervention in schools with significant deficits and surplus will be shared with Schools Forum and development work taken forward, as appropriate to develop protocols.	Son OF	Amber	Green
6.b.2 Enhance the financial monitoring role within the Annual Cycle and Annual Dialogue and provide appropriate training for link advisers to ensure that this is done effectively.		This has now been completed following a review of the Framework to Support School Improvement. There is now a 2005 edition of the Framework.		Green	Green
6.b.3 To publish a manual of good practice in relation to achieving value for money based on Buckinghamshire case studies.	Bob Gibbard /	Three case studies so far are being prepared for publication. A request for further case studies has been made through Schools Management Briefing. Manual is in preparation.		Amber	Green
6.b.4 To provide regular strategic financial management training for all new head teachers and governors	David Shaw	This training has been incorporated into the new headteachers induction programme. Strategic financial management training is ongoing. Built into the Headteacher Induction Programme, TTG training and training offered to aspiring headteachers.	Ongoing	Amber	Green
6.c.1 Establish a dedicated team to offer support and guidance to schools experiencing budgetary difficulties.	Nick Powley	Team has been established. Funding has been identified within the MTP process so that the Schools Finance Recovery Team can continue its work into the next financial year.		Green	Green

Plan 7

Ofsted Recommendation: Monitoring, challenge and intervention: With school, further refine monitoring procedures, ensuring that they are proportionate to need, especially in relation to the most effective schools. Agree with schools a broader range of criteria, including stronger financial management indicators as an element of the school monitoring process.

Key Tasks	Officer Responsible	Comments	Target Date	Jan-05	Oct-05
7.a.1 Survey of other successful authorities to ascertain levels of intervention and support for schools.	Val Osbaldeston	The greater frequency of shorter Ofsted inspections together with a reclassification of schools in Ofsted categories will impact on the support and intervention provided by local authorities. There will be a reduction in the level of intervention and support in successful schools in line with other authorities.	Sep-04	Amber	Green
7.b.1 Consultation with schools through established forums on what support schools feel they need.	Val Osbaldeston	Consultations undertaken through the evaluation of the work of Link Advisers in Chiltern South Bucks, Wycombe and Aylesbury Vale (Summer 2004 and 2005) and meetings with Headteachers and local authority personnel. Support and challenge for secondary schools is in place through the School Improvement Partner programme and Consultant Headteachers.	Ongoing	Green	Green
7.c.1 Revise the Framework for School Improvement detailing the support for each category of school.	Stuart Powell	The framework was revised, published and distributed to schools in Autumn 2004 and further revised in 2005 to reflect the changes in the New OfSTED Framework and the revised SSET. There are two versions of the Framework; one for secondary and one for primary and special schools which reflect the introduction of the School Improvement Partner programme into secondary schools.	Completed	Green	Green
7.d.1 A wider range of management support services are offered for schools to purchase, including those from other providers.	Nick Powley	To be actioned following services to schools project.		Amber	Amber
7.e.1 Revise the indicators for categorisation of schools to include financial management, quality of the schools self-evaluation processes and capacity for improvement.	Stuart Powell	Indicators have been revised and published in the 'Framework for School Improvement'. These indicators were used to categorise schools in the Annual Dialogue, Autumn 2004 and re-written in Autumn 2005 to reflect the New OfSTED Framework.	Completed	Green	Green

7.f.1 Annual dialogue is strengthened to include a requirement for the Chairman of Governors to report to the full governing body on the outcomes (Standard agenda item for Spring Term meeting) and allow for feedback on County Council services to schools.	Val Osbaldeston	Included in the Annual Dialogue, Autumn 2004 and 2005.	Completed	Green	Green
7.f.2 Governor and headteacher training to ensure understanding of the Annual Dialogue process.	Val Osbaldeston	Briefings for Headteachers and Governors undertaken during Autumn 2004 and Autumn 2005. Link Advisers briefed Heads and Governors of their link schools.	Completed	Green	Green

Plan 8
Ofsted Recommendation: Planning and provision of services to support school improvement: Provide focused budget-setting support for schools where financial management is weak

Key Tasks	Officer Responsible	Comments	Target Date	Jan-05	Oct-05
8.a.1 Make clear to schools who is responsible for oversight of the delegated schools' budget and how schools may access support.	Nick Powley	Draft paper has been considered by SPMG and is going through the democratic process.	Sep-05	Amber	Amber
8.b.1 In consultation with schools, develop a shared definition of weak financial management.	Jane Brown	On-going work with Schools Forum to be signed off Autumn 2005.	Autumn 2005	Red	Amber
8.b.2 In consultation with schools, define the criteria and processes to be used to determine when, and how, to intervene in the budget setting process in schools where financial management has been deemed weak.	Jane Brown	Report for Cabinet Member has been drafted and should be signed off by the end of December 2005.	Dec-05	Red	Amber
8.b.3 In consultation with schools, propose, consult on and implement changes to support arrangements for budget setting where financial management is weak.	Nick Powley	Work in progress with a view to completion in March 2006.	Mar-06	Red	Amber

8.c.1 In consultation with schools, review the County Council's strategy on the provision of services for schools through: - An audit of schools' diverse needs - Research into good practice, service provision models, benchmarking and the experience in other County Councils - An examination of charging policies	David Shaw	The Services to Schools Project is under way, and is currently undertaking the actions identified in the Action Plan. Anticipated completion by February 2006.	Feb-06	Amber	Amber
8.c.2 Propose and consult on a revised service model for Buckinghamshire schools.	David Shaw	Work currently in progress. Anticipated completion by February 2006.	Feb-06	Amber	Amber
8.c.3 Implement a revised service model for Buckinghamshire schools.	David Shaw	Work currently in progress. Anticipated completion by April 2006.	Apr-06	Amber	Amber

Plan 9
Ofsted Recommendation: Strategy for SEN: secure the management an control of the current significant overspending of the Authority's SEN budget, and better align the budget to the SEN strategy

Key Tasks	Officer Responsible	Comments	Target Date	Jan-05	Oct-05
9.a.1 Identify and benchmark current SEN expenditure	Janet Sparrow	Regional SEN benchmarking in place	Completed	Green	Green
9.a.2 Action as identified in 4.b.1 to develop capacity within SEN to deliver the SEN Strategy and provide financial monitoring	Janet Sparrow / Caroline Grant	See 4.b.1	Sept 2005	Green	Amber
9.a.3 Establish procedures for review of resourced provision in consultation with headteachers and in the context of key task 2.a.1	Janet Sparrow	Review procedures agreed with Headteachers July 2004	Completed	Green	Green
9.b.1 Review all external provision – including reasons for placement and committed expenditure.	Janet Sparrow	Monitoring Officers to continue Annual Reviews of provision – (Schedule 2 / Form B) and monitoring regional fees. Further review work to be undertaken	Sept 2004 - Nov 2005	Green	Amber
9.c.1 Review resource provision – including funding criteria for admission	Janet Sparrow	Comprehensive review of resourced provision undertaken October 2004 and March 2005	Completed	Green	Green
9.c.2 Develop work of Special Schools' Placement Panel and Placement Support Group to ensure efficient use of resources.	Janet Sparrow	Terms of Reference discussed – agreed and finalised February 2005	Ongoing	Green	Green
9.d.1 Monitor and evaluate pupil outcomes through the Annual Review process (for statemented pupils) and school data.	Janet Sparrow	On target.	Dec 2005	Amber	Amber

Plan 10
Ofsted Recommendation: Provision for pupils educated other than at school: move swiftly to improve the provision for the Key Stage 3 pupils who are out of school

Key Tasks	Officer Responsible	Comments	Target Date	Jan-05	Oct-05
10.a.1 Develop local code of conduct in conjunction with partners to implement the Anti-Social Behaviour Act [educational issues].	Lesley Galloway	Guidance issued to schools within timescale.	Completed	Green	Green
10.a.2 Develop the enlarged multi-agency team to develop a unified approach to dealing with pupils at risk of exclusion in KS2.	Jenny Pearce	Role of Transitions Support team developed. Procedures reviewed and implemented.	Completed	Green	Green
10.a.3 The multi-agency team will work with primary schools to ensure emerging SEN issues amongst KS2 pupils are clearly documented and addressed.	Jenny Pearce	Work to begin September 2005.	Ongoing	Amber	Green
10.b.1 Conclude the review of reintegration procedures at KS3 and implement the recommendations.	Lesley Farr / Bob Aylott	Review complete, implementation on-going. Pupil Placement Panel established	Ongoing	Amber	Green
10.b.2 Appoint additional EWOs and deploy them in those schools where pupils are most at risk of exclusion.	Lesley Galloway	Additional EWOs appointed. EWS re-structured to facilitate targeted support.	Completed	Green	Green
10.c.1 Implement the National Primary Strategy Behaviour and Attendance Programme.	Caroline Grant	Staff appointed for September 2005 to take this strand forward. Plan to launch Spring Term 2006.	Sept 2004 - Sept 2006	Green	Green
10.c.2 Increase the number of social workers to our target number.	Heather Clarke	Work in progress – a number of additional social workers have been recruited in Canada.	Sept 2004 - Sept 2006	Amber	Green
10.c.3 Re-focus the work of KS3 Behaviour and Attendance consultants on those schools with identified problems.	Caroline Grant	On task to meet target in December 2005, confirmed in meeting July 2005. Work commenced September 2005.	Dec-05	Amber	Green
10.d.1 Review existing KS3 provision in the PRUs and extend successful practice to ensure sufficient capacity.	Janet Sparrow	Responsibility for PRUs now moved to Schools Portfolio. Review of provision in progress. Identified as an area requiring further development, through SEN Provision group. Focus groups to commence Autumn 2005.	Sep-05	Amber	Green