

Report to: **Children's Services Scrutiny Committee**

Date: **19 September 2011**

By: **Chief Executive**

Title of report: **Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPP&R)**

Purpose of report: **To enable the Committee to consider and comment on the detailed planning for 2012/13 and beyond as outlined in the State of the County report.**

RECOMMENDATIONS: The Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

- (1) Inform Cabinet of any comments or changes it wishes to propose to the draft new policy steers (at appendix 3), the Council Promise (appendix 1) and their contribution to the objectives of the Council;**
 - (2) Establish a scrutiny board to act on behalf of the Committee to provide ongoing input into the RPP&R process until March 2012, and in particular to consider the detailed departmental portfolio plans when available; and**
 - (3) Identify any issues to include in the Committee's future work programme.**
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1. Background

1.1 The State of the County 2011 report was presented to Cabinet on 26 July 2011. That report outlined the national and local context providing an overview of the main issues which will affect the County Council in the coming year. Cabinet has approved some changes to the Reconciling Policy and Resources (RP&R) process and has agreed:

- That the Council should plan on the basis of a three year budget based on the proposed cash limits;
- To review the capital programme to ensure that the best use is being made of resources to support the Council's priorities;
- To set cash limits on the basis of *service areas* identified for the creation of stronger links between financial and performance information at lower service levels;
- That the process is renamed *Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources* (RPP&R) to mark the more holistic approach the Council will be taking to its planning processes
- Provisional cash limits for 2012/13 to 2014/15 for the purpose of modelling savings and has asked Chief Officers to report progress in October 2011; and
- That Lead Members would review with chief officers, scrutiny committees and other relevant partners, the Council's Promise and policy steers in the light of the changing local and national circumstances.

1.2 The County Council's *Promise* and supporting *Policy Steers* for each portfolio area act as a guide to business and financial planning. The current Policy Steers have been allocated to new portfolios which the Leader of the Council announced at the County Council meeting in May 2011. Appendix 1 summarises the current policy steers arranged against the new Cabinet portfolios.

1.3 Appendix 2 details the policy steers falling within the remit of this scrutiny committee indicating for each: a) what we set out to achieve; b) where we are now, and c) our key areas for

improvement. The Committee may find this helpful when considering any revisions to the policy steers.

1.4 Appendix 3 sets out the draft policy steers for 2012/13 on which the views of the committee are specifically invited.

2. Scrutiny's role in Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources

2.1 Scrutiny's engagement in the RPP&R process is important as scrutiny Members bring to bear the experience that they have gained through their work during previous years. It is also an opportunity for the Scrutiny Committee to highlight any issues to include in its future work programme.

2.2 The Scrutiny Committee is asked to review and comment on the draft new policy steers (appendix 3), and the *Council Promise* (appendix 1), which lie within the Committee's remit. Policy steers ideally should:

- Describe what we can expect to achieve over the medium term (2 – 3 years);
- Incorporate sufficient clarity to be able to determine whether they will have been, or are being, delivered by, for example, ensuring that appropriate measures and targets can be set against them;
- Have resources attached to them;
- Help to build a picture, either explicitly or implicitly, of non priority services or functions.

2.3 The Committee might also wish to bear in mind the following pointers during the later stages of the process as well as when reflecting on departmental activities linked to the policy steers:

- Policy steers need to reflect the severity of the economic outlook and emerging local priorities.
- Scrutiny commentary is particularly valuable where there is a particular tension between 'universal' services and 'targeted' services – either within a service or between departments.
- Scrutiny is invited to make judgements about value for money for areas of above average costs, and to provide challenge to ensure return on investment by increased performance.
- Scrutiny is invited to question the extent to which the key 'areas for improvement' identified in the portfolio report (appendix 2) are still valid and relevant.

3. Next steps

3.1 Cabinet will meet on 11 October 2011 to consider scrutiny's comments and agree the policy steers for 2012/13.

3.2 The Committee's RPP&R Board will meet in December 2011 to consider the detailed portfolio and budget plans and the emerging savings strategy. It will comment in detail upon whether the amended policy steers are reflected satisfactorily within the proposed key areas of budget spending for 2012/13 and beyond. It will seek to ensure that all possible efficiencies are identified and will comment on the likely impact of those savings on services provided by the County Council and its partners.

BECKY SHAW
Chief Executive

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Local Member: All

Background Documents

None

PROMISE AND POLICY STEERS 2011/12

The Promise

We will, in partnership, make the best use of resources to:

- help make East Sussex prosperous and safe
- support the most vulnerable people
- improve and develop roads and infrastructure
- encourage personal and community responsibility
- deliver the lowest possible Council Tax
- be a voice for East Sussex, listening and answering to local people.

Below are the 2011/12 policy steers arranged against the new Cabinet portfolios in place from May 2011 and the relevant scrutiny committee.

Strategic Management and Economic Development (SMED) Portfolio

(Audit, Best Value and Community Services Scrutiny Committee (ABV) and Economy, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee (ETE))

1. Raise the prosperity of East Sussex through a sharp focus on employment, skills and infrastructure. (ETE / ABV)
2. Create sustainable communities by providing strategic leadership, empowering people, recognising the different needs of communities across the county, delivering locally and helping to ensure that public services in East Sussex, especially across the three tiers of local government, are commissioned and delivered effectively. (ABV)
3. Lead the delivery of the Council's policy steers and improvement of services through effective policy development and performance management. (ABV)
4. Support Members to fulfil their role as community leaders, in scrutiny and as the democratic voice of local people. (ABV)
5. Continue to improve equity and equality of opportunity for all through our service delivery and as an employer. (ABV)
6. Ensure that residents, staff and key stakeholders are engaged in and informed about the key changes impacting on them. (ABV)

Community and Resources Portfolio

(Audit, Best Value and Community Services Scrutiny Committee)

1. Ensure the Council matches available resources to its key priorities and delivers the lowest level of council tax consistent with those priorities.
2. Ensure efficient and effective strategic and operational financial management across the Council.
3. Maintain and improve high standards of governance, internal control and risk management.
4. Deliver top class procurement practice to support top class commissioning across the Council.
5. Ensure the Council has the right property resources to support effective service delivery.
6. Make best use of available capital resources and ensure effective delivery of capital projects.
7. Reduce carbon emissions and adapt to climate change.
8. Ensure that we have the right staff, with the right skills, supported by fit for purpose personnel policies and procedures.

9. Improve access to services for residents and maximise how ICT can help the whole Council operate more efficiently for the benefit of our council tax payers.
10. Provide front line staff with the best tools possible so they can be as effective as possible in meeting the needs of service users.
11. Continuously ensure maximum security and resilience of data and networks.
12. Public health:
 - a) arrangements for integration of services (ABV).
 - b) Public health targets (Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee) in due course.

Community Services Portfolio

(Audit, Best Value and Community Services Scrutiny Committee)

1. Work with the voluntary and community sector to build capacity.
2. Embed the Library Service in its communities to: reflect the expressed needs of the customer; encourage people to get the skills they need for employment; promote learning/literacy and improve access to services.
3. Ensure that the promotion of culture within East Sussex is embedded in the work of the County Council to maximise the attraction of investment and visitors to the area.
4. To seek out and preserve the original documents which record the history of East Sussex, its people, communities and organisations; and to make them available to present and future generations for inspiration, research and lifelong learning.
5. To modernise delivery of the Registration Service.

Economy, Transport and Environment Portfolio

(Economy, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee)

1. Improve the condition of our road and rights of way network.
2. Plan and prioritise the infrastructure needed to support the county's prosperity.
3. Achieve a fair balance between economic growth and the protection of our urban, rural and coastal environment.
4. Minimise the amount of the county's waste sent to landfill or landraise.
5. Make our roads safer.
6. Improve transport access to services.
7. Reduce the risk and impact of local flooding in East Sussex.
8. Promote informed, successful businesses in a fair and safe trading environment; encourage informed, confident consumers, protect vulnerable consumers.
9. Work with partners to strike a balance between the needs of the settled and Gypsy and Traveller communities with the reduced level of funding available.

Children's and Adults' Services Portfolio

(Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee)

1. Provide the strategic leadership required across the county to ensure that continued improvements in the full range of the community safety agenda are maintained through the spending reductions and organisational changes over the next 3 years.

Children and Families Portfolio

(Children's Services Scrutiny Committee)

1. Promote good health for children and young people and reduce health inequalities.
2. Protect children and young people from harm and neglect.
3. Develop resilience in families to help reduce dependency on public services by enhancing their capacity to resolve their own problems.
4. Improve outcomes for Looked After Children and Care Leavers, as well as improving support to children and young people on the edge of care.
5. Promote the benefits of young people making a positive contribution to their community and decisions affecting their own lives.

Learning and School Effectiveness Portfolio

(Children's Services Scrutiny Committee)

1. Support and challenge schools to raise educational achievement and aspirations at all key stages and target interventions at those most vulnerable to under achievement.
2. Work with partners to minimise the number of young people who are not in employment, education or training.

Adult Social Care Portfolio

(Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee)

1. Make a strategic shift in Adult Social Care resources towards Older Peoples Services over the next five years, to reflect our demography and to ensure our resources are fairly and equitably distributed.
2. Improve information and advice to enable people to make the right choices about the support they need, at the right time, irrespective of their ability to pay.
3. Improve people's choice and control about how their needs are met by making best use of family and community support networks, and by developing the range of support and services available.
4. Ensure Adult Social Care support is accessible, proportionate, and that in partnership, we will protect vulnerable adults from harm.
5. Continue to invest in prevention and early intervention to keep people healthy and to maximise opportunities for rehabilitation and recovery.

Children's Services

1. Introduction by Lead Member

Implications of our budget settlement

2011/12 has marked the start of a period of substantial change for Children's Services. In some areas we are facing considerable constraints; however, there are also opportunities to be grasped and we are committed to minimising and mitigating the impact of reductions in services on the children and young people who need our support.

Nevertheless, Children's Services is especially affected by the ending of a large number of specific grants, alongside reductions in central grant and rising costs in areas such as safeguarding and children in care. Also, as part of the Government policy to increase the resources devolved to schools directly, rather than held by local authorities to provide services, the Department has seen funds that have paid for central services – such as school improvement support – transfer to school budgets.

The scale of the reduction in funding this year means we have had to make some very difficult decisions about what services to prioritise. We have, protected expenditure on safeguarding and have agreed to maintain only a slightly reduced level of investment in the early intervention services most directly associated with safeguarding outcomes. However, there are four key areas that are particularly affected by the cuts:

- monitoring the quality of early years settings, unless there are specific concerns or they are providing services for the most vulnerable children
- monitoring and intervention in schools standards, unless schools are not improving or are judged to be not doing well by OFSTED
- provision of universal access to youth activities and information, advice and guidance, with remaining activity targeted on those that most need these opportunities and services
- provision of non statutory inclusion support services for school age children, which will now need to be purchased by schools

In the future, the services that we continue to provide will be organised in different ways and there will be a greater emphasis on localism and locally directed solutions. We are likely to see more automated, self-service access to universal services and there will be an even greater emphasis on providing services with partners, through joint commissioning or other arrangements. Many of our services, such as Schools and Learning Effectiveness (SLES), Inclusion Support and Targeted Youth Support (TYS), are already working to develop new delivery arrangements. A particular focus is upon developing a new partnership with schools that recognises their increased autonomy whilst at the same time delivering our shared responsibility for improving school performance and raising standards of attainment for all young people, particularly those most vulnerable to underachievement.

In the face of these challenges, I am very proud of the way in which managers and staff are continuing to deliver and I believe that, although these are difficult times, we will still be able to focus on protecting and helping the most vulnerable children and young people in East Sussex in order to maximise their life chances.

2. Safeguarding

- ❖ Protect children and young people from harm and neglect

2.1 What are we trying to achieve?

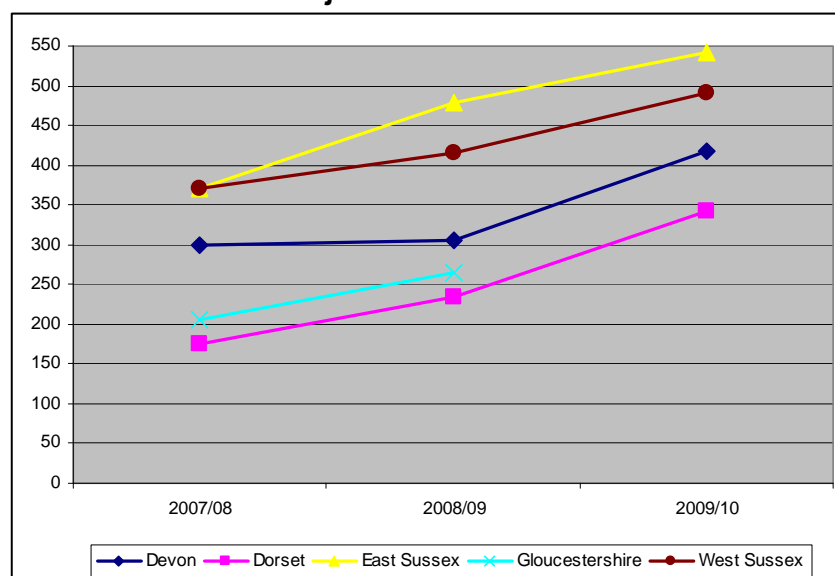
A key priority for us continues to be maintaining good performance against a backdrop of increased demand and reduced resources. In particular, we want to see:

- Earlier intervention to prevent more serious safeguarding and safety issues arising in the future; and
- Children and young people protected from neglect and abuse.

2.2 Where are we now?

Following the tragic death of Peter Connolly in Haringey, and the consequent raised awareness across the country about child protection issues, there was a significant increase in workload and pressures for all agencies. During 2010/11 70.2% of core assessments were carried out within 35 working days of their commencement compared to 74% in 2009/10. However, this was in the context of a **60% increase in workloads** – assessments went up from 1925 in 2009/10 to 3190 in 2010/11, this significant increase is reflected across our statistical neighbours with further increases anticipated in 2011/12.

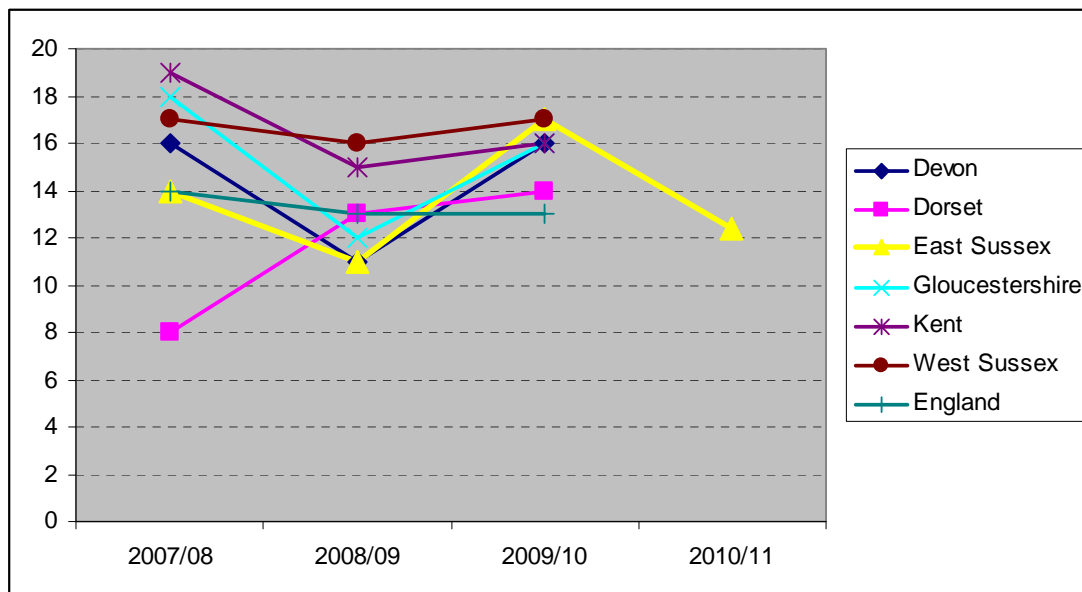
Children who were the subject of a Child Protection Plan at 31 March



First Statistical Release, 2010/11 data will be available in October 2011

Positively, the percentage of children with a Child Protection Plan (CPP) who had previously been subject to one fell from 17.2% in 2009/10 to 12.4% in 2010/11.

Percentage of children subject to repeat child protection plans



The percentage of children with a CPP who had an allocated social worker also rose from 95% in 2009/10 to 99.5% (637/640) in 2010/11.

The OFSTED inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children Services, which took place in December 2010, judged that the overall effectiveness of the council and its partners in protecting and promoting the welfare of children is good with a strong culture of safeguarding from council members to frontline staff. It was commented that the low re-referral rates and comparatively low numbers of children subject to repeat child protection plans (shown in the graph above) re-enforced the view that local services are effective.

2.3 What are our key areas for improvement?

Referrals and assessments have stabilised at the higher level and so our planning in this area takes this into account. Recruitment of more social workers has achieved more manageable workloads; retention and continued development of this increased cohort is, therefore, a key priority. Having more capacity means we will also be able to address concerns raised in the recent inspection by OFSTED that despite no children being found at risk, our record keeping needs to keep pace with our fieldwork.

Nationally, the focus for safeguarding is now much more on outcomes for vulnerable children rather than processes in accordance with the recommendations of the Munro Review of Safeguarding. This is an opportunity for us to rethink both the way in which children's social care services are delivered, and also how, through a "whole system" approach, we can continue to enhance early intervention and, as far as possible, reduce the numbers of children who need formal safeguarding support. Within the statutory service, we will be concentrating on ensuring children are protected from harm and, as long as children are seen in a timely fashion, there will be less focus on rigid timescales. A key indicator will be the percentage of children becoming the subject of a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time, as this gives us information about whether we are assessing risk appropriately when deciding to end Child Protection Plans and the quality of support packages offered to families when Child Protection Plans are ceased. Another priority will be the proportion of children with a Child Protection Plan for more than 18 months, which enables us to analyse whether we are intervening appropriately in the most complex cases. The first of these indicators is a priority within the Children and Young People's Plan, with actions from across the Children and Young

People's Trust partnership which will be monitored.

Domestic Violence remains a significant factor in referrals to social care and the police contacts specifically in relation to domestic violence account for approximately 15% of the total number of referrals. Domestic violence is the main identified risk factor for children with Child Protection Plans (35%) closely followed by neglectful parenting. Risk of emotional abuse remains the main category for children subject to Child Protection Plans (60%) which reflects the increased understanding of the emotional impact on children of domestic violence. There has been significant interagency training and raising of awareness in respect of domestic violence issues over the last two years which has led to increased recognition and impacted on referral rates.

3. Resilience in families

❖ Develop resilience in families to help reduce dependency on public services by enhancing their capacity to resolve their own problems

3.1 What are we trying to achieve?

Circumstances known to increase the risk of poor outcomes for children and young people include poverty, parental conflict, violence and poor parenting. There is a consensus that exposure to domestic abuse and neglect has long-term negative consequences for children, including poor educational outcomes, risk of offending and poor mental health including depression. Supporting families and children as soon as they are recognised as being 'in need' can avert escalation to the point at which they are in crisis.

3.2 Where are we now?

Evaluation evidence on the effectiveness of our key early intervention services (including the Children's Centre Family Outreach service, the primary school age Parent Support Adviser service and the intensive Family Intervention programme (FIP)) suggests that they are having a positive impact on many families. For those in the most acute need, we have increased the number of families participating in Family Group Conferences (46 families with children aged 12+ in 2010-2011, exceeding the target). We estimate that our crisis response service for teenagers has also prevented a number of young people being taken into care.

3.3 What are our key areas for improvement?

This is an area of work that we will be developing further during the coming year as we move away from universal provision to more targeted services. With reducing resources it is important that we try to intervene early and help families to help themselves. We are therefore restructuring our preventative services into three strands, 0-5, 5-11 and Targeted Youth Support. The latter is a key change which involves focusing resources on one to one support for the most vulnerable, a shift which, together with substantial cuts in government grants, will require a big reduction in the Youth Development Service, particularly generic open access youth clubs. At present some vulnerable young people are supported by two or more children's services specialists. The new Targeted Youth Support (TYS) Team will ensure families are supported by one member of staff as far as is appropriate, which will avoid potentially confusing families with multiple contacts, as well as streamlining the service and avoiding duplication of effort.

To support the transition to Targeted Youth Support services the new service is implementing workforce reform, ensuring staff have a wider breath of knowledge across key areas of concern for young people, to deal successfully with the many issues facing young people, again streamlining the service and minimising multiple contacts. Supporting staff resilience will also be a focus.

A key part of our plans is to continue working with partners to ensure greater and more consistent use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF), which is a key part of delivering frontline services that are integrated, and are focused around the needs of children and young people. The CAF promotes more effective, earlier identification of additional needs, and so places workers in a better position to agree appropriate modes of support. CAF will be used in the TYS and will continue to be a major tool for early intervention services for younger children; targets for increasing support for vulnerable families, using CAF, have been agreed as part of joint commissioning with the PCT in relation to health visiting and children's centres services.

In addition to these steps we will be exploring with partners how we can improve our support for families with multiple problems, both ensuring there is good coordination and focused support for those already with significant presenting problems (building on our existing key worker schemes) and enhancing our collective approach to early intervention, to prevent problems arising or getting worse. Our work in this area will take account of lessons from the 16 community budget pilot areas across the country.

4. Looked After Children

❖ Improve outcomes for Looked After Children and Care Leavers, as well as improving support to children and young people on the edge of care

4.1 What are we trying to achieve?

We take our role as corporate parents very seriously. Our aim is to ensure vulnerable children in need of care are protected, while minimising disruption to their lives.

4.2 Where are we now?

The three-yearly OFSTED inspection, which took place in December 2010, judged that the overall effectiveness of Looked After Children (LAC) Services is good and that the capacity to improve is outstanding. The inspectors found that there was highly effective practice in most LAC Services which led to good outcomes for children, particularly in terms of their education and participation, both of which were judged as outstanding. Elected members were seen as strong advocates for children in care.

At the end of 2010/11 there were 585 Looked After Children with ESCC, however this is a snapshot as at the end of March 2011 and does not reflect the considerably higher volume of children (822) who were in care at some point during 2010/11. Despite the considerable increase in activity (which rose by 73% in terms of LAC reviews), the number of LAC reviews taking place on time during 2010/11 increased by 1.5%.

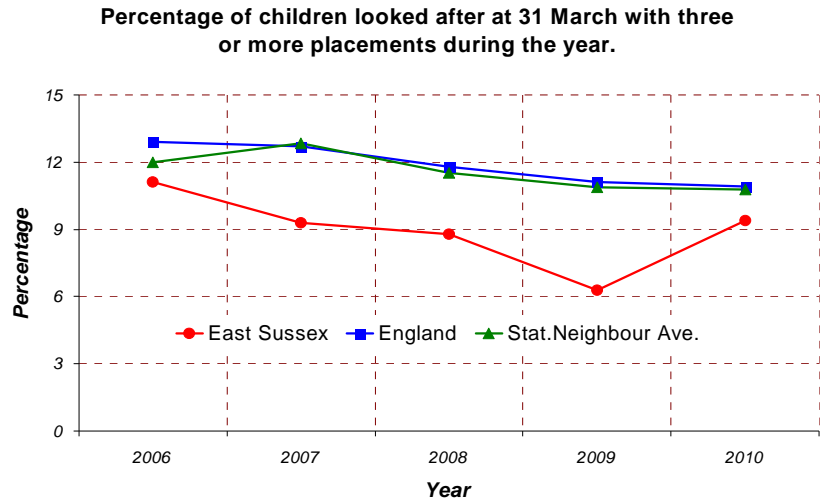
Only 9.7% (57/585) of children looked after at Quarter 4 2010/11 had experienced three or more placements during the year, meeting the target of less than 12%, despite the increase in numbers of looked after children during the year. Clearly stability for children increases both emotional health and academic achievement.

Good performance is typified by a lower percentage:

Very Good
0 < 16.01

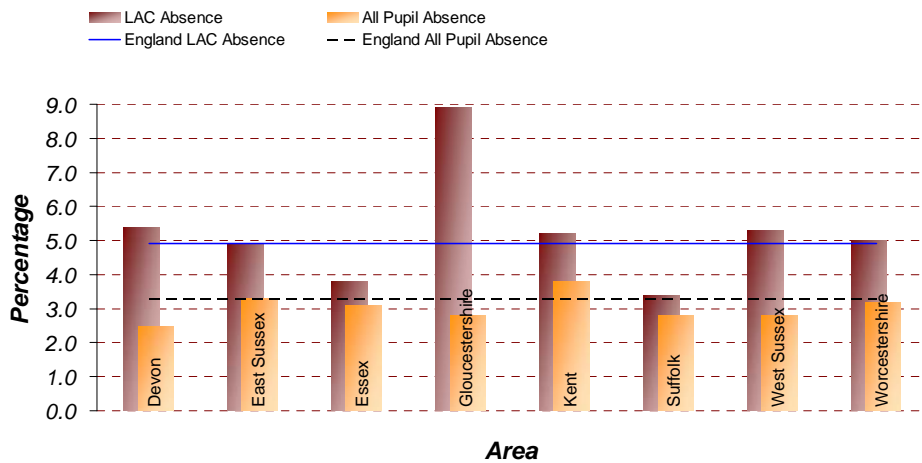
Ask questions about performance
16.01 < 20

Investigate urgently
20 < 100



Currently 14 school aged Looked after Children missed more than 32 days of schooling between 1st September 2010 and 31st May 2011. There are 385 looked after children of school age (Reception to Y11) which is 3.6% of the cohort being persistently absent.

Persistent Absence - comparison between Looked After Children and all pupils (Academic Year 2008/09)



4.3 What are our key areas for improvement?

Numbers of Looked After Children (LAC) have risen considerably in the wake of the Peter Connelly case in Haringey and the consequent rise nationally in referrals. This obviously puts a significant strain on resources; nevertheless it is important that we continue to focus on decreasing the number of LAC - where it is safe to do so - through our robust management of referrals and assessments, and our targeted prevention work. Despite the difficult financial climate and within the context of increasing activity levels, we aim to continue to provide a stable and happy upbringing for all our Looked After Children so that they have the best start possible in life.

April 2011 saw the introduction of the revised Children's Act 1989, which aims to streamline legislation and make it more accessible for children, young people, their carers, practitioners and managers. A final version of the Act was not available until the end of March 2011, therefore the service is attempting to rapidly assess and implement the new range of duties and calculate the full financial implications associated with the changes.

During 2011/12, our key aims will be to promote permanence for children via the most appropriate route and to continue to minimise the number of looked after children who experience three or more placements during the year. We also want all our young people in care to leave school with a good education and so we will continue to provide extra support to LAC through the Virtual School, which was judged as outstanding in the recent OFSTED inspection and viewed as an example of best practice. One key issue we have identified is the percentage of children of school age looked after continuously for at least 12 months who missed a total of 32 days or more of schooling for any reason. We will therefore be targeting support to those most vulnerable to absenteeism and working with schools to try and minimise the use of fixed term exclusions. The Virtual School will continue to work closely with schools to support and improve LAC attainment and will also administer the additional funding allocated via Pupil Premium on their behalf.

We will be, in addition, working closely with care leavers to ensure that their move to adult life is as smooth as possible. We are putting new measures in place to increase the range of suitable housing options and decrease the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for this vulnerable group of young people.

5. Educational achievement and aspirations

❖ Support and challenge schools to raise educational achievement and aspirations at all key stages and target interventions at those most vulnerable to under achievement

5.1 What are we trying to achieve?

We want all children and young people to achieve their potential and enjoy their time in education. In particular, we aim:

- To support East Sussex schools so that their performance exceeds the national average and the performance of schools of our statistical neighbours;
- To narrow the gap in performance between pupils entitled to FSM and other pupils; and
- To increase the uptake of Early Years Education Entitlement (EYEE) in the most deprived parts of the county.

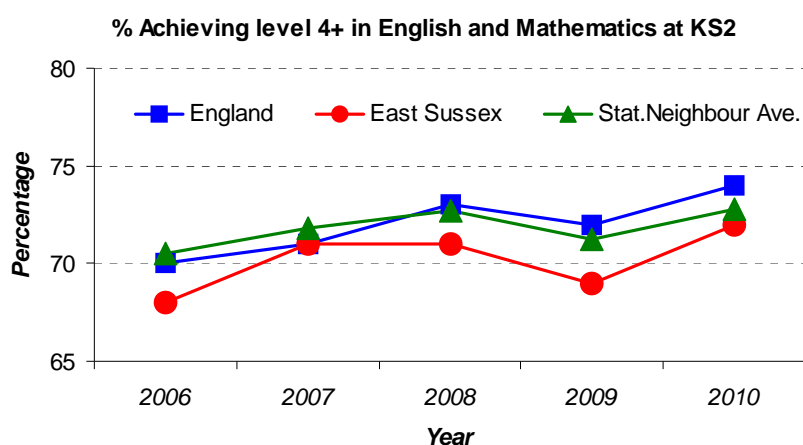
5.2 Where are we now?

In 2010, achievement of at least 78 points in the Foundation Stage Profile increased by 1% to 56%, in line with the national average (56%) and ranking us 6th out of our 11 statistical neighbours.

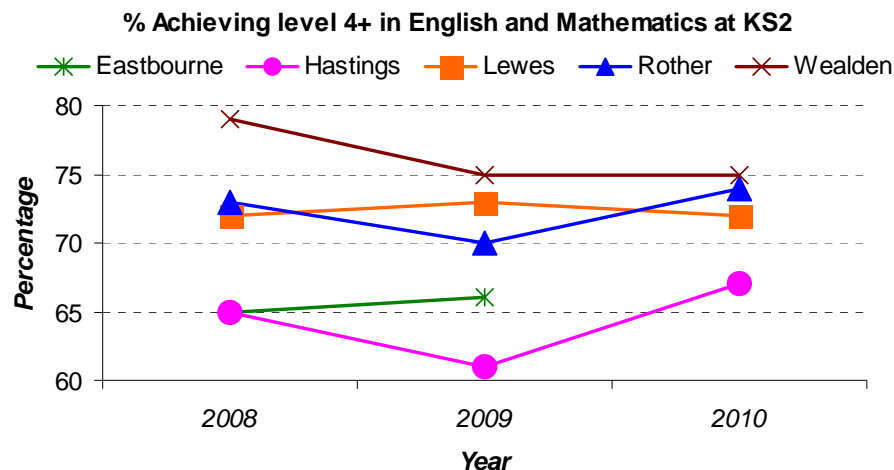
Local Authority area	% achieving a good level of development*		
	2008	2009	2010
Essex	43%	45%	50%
Suffolk	48%	46%	50%
Devon	43%	47%	52%
West Sussex	50%	50%	56%
Worcestershire	40%	45%	56%
East Sussex	56%	55%	56%
Gloucestershire	59%	59%	60%
Kent	46%	51%	61%
North Somerset	53%	58%	62%
Shropshire	57%	58%	62%
Dorset	62%	64%	67%
ENGLAND	49%	52%	56%

However, the attainment gap between the average of the lowest 20% and the median performance of the whole cohort increased by 1.5% from the previous year to 31.9%, however, this is still 1% narrower than the national gap of 32.7%. During 2010/11 the 'Every Child a Talker' (ECAT) project was rolled out in 60 foundation stage settings and training offered to all providers during Terms 3 and 4 in 2011. There is already evidence that ECAT is having a positive impact on language development.

The percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 and above at Key Stage 2 in **both** English and mathematics for 2010 was 72%, a 2% increase on the previous year, but remains below the national average (74%). East Sussex currently ranks 8th out of our 11 statistical neighbours.



There is considerable variation across East Sussex at Key Stage 2, with Hastings achieving only 67% compared to Wealden reaching 75%. The gap in outcomes for pupils entitled to Free School Meals (FSM) compared with non-FSM pupils widened slightly by 1%. 6% of schools (11) performed below the floor target of 55%, compared to 10% (19) in the previous year.

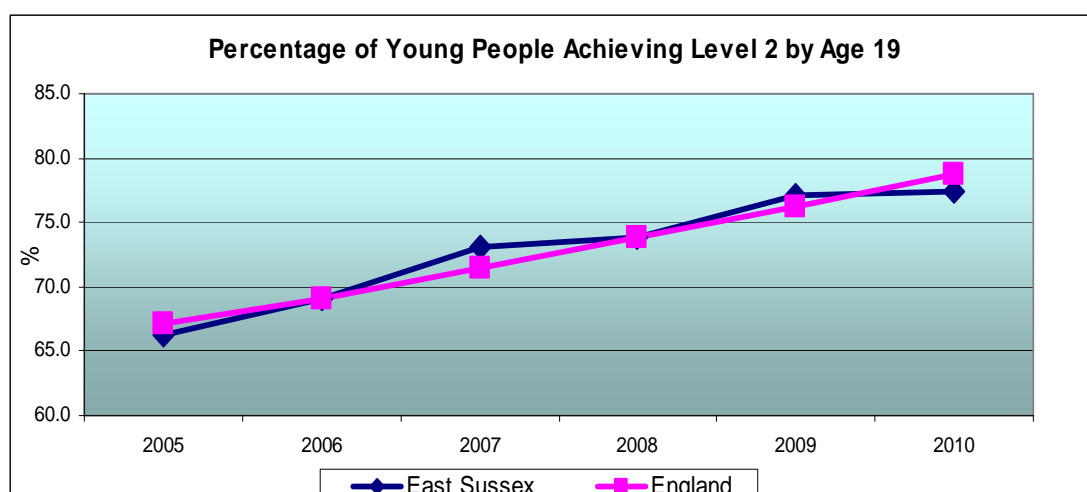


Due to the boycott of SATS results in Eastbourne, data is unrepresentative and therefore omitted in graph.

The percentage of pupils achieving 5+A*-C GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, increased by 4.7%, to 55.4%. This is the highest performance ever for East Sussex and is above the national (55.3%). In 2010 East Sussex was ranked 6th of its 11 statistical neighbours.

At Key Stage 4 the percentage of FSM pupils achieving 5+A*-C including English and mathematics increased by 7.4% to 28.5%, which resulted in a closing of the gap between FSM / non-FSM pupils by 3.9% to 28.5%. This is a significant narrowing compared with the previous year and, for the first time, a greater rate of increase for FSM pupils than for non-FSM pupils.

The latest validated result for the percentage of students achieving at Level 2 by the age of 19 was for 2009/10 academic year and was 77.5%. This is below the national average of 78.7%, but it shows an improvement on the previous year.



The secondary schools persistent absence rate in for the 2009/10 academic year was 5.1%. Despite a reduction of 0.4%, compared to the previous year, East Sussex has the highest secondary schools persistent absence rate of our statistical neighbours, exceeding the national average by 0.8%.

During the 2010 calendar year, the number of days lost through fixed term exclusions from the secondary schools in the Hastings & St Leonards Excellence Cluster was 995.5 (from 348 fixed term exclusions) compared with 534.5 days in 2009 (177 exclusions). The significant increase needs to be set in the context of an unusually steep reduction between 2008 and 2009 and may not be indicative of an underlying upward trend. The 2010 outturn exceeded the 2010 target of less than 2371 days, by more than 1,300 days.

5.3 What are our key areas for improvement?

The Education Bill introduced in the House of Commons in January 2011 was founded on the principles and proposals in the Department for Education (DfE) November 2010 White Paper 'The importance of Teaching'. This proposed legislation and DfE policy provide increased autonomy for governing bodies and schools and recognise that the primary responsibility for school improvement sits with schools. It proposes that our best schools and leaders should take on greater responsibility for leading school improvement work and managing change across the system.

In line with the Schools White Paper 2010, we will promote educational excellence by ensuring a good supply of high quality schools places, co-ordinating fair admissions and developing our school improvement strategies to support local schools. We will be looking at provision in relation to school reorganisation, place planning and the impact of the new admissions code.

The economic situation has led to a fundamental shift in our provision of school improvement services. The local authority (LA) will retain a statutory duty to improve outcomes, in particular for the most vulnerable, and to secure full participation in high quality education and training opportunities for all children and young people to age 19 and for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) to 25. Accountability for this duty is discharged by the Schools and Learning Effectiveness Service (SLES). The LA will also retain, and is expected to use, its intervention powers to act decisively to secure improvement if there are significant concerns about a school's performance.

The LA is free to determine their strategy for school improvement but it must be designed to ensure that its schools perform above the floor standards, maintain an upward trajectory of improvement in attainment and participation at all Key Stages and are not judged by OFSTED to be in an underperforming category. The new national performance measures and floor standards present challenges to a number of schools in East Sussex and a risk of their underperformance in national league tables.

The core elements of the SLES activity are:

- **Knowing all our settings, schools and colleges sufficiently well** through a process of centralised desk top analysis of standards and the collection of other data, to identify risk of underperformance for a school or group of pupils, and to inform categorisation of schools for the purposes of support and intervention.
- **Identifying priorities** sufficiently accurately to be able to target support for schools below, or at risk of falling below, the floor standards or at risk of an OFSTED category of concern. Also to identify and address countywide performance issues and to support schools to move from satisfactory to good and from good to outstanding.
- **Building capacity for partnership** to ensure a sufficient and locally well-informed group of National Leaders of Education (NLEs), Local Leaders of Education (LLEs) that will provide sufficient capacity to support school to school improvement and complement the support provided by the SLES. In addition SLES will work both strategically and operationally enabling and promoting appropriate school provision including school driven partnerships, Trusts and Academies.

The provision of traded school improvement services that are quality assured and meet the priorities of settings, schools and colleges is an increasingly important part of SLES activity to build capacity to support school improvement in East Sussex. In 2011-12 we plan to develop traded services by targeting work across boundaries in neighbouring local authorities. This pilot activity will provide the basis for an evaluation of the viability of further traded service development in 2012-13.

We are working with headteachers, governors and schools to develop a new strategy for school improvement. The strategy outlines the role of the SLES in supporting school improvement by creating conditions for change including promoting effective partnerships with and between settings, schools and colleges.

Good or outstanding schools and strongly improving satisfactory schools will purchase their own support and challenge for school improvement from the SLES or from other schools and external consultants. Underperforming schools, that require additional support to secure improvement, will receive a tailored programme of support and challenge negotiated by the SLES: the school and the local authority will both contribute to the cost of funding the support and intervention programme.

Our direct support and challenge for foundation stage providers will also be targeted and we will work with those settings in the most deprived areas of the county. Narrowing the gap in outcomes at the end of the foundation stage between the most deprived 20% of children and all others will continue to be a priority.

In addition to the school improvement strategies designed to raise the attainment of the most vulnerable we will continue to develop alternative provision at College Central, for the most challenging young people. We will also look to work with schools to identify opportunities to build sustainable alternative provision for a wider cohort of young people and will continue to invest in supporting schools to manage the behaviour and safety of children and young people with behaviour and attendance issues.

We will continue to support governors; in particular there will be support for specific strategic responsibilities critical to future success, for example, considering alternative approaches to leadership, management and school organisation, such as formal partnerships and hard federations, as well as appointing headteachers.

We are working with several other local authorities (SE7) and the Department for Education (DfE) to develop a shared approach to special educational needs (SEN) which will include earlier identification, a reduction in bureaucracy and a change to the adversarial nature of the current system. DfE have published a Green Paper on SEN and Disability, the consultation for this is on-going. In the meantime, we are exploring issues such as collaboration on market development, SEN transport and monitoring. We hope to be a pathfinder site for new approaches for SEN as described in the Green Paper.

6. Health

❖ Promote good health for children and young people and reduce health inequalities

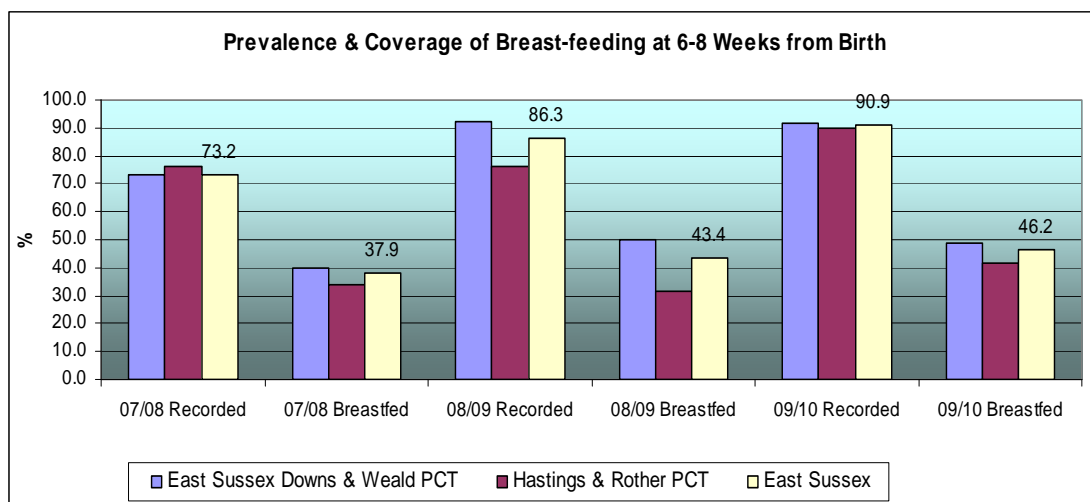
6.1 What are we trying to achieve?

We want to help reduce health inequalities by ensuring that all children and young people, particularly those in vulnerable groups, have the advice, guidance and services they need, for their emotional and physical health and wellbeing. The County Council has a long history of partnership working with local NHS agencies, including over health promotion and family support. We have particular responsibilities for the well being of looked after children; we also work closely with NHS colleagues to provide holistic, joined up education, social care and health care for disabled children and children with mental health problems, to prevent teenage pregnancy and to support young parents.

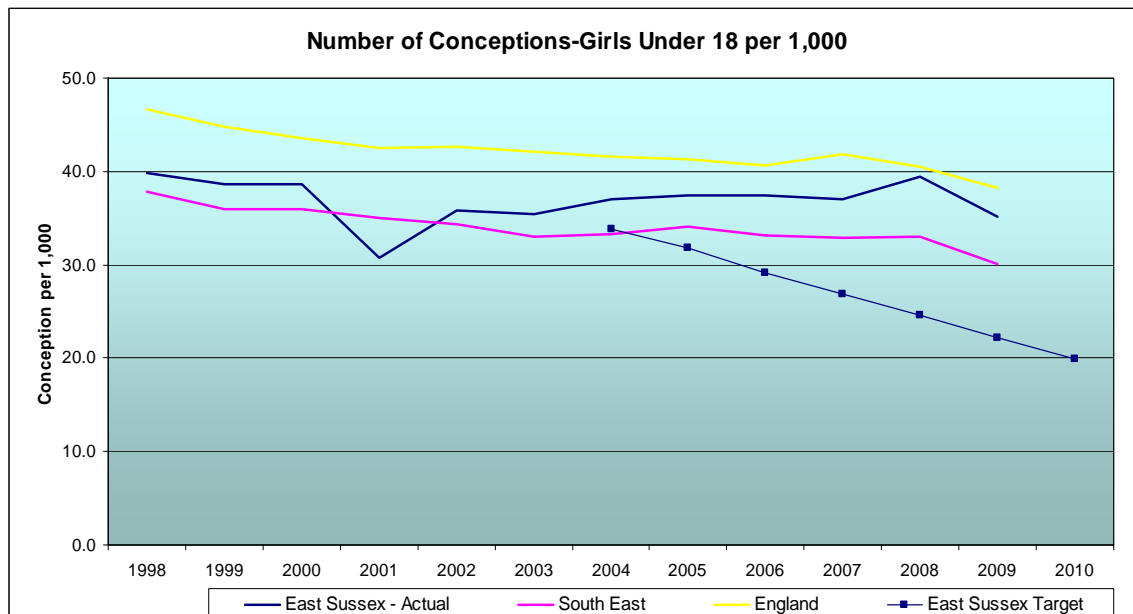
6.2 Where are we now?

The Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children Services, which took place in December 2010, judged that the contribution of health agencies to keeping children and young people safe was adequate. It was also recognised that engagement and relationships between Children's Services and health partners was generally effective. Following the inspection, named and designated doctors and nurses have now been appointed, one of the key recommendations emerging.

2010/11 end of year figures showed that 48% of mothers in East Sussex are still breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks, an increase of nearly 2% on the previous year and partially attributable to a three day postnatal breast feeding contact pilot commenced in three Children Centre areas - Eastbourne, Hastings and Peacehaven.



The latest (provisional) data available relates to 2009 and shows an annual average conception rate of 35.1 per 1000 females aged 15-17. This represents an 11% reduction on the previous year. Partnership working continues across the County with joined up media campaigns and training programmes currently being delivered through our sexual health provider services.



The average of the percentage of children looked after continuously for 12 months who had their teeth checked by a dentist in the previous 12 months and had an annual health check was 87.1% (345/396) in 2010/11.

The effectiveness of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) in East Sussex in 2009/10 was rated as 16/16. This placed us higher than the national average and higher than most of our geographical neighbours (Kent, West Sussex and Surrey all score lower – only Brighton & Hove attained the same score as us). The three-yearly OFSTED inspection, which took place in December 2010, also commented that specialist CAMHS services were very good.

6.3 What are our key areas for improvement?

The County Council's involvement in health services will increase further in 2011-2012 through two key developments:

- (i) The assignment of PCT children's commissioning staff to the CYPT team in the department, driving forward the integration of strategic commissioning work across the NHS and ESCC;
- (ii) The co-location of the PCT public health service with ESCC colleagues in County Hall, ahead of the proposed transfer of responsibility for public health to the Council.

These two developments together will help us deliver our key agenda around reducing health inequalities, summarised below.

First, we will be working to completely integrate ESCC and NHS support to families with children aged 0-5, using a new pooled budget arrangement to achieve a shift in investment from universal to targeted services so that resources are used where they are most needed. As part of this shift we will expand the successful Family Nurse Partnership programme which helps to improve the life chances of vulnerable babies, young children and their families. Breastfeeding promotion and support will continue,

particularly among vulnerable groups and linked to wider work to promote family resilience and parenting.

For older children, we will provide preventative family support, through the Parent Support Adviser programme. County Council funding through the Early Intervention Grant will ensure a minimum programme in deprived areas and we will also help schools which wish to use their pupil premium funding to expand the programme. Our new streamlined Targeted Youth Support service will provide support for the most vulnerable young people to help them take responsibility for their own well being including dealing with issues around drugs and alcohol.

Together with NHS colleagues we will continue to jointly commission specialist mental health services for children and young people, ensuring that they develop where appropriate to meet local needs, and are well understood and targeted. We will also work with Sussex Partnership Trust and NHS colleagues to ensure effective implementation, including through children's centres, of a new perinatal mental health service for mothers with post natal depression.

We will also jointly commission the new Children's Integrated Therapy Service, bringing together resources from the County Council and the NHS to ensure coherent, consistent therapeutic support for those who need it, to promote healthy development and educational attainment.

We take our role as corporate parent very seriously and as such will work closely with our NHS partners to ensure a high standard of health assessment and care for our looked after children.

We will also continue our work to reduce teenage conception rates, refining our data to enable better targeting of services in areas of most need, including parts of Hastings, Hailsham and Wealden.

7. Not in Education, Employment or Training

❖ Work with partners to minimise the number of young people who are not in employment, education or training

7.1 What are we trying to achieve?

- Increasing the number of young people in learning; and
- Fewer young people who are not in education, employment or training;
- Raising the Participation Age (RPA), with full participation by 2012.

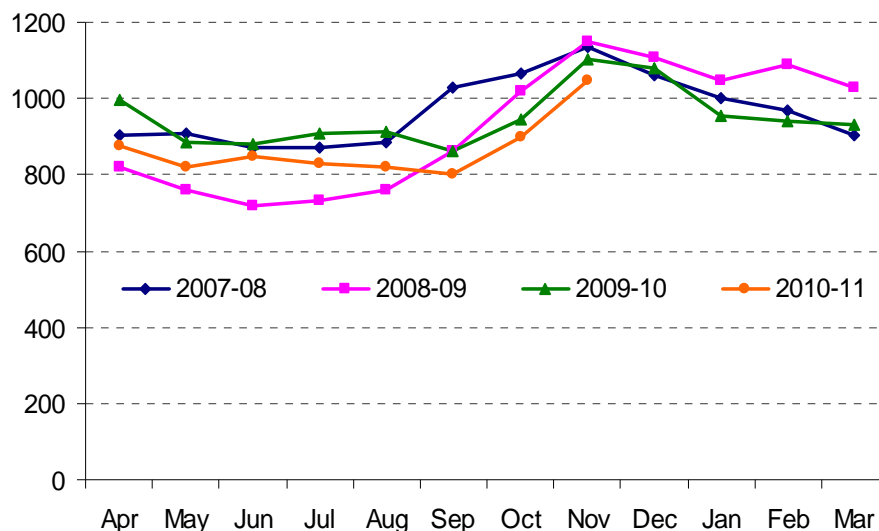
7.2 Where are we now?

The latest data published nationally shows that for 2009, 81.8% of 17 year olds were participating in education or training. This represents an increase of 6% on the previous year. Although the East Sussex outturn remains below the national average (85.2%), we have improved at a faster rate (6% compared to 5%). We have been recognised by the DfE as one of the most successful Raising the Participation Age

(RPA) Trial areas and are taking on a new role to support other South East LA's to prepare for RPA.

The 2010/11 annual NEET figure was 6.58%, a reduction from 7.29% in 2009/10. The annual reduction of 0.7% compares well to 0.4% for England and the South East, and although we are still above the England and South East average of 6%, we are closing the gap. The average NEET figure for our statistical neighbours is 5.6% and East Sussex is the second highest; only Suffolk is higher with 7.4%.

Number of young people 16-18 who are NEET



7.3 What are our key areas for improvement?

Section 68 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 places a duty on local authorities to make available to young people below the age of 19 and relevant young adults (i.e. those aged 20 and over but under 25 with learning difficulties) support that will encourage, enable or assist them to participate in education and training.

The Government's general approach is to give local authorities freedom and flexibility to decide how to fulfil their statutory duties. However, there is an expectation that local authorities will have regard to the following guidance when deciding how to organise and resource their services:

- Tracking and supporting young people

There must be a good mechanism for tracking young people's participation in order to identify those who need support.

Information on the number and proportion of young people in each area who are not in education, employment or training, or whose current activity is not known, will be taken from the data reported to DfE and made available to the public via the Cabinet Office transparency website.

It is also important that there is a good mechanism to check which young people are still to secure an offer of education or training and providing them with the support to do so.

- Working with Jobcentre Plus

The LA will be required to continue to maintain close links with Jobcentre Plus to ensure that young people who are NEET receive a complementary package of support to find employment or to re-engage in education or training. This responsibility is best underpinned by the development of local partnership agreements, which document the ways in which local authorities and Jobcentre Plus will work together to ensure that a seamless and comprehensive service is provided for all young people

We have been successful in our bid to take part in the 'Locally Led Delivery projects: Raising the Participation Age' for 2011/12, which will consolidate some of our learning from the RPA Trials and enable us to roll out successful tools and models to all schools and colleges across East Sussex.

Reflecting the government's commitment to Raising the Participation Age (RPA) and the excellent progress made in East Sussex with the RPA pilot, we will develop our strategy to improve post-16 participation in education and training through partnership work with schools and colleges. We will aim to achieve full participation by 2012 and our focus will be upon improving the transition, particularly for young people who are vulnerable to becoming 'early leavers', as well as ensuring full access to an appropriate range of high quality opportunities. Our continuing aim will be to ensure that at least 86% of 17 year olds are participating in education and training by 2012.

The Connexions Service is one area that has been reduced significantly with the move away from universal provision so our work will be more targeted in future. We have identified two key focus areas - the high proportion of NEETs in Hastings and the over-representation of Learners with Learning Difficulties or Disabilities (LLDD) in our NEET cohort. Personal Adviser time will be centred on those NEET young people who are most likely to become EET and we will be targeting secondary schools with the highest numbers of leavers moving to NEET to increase their usage of the Risk of NEET Indicator to build capacity within schools around NEET prevention. Partnership working with Job Centre Plus will also be made more robust so that Connexions can focus support on 16 and 17 year old NEETs and provide minimal support to Job Centre Plus who are working with 18 year old NEETs.

Throughout 2011/12 we will work towards our participation target (of 86% as stated above) and a NEET figure of 5.9% by carrying out the following activities:

- Develop data collection; this will be increasingly important as the local universal Connexions service ceases. We will use a call centre to track young people not in education at regular points throughout the year.
- Prioritise the targeted Connexions support for 16 and 17 year olds who have multiple barriers and are seeking EET and reduce the support provided to 18 year olds; secure impact of this strategy by working with other services, including Targeted Youth Support and Job Centre Plus.
- Respond to learner demand for more employment with training and apprenticeships opportunities by developing Work Pairing; develop an Apprenticeship Training Association to help support small to medium enterprises (SMEs) to offer apprenticeships and support the 100 in 100 Eastbourne Apprenticeship campaign.
- Support progression to post-16 provision through implementing data sharing protocols, developing resources to support progression and commissioning summer/induction programmes.

- Recognising the new responsibilities of schools and colleges in offering Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance develop (and provide training on) a RPA Toolkit which will include resources and tools for providers to use.
- Collaborate with partners to secure additional resource into the county for projects that help support NEET young people, for example through ESF and the Big Society Fund.
- Influence national emerging practice on RPA through our DfE funded role as a 'local leader', supporting other local authorities and our representation on the national RPA Steering group.
- Work with post-16 providers to ensure that provision for learning meets demand.

8. Making a positive contribution

❖ Promote the benefits of young people making a positive contribution to their community and decisions affecting their own lives

8.1 What are we trying to achieve?

- Encouraging engagement and involvement of children, young people and their families; and
- Preventing anti-social behaviour.

8.2 Where are we now?

Encouraging engagement and involvement of children, young people and their families

A huge range of activities have been organised to enable children, young people and their families to be involved in shaping and running the services they receive. A small sample includes:

- training a group of young people to become Young Inspectors, who have since inspected a range of services,
- ensuring all Safeguarding and LAC services now routinely seek service-user feedback through the Children in Care Council,
- ensuring all Looked After Children are able to participate in their reviews,
- routinely inviting parents to contribute to Foster Carers Reviews,
- training parents to become peer researchers through the Connected Education project
- developing advocacy routes for vulnerable parents and children and involving BME parents and carers on developing new race equality resources
- Equality & Participation Team successfully promoted the Office of the Children's Commissioner's Takeover Day 2010 to partners: approx 2000 children and young people took part across the county, in a range of roles within schools and externally with services, including working alongside MPs, Sussex Police, Children's Services staff, health services, and businesses

Preventing anti-social behaviour

Provisional figures as at Q4 2010/11 are showing a reduction in first-time entrants to the youth justice system aged 10-17 per 100,000 population from 229 FTE in 2007/08 (baseline year) to 114 - a 46.7% decrease.

8.3 What are our key areas for improvement?

Children and young people need to be supported and guided to contribute meaningfully to service development to ensure that we provide the services that meet specific local needs.

They also need to be encouraged and supported to participate in the “Big Society” agenda. This social development is the responsibility of everyone in contact with young people and involves enabling them to discuss different values and attitudes, to participate in positive activities and to have their say on issues that are important to them in an atmosphere that is free from discriminatory behaviour.

Our key aims are to continue to encourage as many young people as possible to communicate their views to us while concentrating our limited resources to target specific support to the most vulnerable young people, one way is through the new Targeted Youth Support Service.

Following the Ministry of Justice Green Paper ‘Breaking the cycle: Effective Punishment, Rehabilitation and Sentencing of Offenders’, there is move to look at alternative approaches for young people, with the aim of decreasing the offending rates and the number of young people having a criminal record; to support this move the Targeted Youth Support service is being designed to ensure cross over and greater links with the Youth Justice team, to fully support young people in this area and enable solutions through the use of restorative justice. Reducing the number of incidents of anti social behaviour is also a key priority within the Children and Young People’s Plan 2011-2014, with actions from across the partnership. The one to one TYS service and careful targeting of continuing youth activity provision are key contributions from ESCC to this priority.

APPENDIX 3: Children's Services Department Policy Steers

DRAFT FOR APPROVAL

Corporately, the ambition for 2012/13 onwards is to be able to demonstrate much more clearly to members, via our plans and performance monitoring, how our budgets relate to performance under individual policy steers. In previous years the policy steers have tended to concentrate on specific areas of service where members wanted to see improvement – consequently not all expenditure could be matched back to a specific steer. However, for next year we are now proposing a new set of Policy Steers which will ensure that all the major budgets are reflected and the Steers themselves accurately reflect the totality of what those budgets are expected to achieve.

Current Policy Steers	Suggested Policy Steers 2012/13	Comments
1. Protect children and young people from harm and neglect.	1. Protect children and young people from harm and neglect.	<i>This remains the same as last year. The budget shown against this policy steer will be for the Safeguarding Unit, Locality Social Work and Family Support Services.</i>
2. Develop resilience in families to help reduce dependency on public services by enhancing their capacity to resolve their own problems.	2. Work with partners to develop resilience in families through providing early co-ordinated help for children aged 0-11 and streamlined support, for families with multiple problems.	<i>This policy steer has been developed to reference the important area of work that Children's Services are leading on across the County Council to streamline support for families with multiple problems. It is also key to our work on early help to reduce demand at the critical end of services by developing more early intervention services. Although there is not a specific single budget for this area of work, we will extract those elements of other budgets that fund services in this area in this area, for example the budget for Children's Centres, and for some other work funded by Early Intervention Grant.</i>

Current Policy Steers	Suggested Policy Steers 2012/13	Comments
6. Promote good health for children and young people and reduce health inequalities.	3. Work with partners to provide early support to young people aged 11-19 who are most vulnerable to poor outcomes.	<p><i>This Policy steer will cover all the services that have been combined into Targeted Youth Support – Youth Development, Teenage Pregnancy, Youth Justice, Substance Misuse, Youth Homelessness and CAMHS.</i></p> <p><i>The budget shown against this policy steer will be for Targeted Youth Support.</i></p>
7. Promote the benefits of young people making a positive contribution to their community and decisions affecting their own lives.		
3. Improve outcomes for Looked After Children and Care Leavers, as well as improving support to children and young people on the edge of care.	4. Improve outcomes for Looked-After Children and Care Leavers.	<p><i>This remains similar to last year. The work with young people on the edge of care is covered by policy steer 1 as this is taken forward by Locality Social Work and Family Support Services.</i></p> <p><i>The budget shown against this policy steer will be for Looked After Children Services.</i></p>
	5. Ensure appropriate support for children and young people with disabilities, and their families, including supporting young people aged 16-25 with complex special needs to make a smooth transition into adult life.	<p><i>This area of work is not reflected in the current set of policy steers but is a significant area of expenditure so we wish to include it in future. The same Policy Steer will be shown in the Adult Social Care Portfolio to emphasise the joint working we do through the transitions service.</i></p> <p><i>The budgets shown against this policy steer will be for Disability Services and, separately, for the Transition Service.</i></p>
	6. Work with schools and families to identify, assess and support appropriately children with special educational needs.	<p><i>Again this area of work is not reflected in the current set of policy steers but, as it is an area of significant spend, we feel it is appropriate to do so in future.</i></p> <p><i>The budget shown against this policy steer will be for Special Educational Needs.</i></p>
4. Support and challenge schools to raise educational achievement and aspirations at all key stages and target interventions at those most vulnerable	7. Identify, challenge and, where appropriate, support those schools and settings most vulnerable to underachievement in order to maximise young people's chances of a fulfilling and	<p><i>The significant changes to the government policy on schools means that, in future we will be working mainly with the schools most vulnerable to underachievement so we have adjusted the wording of this policy steer accordingly. Also, we want to</i></p>

Current Policy Steers	Suggested Policy Steers 2012/13	Comments
to under achievement.	economically active life.	<i>emphasise the ultimate aim of achieving well at school, which is to go on to education, employment and training – so we have combined the NEET policy steer into this one as well.</i>
5. Work with partners to minimise the number of young people who are not in employment, education or training.		<i>The budget shown against this policy steer will be for Standards and Learning Effectiveness.</i>
	8. Promote the access, inclusion and achievement of all pupils through a fair admissions policy and with extra support for those with specialist needs or who are vulnerable to missing education.	<i>This area of work is not reflected in the current set of policy steers but is a significant area of expenditure so we wish to include it in future.</i> <i>The budgets shown against this policy steer will be for Inclusion Support and, separately, for Admissions and Transport.</i>