
OVERVIEW OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES PORTFOLIO

1. It is with pleasure that I present my first report to Council as Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Children's Service and give below the main areas for work under my Portfolio since the last meeting of Council.
 - (a) **Council Wide Domestic Violence Policy** – It is pleasing to note that the Social Affairs and Health Scrutiny Committee's recommendations to adopt the Council-wide Domestic Violence Policy as a joint policy between this Council and the Darlington Primary Care Trust has been approved. This Council Policy is an example of good practice and its adoption by the Primary Care Trust will send a strong and positive message to the community of the importance of tackling issues of domestic violence.
 - (b) **Racial Incidents in Schools – Academic Year 2003-4** – Consideration has been given to the number, nature and outcomes of racist incidents in schools during the academic year 2003-04. It is pleasing to note, that in every case reported further action was taken by the head teacher or senior manager in the School and also to note the work being carried out by the Language for Learning Service, within the Education Department, with schools and governors on race equality issues.
 - (c) **Big Lottery Fund** – Approval has been given for the submission of a bid for £90,000 from the Big Lottery to support an extended school development involving Longfield Comprehensive School and neighbouring primary schools. The bid will help the schools develop joint activities, particularly relating to sport, and is in addition to the funding already secured for extended schools through the Standards Fund.
 - (d) **Eastbourne School** – It is with great pleasure that I can announce that Eastbourne School has been removed from special measures following a re-inspection visit by HMI. This achievement is a great reflection on the efforts of Head Teacher Karen Pemberton, the staff at the school and the tremendous support of the Authority's Officers and the Federation, the first in the Country, with Hurworth School.
2. Since taking responsibility for the Children's Services portfolio, I have started to meet regularly with the Director of Social Services and Director of Education. I am also planning to visit teams within these two departments in order to familiarise myself with children's services within the Council, and I will shortly be visiting children's residential units and other relevant establishments.

Councillor Chris McEwan
Cabinet Member with Children's Services Portfolio