

---

**OVERVIEW OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

---

1. Since the last meeting of Council, the following are the areas for work under my Children's Services Portfolio :-

**a) Targeted Capital Fund 2005 - Submission from Hummersknott Language College**

Approval has been given to a proposal to bid for Targeted Capital Funding to undertake works at Hummersknott Language College. There is a clear need for significant capital investment to be made into Hummersknott Language College which will have a direct effect upon the Authority's drive to raise educational standards in Darlington. At present, a bid for Targeted Capital Funding is the only available funding stream to provide such support. If successful, a corporate investment of £3 million matched funding would be required.

**b) Education Premises Capital Programme 2005-06**

Approval has been given to a capital programme of works in schools for 2005/06, and the release of funding to support those schemes. This is in order to ensure the funding of over £5 million secured for Darlington schools can be directed at the most urgent building projects providing an improved environment for children to learn.

2. I have been involved on the recent Appointments Panel for the Chief Executive, and for 2 Assistant Director posts within the new Children's Services Department. A third Assistant Director post for Children's Services is due for interview in early July.

**3. Developments in the Youth Service**

I am pleased to report the following recent developments within the Youth Service (part of the Community Services Department), summarised below:

(a) The Youth Service is leading on a multi-agency group to produce an information leaflet on activities that are available for children and young people through the summer holidays.

(b) Detached Youth Workers are working with a group of young people in the North Road area to support the local Community Partnership's vision of gaining a community centre in the area. The Detached Workers are also linking in with Leisure & Arts staff to provide activities for young people by using Longfield School's grounds on an evening.

(c) The Youth Service is preparing a presentation of young people's views for a special Darlington Assembly event taking place on 22nd June 2005 at the Dolphin Centre.

4. In addition to weekly briefings with the Director of Children's Services and Assistant Directors, I am continuing a weekly series of visits and meetings with staff who work in

children's services, to schools in the Borough, and attending strategy and case meetings as an observer to develop my knowledge of key areas. These include:

(a) Friday 8th April - Met with senior managers to discuss Darlington's Youth Service.

(b) Friday 14th April - Met with the Director and the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Lifelong Learning and the Social Affairs & Health Scrutiny Committees to discuss joint areas of work and common issues.

(c) Friday 22nd April – I visited Branksome Comprehensive School where I met with the Head Teacher, staff and pupils and toured the school's facilities. I also visited Corporation Road Community School, where again I met with teaching and non-teaching staff and pupils at the school.

(d) Friday 29th April – I visited Carmel RC Technology College, where I met with the Head Teacher, staff and pupils. I met with senior managers in the Council and managers from Investing in Children and the Children's Fund. I met with the Chair of Governors at Corporation Road School, further to correspondence sent to all Chairs of Governors in the Borough inviting them to meet with me in my new role

**Councillor Chris McEwan**  
**Cabinet Member with Children's Services Portfolio**