



**SCRUTINY COMMISSION – 17<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2002**

**REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**INDICES OF DEPRIVATION – CO-ORDINATION OF  
RESEARCH AND MANAGEMENT INFORMATION**

**Purpose**

1. The purpose of this report is to advise the Commission of the response of the Cabinet to views expressed by the Education and Heritage Scrutiny Committee on the use of data such as Indices of Deprivation and the need for better co-ordination of research and management information.

**Background**

2. The Education and Heritage Scrutiny Committee in October/November 2001 considered reports on the issues surrounding education provision for three year olds. At that time concern was expressed regarding the use of indices of deprivation as the basis for the selection of areas qualifying for nursery provision. An internal inquiry commissioned by the Leader into the matter made the following two specific recommendations (which were accepted by the Cabinet) relating to Indices of Deprivation:
  - Recommendation 16: that unless there are contrary indications, any ward-based allocation of places in 2001-2002 should use the DETR's Multiple Deprivation Index 2000.
  - Recommendation 17: that where an official document of the County Council quotes an Index, the reference should be precise, to avoid any misunderstanding as to which index is meant.
3. The Education and Heritage Scrutiny Committee on 16<sup>th</sup> January, 2002 considered a detailed report on the official Indices of Deprivation published by central government, the major differences between them, the effects of applying each and their limitations. Arising from the discussion on the report the Committee resolved, inter-alia, to advise the Cabinet as follows:-

'That consideration be given to improving the research and management information activities of the County Council and that this issue should be addressed when proposals for re-organisation were being considered. Such an approach would enable a more consistent and better informed approach by Departments to the use and limitations of Indices of Deprivation.'

## **Consideration by the Cabinet**

4. The Cabinet at its meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> March, 2002 received a report setting out the view of the Education and Heritage Scrutiny Committee and the comments of officers thereon. The Cabinet were advised as follows:-
  - “8. Official statistics and other information is used for policy development and/or for service delivery purposes by most departments of the County Council. As a guiding principle, it is important that this usage is co-ordinated to ensure both common interpretation and use of current data. Successful co-ordination and interpretation and usage requires a lead officer to be identified.
  9. Not all data requires central co-ordination. Information relevant to a specific service may be successfully managed within the appropriate service department. Other data, such as the Indices of Deprivation, has a more corporate significance because of its wider usage. Such data is best interpreted once, in a way which becomes ‘definitive’ for the County Council. This interpretation can then be made freely available to all departments to access.
  10. The sharing of common data sources across the Council will be enhanced by the use of the County Council-wide Corporate Information Service. This will make it possible to share information electronically across the authority, allowing a single point of interpretation and updating. The Research and Information Team in the Planning and Transportation Department holds and manages the widest range of data that is used across the organisation. The Team is currently preparing ‘community profiles’ for the County and District areas.
  11. The need to improve co-ordination has already been recognised in the County Council’s Information Management Policy and Strategy. Some aspects of co-ordination are being progressed through the development of integrated data models and the adoption of geographical information systems within departments and corporately across the County Council.
  12. There are a number of benefits arising from this approach:
    - It provides officers (and members) the capability to access data on their own desktops
    - Officers can obtain data analysis quickly (vital when responding to the requirements of funding bids)
    - Policy development can take place with a more informed approach
    - It avoids duplication of data and ensures data is consistent.”

## **Decision of the Cabinet**

5. The Cabinet concurred with the view of the Education and Heritage Scrutiny Committee that improved co-ordination of research and information functions in the County Council should be facilitated by the proposals for departmental restructuring, (to be considered in due course), which should provide for a more consistent and better informed use of research, including the indices of deprivation.

## **Equal Opportunities Implications**

6. Better co-ordination of research and information will assist in identifying the needs of all sectors of the community more consistently and accurately.

## **Recommendation**

7. The Commission is asked to note the response of the Cabinet.

## **Background Papers**

Report of the Director of Education to the Education and Heritage Scrutiny Committee on 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 2001 – ‘Nursery Funding for 3 year olds’.

Report of the Chief Executive to the Cabinet on 4<sup>th</sup> December and Education and Heritage Scrutiny Committee on 5<sup>th</sup> December, 2001 – ‘Leicestershire Early Years Development and Child Care Partnership – Nursery Education Grant’.

Report of the Director of Planning and Transportation to the Education and Heritage Scrutiny Committee on 16<sup>th</sup> January, 2002 – ‘Indices of Deprivation’.

Report of the Chief Executive to the Cabinet on 19<sup>th</sup> March, 2002 – ‘Indices of Deprivation’.

## **Officer to contact**

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