

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE  
SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL**

**DATE:** 21 December 2006

**JOINT AREA REVIEW**

**Ward(s)** All

**Portfolios:** Councillor Zahid Ali, Children's Services

**Summary of report:**

This report responds to the resolution of the children's and young people's scrutiny and performance panel "That the panel receive costing of the JAR, based on the experiences of other local authorities."

The report summarises the findings of a questionnaire sent to local authorities whose JAR has been completed and published, asking them to estimate the costs to them of preparing for and managing the inspection.

**Background Papers**

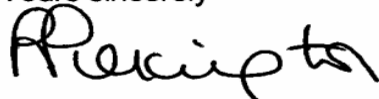
Questionnaire to other local authorities, and their responses.

**Reason for Scrutiny:**

Scrutiny requested a report on the likely costs to the council of the forthcoming Joint Area Review.

**Signed:**

Yours sincerely



Pauline Pilkington  
Assistant Director

**Date:** 12 December 2006

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**DATE:** 21 December 2006

### **JOINT AREA REVIEW**

At its meeting on 7 September 2006, the children and young people's scrutiny and performance panel requested "That the panel receive costing of the JAR, based on the experiences of other local authorities."

A short questionnaire was sent to those local authorities who by September 2006 had completed Joint Area Reviews with published reports. They were asked to estimate the direct and indirect costs of their JAR.

"Direct Costs" were defined as those additional to mainstream budgets, before, during and after the fieldwork. They included things like: use of external consultants, interims, short term appointments, honoraria, publicity and events.

"Indirect Costs" were defined as JAR related activity funded from within mainstream budgets, before, during and after the fieldwork. These included management and staff time, consultation, communications and printing.

A number of respondents found it difficult to provide figures and others had difficulty in splitting direct and indirect costs. However the results were:

Direct costs: range £10,000 - £100,000; average £60,000

Indirect costs: range £20,000 - £250,000; average £105,000

Total costs: range £75,000 - £260,000; average £160,000

There is no correlation between the size of the authority and the amounts spent. Nor is there any obvious correlation between the amounts spent and the JAR result. Some high performing authorities spent relatively little, while others spent a lot. The same was true for authorities whose JAR result was poor.

Members will be aware that Walsall is in the unique position of having a contracted out education service. While Education Walsall are full partners in our preparations for the JAR, the children's services directorate lacks the infrastructure that other authorities can call on to lead and support the preparatory work.

Walsall's JAR inspection will take place over a fortnight beginning on Monday 28 January 2008. Preparations have already begun and will steadily gather pace during 2007. A corporate CPA inspection will take place at the same time as the JAR (and probably an Enhanced Youth Service inspection as well). There will therefore be considerable pressure on key staff and managers during the latter half of 2007 and into 2008, notably in areas like finance, HR and performance management.