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## Report of the Head of Policy, Performance and Improvement

Meeting: Children's Services Scrutiny Board

Date: 26<sup>th</sup> June 2008

Subject: Performance Report Quarter 4 2007/08

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**Electoral Wards Affected:**

**Specific Implications For:**

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

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### 1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report discusses the key performance issues considered to be of corporate significance identified for each of the Directorates as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008.

### 2 Purpose of the Report

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to highlight key performance issues at the end of Quarter 4 (1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008) and to provide additional contextual information where relevant.

### 3 Background Information

- 3.1 This 'highlight report' has been prepared following the Accountability process, which includes the CLT meeting on 20th May and Leader Management Team on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2008. Separate reports have been prepared for each of the scrutiny committees.
- 3.2 Scrutiny board arrangements have been slightly amended this year which has meant that performance information has had to be split differently between boards. For some PI's this split is not straightforward, for example, is teenage conception a health issue or a children's issue? For this reason we have decided for quarter 4 to report such indicators to both relevant boards. As the new arrangements bed-in greater clarity may emerge, although in theory there would appear to be no reason why dual reporting could not continue.
- 3.3 The issues discussed in this report have been identified because performance in these areas impacts upon one or more of the following; the delivery of effective services, the delivery of our corporate priorities; our CPA score; or our ability to deliver efficiency savings. This report is supported by detailed PI information.

## **4 Directorate Performance Issues**

### **4.1 Children's Services**

#### **Improvements to social care assessments and reviews**

The Quarter 4 report highlights the significant improvements in some key indicators that measure assessments and reviews in children's social care. In particular the indicators for Core and Initial Assessments as well as for the proportion of young people involved in their reviews show strong improvement, achievement of targets and a rise in OfSTED ratings. Other similar indicators also show some improvement, but not all targets have been met so significant challenges remain.

#### **The number of Looked After Children and Young People**

The relatively high number of Looked After Children and Young People in Leeds has been identified as a key issue previously. Quarter 4 performance data (though currently provisional) show limited progress over the past year. The number of children in care and coming into care for the first time are close to previous years' figures., and the rate of adoptions has not been increased to meet the agreed target.

#### **Post 16 learning**

Two indicators in this area cause some concern. The most significant is the measure of 16-18 year olds Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET). Q4 (provisional) data show that the Leeds target has been missed and performance has actually declined. This is significant as NEET is a national and local priority, and an area where the authority and its partners have agreed challenging targets in the Leeds Strategic Plan. The second area of concern is the failure to achieve improvements in Level 3 (A-Level equivalent) qualifications for 19 year olds. This is important as this is another area for improvement in the Leeds Strategic Plan and a national and local priority.

Further improving social care, 14-19 learning and reducing the numbers of children needing to be taken into care are all priority areas for the Children and Young People's Plan, and are subject to detailed action plans arising from the Joint Area Review. These action plans will be subject to rigorous monitoring over the coming year, and progress will also be monitored externally via Government Office.

#### **Youth Service data quality issues**

Problems with the availability and reliability of youth service performance data have been previously reported. Actions taken over the year have made some progress, but this has not been enough and significant challenges remain. There are two main areas of concern remaining: firstly to support youth workers in using the new IT system effectively; and secondly to ensure the IT system is fully functional and secure for use by both Council and external staff. As such the Director of Children's Services has required managers of the service to work with Corporate IT Services to agree a joint action plan and put in place effective project management to ensure that the plan is implemented.

## **5 Recommendation**

That Members note the content of this report and comment on any particular performance issues of concern.