



Report of the Director of Children's Services

Scrutiny Board (Children's Services)

Date: 21st October 2010

Subject: Leeds Children and Young People's Plan 2011 – Consultation

Electoral Wards Affected:

All

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

1.0 Background

- 1.1 At present, all local areas are statutorily required to have a Children and Young People's Plan. The Plan must set out how the local partners within a Children's Trust (which includes the local authority) will cooperate to improve well being for children and young people living in the area. It should be clear about the priority issues for children's services in the city and set out broadly how these will be addressed. It should link in with other, relevant key strategic plans for the city.
- 1.2 Leeds developed its first Children and Young People's (CYP) Plan in 2006. This ran until 2009. During this period the Plan was refreshed annually to ensure it stayed relevant and focused to the needs of children, young people and families in the city. A full review was then carried out and a new Plan produced in 2009. This set out longer term ambitions until 2014 and specific short-term priorities until 2011. This Plan underwent an annual refresh earlier in 2010. The Children's Services Scrutiny Board have consistently been involved in work to review and develop the city's CYP Plan.
- 1.3 It was always the intention to carry out a full review of the Children and Young People's Plan ready for 2011. This has become particularly important in light of the changing political and financial context during this year. It is also important in view of a number of specific developments in Leeds, notably:
- The Improvement Plan and the work of the independently chaired Improvement Board to target priority areas (including those in the CYP Plan) and oversee improvements in outcomes.
 - The Transformation Programme, aiming to develop a more integrated approach to delivering children's services.

- The development of revised Children's Trust arrangements for the city, which came into effect in April 2010.
- A new Director of Children's Services, Nigel Richardson, taking up post at the start of October 2010.

A review for 2011 will also mean that the Plan can link in with the 2011 review of the Leeds Vision.

- 1.4 This work is taking place against a shifting national approach to children's services. Currently Children and Young People's Plans are a statutory requirement for all local areas. However, the coalition government has clearly stated its intention to remove this statutory obligation by April 2011. This will mean Leeds is no longer required by government to produce a Children and Young People's Plan. In anticipation of this change, senior leaders from partners on the Children's Trust Board have considered the implications and options. The collective view is that Leeds will still benefit significantly from having a document that captures the shared vision and priorities for children's services in the city. However it is too early to determine how close such a document will remain to the format and level of detail within the current Plan.
- 1.5 As such, senior leaders have drawn up outline proposals for the priorities within a future Plan and a period of consultation is now taking place on these proposals, along with consideration of how a new Plan can best be structured to deliver the maximum benefit to services and the public in Leeds. The remainder of this report outlines the proposals, the approach being taken and the consultation process. The Children's Services Scrutiny Board is an important part of this process.
- 1.6 It is important to see consultation on the CYP Plan for the city as complementary to the consultation on the organisational transformation of children's services in Leeds, which is also taking place at the current time. The two overlap and as set out below, must be seen as a whole in order to understand how we will take forward services for children, young people and families in Leeds in the short, medium and longer term. Nigel Richardson, the new Director of Children's Services in Leeds, will complement the information within this report by providing members of the Scrutiny Board with a presentation at their meeting that sets out his initial thinking around the development of this work.

2.0 Main Issues

Existing Priorities

- 2.1 When considering priorities for a future CYP Plan, it may be helpful for members to be reminded of how the framework behind improvement work in Leeds has been evolving over the last eighteen months. The 2009-14 Children and Young People's Plan (published in September 2009) contains a mixture of immediate and longer term priorities. These are as follows:

Immediate priorities: improving outcomes:

1. Improving outcomes for Looked After Children
2. Improving attendance and reducing persistent absence from school

3. Improving early learning and primary outcomes in deprived areas
4. Providing places to go and things to do
5. Raising the proportion of young people in education or work
6. Reducing child poverty
7. Reducing teenage conception
8. Reducing the need for children and young people to be in care

Immediate priorities: working together better

9. Strengthening safeguarding
10. Enabling integrated working.

Longer term ambitions, all children and young people:

1. are safe and secure
2. are safe and supported in stronger communities
3. are helped to narrow the gap
4. are thriving in learning
5. are safe and supported in stronger families
6. enjoy life and have places to go and things to do
7. make the right choices
8. make a good start
9. are supported by excellent, integrated working.

2.2 At the start of 2010, Leeds produced an Improvement Plan that drew together the priorities in the CYP Plan along with the recommendations from Ofsted's key announced and unannounced inspections and the requirements set out in the Improvement Notice issued by the government. There are five themes within the Improvement Plan and a significant number of detailed actions for each of these. The five themes are:

1. Effective leadership and governance of integrated children's services in Leeds
2. Excellent safeguarding standards and practice
3. Improved outcomes for Looked After Children
4. All young people participating fully, socially and economically
5. A highly skilled, well supported, motivated and continually developing workforce

2.3 During 2010, the Children's services Scrutiny Board has received updates on progress in these areas as part of the wider suite of quarterly performance information it regularly receives. The new proposals build on the progress made and continuing challenges under these themes.

What is being proposed?:

2.4 Given that CYP Plans are unlikely to be statutory for much longer, and that the financial pressures facing the public sector will ensure resources are increasingly targeted to the most critical areas, members of the Children's Trust Board have proposed that the new Plan should sharply focus on only those *specific* priority areas where joint working between the partners can make a marked and clear difference

over the three year life span of the plan. Through the current consultation it is intended we will be able to develop action plans that give the detail of how the partners will work together to resource and improve priority outcomes in particular areas.

- 2.5 Discussions of the CYP Plan have also emphasised the importance of **how** partners work together as well as **what** priorities and outcomes they are trying to achieve. ‘Think family,’ ‘locality working’ and a combination of these two approaches through targeting particular families in particular neighbourhoods have been especially evident in discussions. There is a consensus that work to fully progress these agendas needs to be accelerated and will lead to highly effective changes to current partnership working and methods of delivery. This is very much reflected in the approach being taken to the transformation programme across children’s services (as detailed for the Scrutiny Board in their September update report). To reflect the importance of these issues the consultation framework distinguishes between priorities for **what** outcomes the partnership wants to make progress against and priorities for **how** it wants to work and deliver services. Nigel Richardson’s presentation to the Board will link in to this approach and provide initial information about his vision for the future strategic direction of children’s services in Leeds.
- 2.6 The framework set out below summarises current thinking, taking account of the latest data trends and other key city wide plans, the existing CYP Plan and the 2010 review of it, as well as the Children’s Services Improvement Plan. Consultation will focus not just on whether these are the right priorities and approaches, but on the detail of the joint actions and milestones to achieve progress, and the detail of how partners will work better together.

A Framework for our new Children and Young People’s Plan:

<i>What we should prioritise:</i>
<i>1. Improving the safeguarding of children and young people</i>
through well embedded child protection systems and practice, tackling substance misuse by parents, and reducing the impact of domestic violence and anti social behaviour on children and families.
<i>2. Improving early years and primary stage outcomes</i>
through intervention and prevention in the early years and improving outcomes at key stage 2, targeting those most at risk of relatively poor early learning and primary outcomes, and known to be susceptible to poor outcomes in later stages of childhood. This will include tackling barriers to participation including irregular school attendance, obesity and low self esteem.
<i>3. Better outcomes at 16 and 19 through improved participation and engagement of children and young people</i>
reducing NEET, improving behaviour and attendance at school, reducing and preventing offending, reoffending and anti social behaviour, tackling key health issues such as teenage pregnancy and substance misuse.

How we can work together to deliver this: (linking in to the transformation programme)

- using 'think family' principles, develop approaches in localities approaches that target children, young people, families and neighbourhoods most at risk of relatively poor outcomes
- develop stronger multi-agency approaches to mitigating the impact of child poverty, with a focus on those families and communities most at risk
- work across partners and agencies, including the sharing or pooling of budgets and resources
- robust and effective systems of safeguarding
- raise the aspirations of children, young people and their families through approaches such as mentoring and coaching
- strengthen integrated early intervention and preventative work
- ensure that where appropriate action plans address the needs of priority groups: children and young people with special needs, children and young people with disabilities, looked after children, Black and minority ethnic groups, children and young people in receipt of free school meals
- develop the children and young people's workforce

The Consultation Process and Next Steps

- 2.7 Consultation on the proposals above is currently taking place at various meetings across services and stakeholders, including with groups involving parents and young people and headteachers. An online toolkit has been developed and can be accessed on the Children Leeds website (www.childrenleeds.org.uk), which gives background information and explains the priorities and how they were agreed. There is also an online survey for practitioners, parents and children and young people. A variety of consultation took place with young people during the summer, primarily through Breeze events where 572 young people completed the questionnaires and an additional 200 younger people made extra comments about the consultation questions.
- 2.8 The consultation process is due to be completed by the end of October 2010. A draft plan will then be produced by the end of the year. The drafting of the plan will be timed and structured to take into account developments including:
- Announcements relating to children's services within the Comprehensive Spending Review.
 - The progress and direction of the children's services transformation programme.
 - Outcomes from any other Ofsted inspections that take place during 2010.
- 2.9 There will then follow a consultation on the full draft of the Plan, during early 2011, including its submission to the Children's Services Scrutiny Board, before a final version is produced ready for April 2011, to coincide with the implementation of much of the transformation programme.

3.0 Conclusion

- 3.1 A range of significant national and local developments are changing the context in which children's services operates. At the same time there is a continued need for a shared agenda to deliver improvement on key areas of work where partnership is essential. Against this background and in spite of the likely removal of the statutory duty to produce a Children and Young People's Plan, the Children's Trust Board have re-affirmed their commitment to producing a new Plan for 2011 to help drive future partnership working. This report outlines the approach being taken and seeks the initial views of the Children's Services Scrutiny Board. The Plan will be brought back to the Scrutiny Board when a full draft has been produced, early in 2011.

Background papers

- Leeds Children and Young People's Plan 2009-14
- Children's Trusts: Statutory guidance on co-operation arrangements, including the Children's Trust Board and the Children and Young People's Plan (March 2010)
- Children's services Update report (September 2010) – Children's Services Scrutiny Board