



Report of the Director of Children's Services Unit

Inner North West Area Committee

Date: 13th December 2007

Subject: Leeds Joint Area Review

Electoral Wards Affected: All

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Council
Function

Delegated Executive
Function available
for Call In

Delegated Executive
Function not available for
Call In Details set out in the
report

Executive Summary

The report/presentation seeks to describe the JAR process and outline the timetable of activities in Leeds so that members are informed of developments and offers an opportunity to engage with the JAR at Area Committee.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

At the previous area committee meeting in September, elected members welcomed the opportunity to learn about the Joint Area Review (JAR) of Leeds. The Locality Enabler for North East Leeds was requested to provide a report to a future meeting.

2.0 Background Information

The JAR replaces a number of previous inspection regimes. It has been designed so that it sees what life is like for children and young people growing up in Leeds, how well all services work together to improve outcomes for children and young people, how well we protect our children and young people from harm, and assess the impact of our children's trust arrangements.

3.0 Main Issues

- Who are the inspectors?
- How does it fit with other inspections?
- What evidence will inspectors look at before and during the visit?
- What does our Children and Young People's Plan self-assessment tell us?
- What is the timetable for activities?
- Where will they dig and into what?

- What do we do after the inspection?
- What do we need to do now?
- How can I find out more?

4.0 Implications For Council Policy and Governance

- Children & Young People's Plan – 2006-2008 refreshed July 2007
- The inspection will focus on the overall general well-being of children and young people. Inspectors will want to be sure that all groups are able to access services.
- Changes to the way children's services are assessed and inspected were announced in the recent local government white paper. From March 2009 the JAR will be replaced with a single performance framework for local authorities, with a shift to proportionate inspection to target authorities most at risk of underperforming. This will mean a lighter touch inspection regime and fewer automatic inspections for authorities performing well against the *Every Child Matters* outcomes.

5.0 Legal and Resource Implications

There are some costs associated with the preparation for the inspection but these will be met within existing resources. There are no direct legal implications; however, clearly the local authority must be able to demonstrate through the inspection that it is meeting its statutory duties to children and young people in the city.

6.0 Conclusions

The JAR is an important inspection of the city and as such merits consideration and the utmost attention. As with any inspection, preparation is key to a successful outcome. We all have a part to play in supporting the process and in implementing its recommendations. Services, in particular, across the sectors and the city are being engaged and energized and are working together to prepare for the inspection.

7.0 Recommendations

Members are requested to:

- a) Note this report and receive the presentation; and
- b) Discuss its implications comment on matters that arise for members.