



Report of: Director of Children's Services

Meeting: Scrutiny Board (Children's Services)

Date of meeting: 13th March 2008

SUBJECT: Review of the Children and Young People's Plan 2007-2008

1.0 Purpose of report

1.1 To provide the board with an overview of the 2008 Review of the Children and Young People's Plan and highlight key issues to inform discussion of progress and priorities.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Children Act 2004 set out requirements for all local authorities to develop a 'Children and Young People's Plan' (CYPP) with their local partners. The intention for this new plan was to replace a large number of existing documents in different agencies with a single, overarching strategy for improving outcomes for children and young people.
- 2.2 The first Leeds CYPP (for the 3 years 2006-2009) was developed in 2005 – 2006 and approved by the Full Council in June 2006. The plan was the product of widespread participation with children and young people, parents, elected members and local services. OfSTED has praised the Leeds plan in reports from their inspection of children's services, particularly for the strong role of children and young people and for its analysis of local needs.
- 2.3 Government and OfSTED guidance requires that local authorities and their partners review their CYPP each year. This review has in the past been used to provide the main evidence to inform the OfSTED Annual Performance Assessment (APA) of council children's services. This may now change as OfSTED adapt their inspection regime to the new approach of the Comprehensive Area Assessment. This may require changes to the CYPP Review process this year once the changes have been confirmed. The Leeds CYPP Review includes both a review of progress as well as updated priorities and plans for the year ahead.
- 2.4 Work to review the CYPP is ongoing throughout the year, but is especially focussed and intense from February through to April/May. This Review is significant in that it needs to take account of the new Leeds Strategic Plan (incorporating the LAA).
- 2.5 The most important factors that will inform the review are set out below and explored in more detail in the following sections:

- a) The views of stakeholders, particularly children, young people, front-line staff and service managers. This includes messages and priorities coming through local developments.
- b) The latest data on need, outcomes and service performance
- c) The Leeds Strategic Plan and Local Area Agreement
- d) Feedback from inspectors and government, particularly the Joint Area Review and the Annual Performance Assessment
- e) The wider context, e.g. the national Children's Plan, Staying Safe Action Plan etc.

4 Views of stakeholders

4.1 The views of stakeholders are important to the review of the Leeds CYPP, as they have been at each stage of the development of the plan. In particular, the views of children and young people continue to have a prominent role in informing the Leeds CYPP. Over the past year there has been extensive involvement and consultation with children and young people both locally and nationally, for example in the OfSTED 'TellUs' survey of over 100,000 school pupils.

4.2 The main issues raised by children and young people include:

- a) *Health advice*: whilst most young people said they had enough support, a significant number want more advice on health, particularly about drugs, sex and emotional health
- b) *Community safety*: whilst most children and young people say they generally feel safe, a large number do not. One in four young people think bullying and/or gangs are a big problem in their school or local neighbourhood, and the same number say they do not feel safe in their area.
- c) *Schools*: the vast majority of children and young people enjoy schools, half reporting that they enjoy school 'most or all of the time'. Between a half and three-quarters think schools give them good support to be healthy, safe and successful.
- d) *'Places to go, things to do'*: Three quarters of children and young people say that there are not good enough activities for them in Leeds. Improving opportunities is young people's most important priority for making Leeds a better city.
- e) *Planning for the future*. Most young people are ambitious – half plan to go to university, one in five plans to run their own business. But most young people say they want more and better advice and support in planning their future.

4.3 Front line staff and managers have also been involved through workshops and on-line surveys in sharing their views on progress and priorities. The main issues raised by this group included:

- a) *Commissioning*: including aligning and pooling budgets around priorities, developing a single commissioning service to support this
- b) *Partnership*: further developing inter-agency working, reducing duplication and focusing on shared targets
- c) *Participation*: additional strengthening of the participation of young

people and parents, especially those groups who are more difficult to reach

- d) *Community Safety*: this included both reducing bullying and wider concerns of ensuring children and young people feel safe on the streets
- e) *Play and leisure*: raising the importance of 'enjoy' in 'Enjoy and Achieve', developing better and safer opportunities for leisure and play for all children and young people
- f) *Child poverty/Narrowing the gap*: additional focus and joint responsibility for narrowing the gap for vulnerable groups and addressing the poverty that worsens social exclusion

4.4 The development of local CYPPs at the end of 2007 provided a further opportunity to learn from what is happening locally. These have been informed by the city-wide CYPP, discussions with Area Committees, local partnership discussions and existing 'cluster' plans for extended services around schools.

5 Data on need, outcomes and service performance

5.1 As the Board will be aware through other reports such as those for quarterly performance monitoring, children's services produce extensive data on local children, young people and families, as well as the performance of the services that work for them. The latest data highlight particular concerns, including:

- a) *Obesity*: new national and local data shows that one in three pupils in Year 6 are either obese or overweight. This is broadly in line with national prevalence.
- b) *Teenage conceptions*: data released in February show that Leeds is lagging in reducing teenage conceptions. The national target is to reduce the rate by 50% between 1998 and 2010. The latest data for Leeds shows a small increase since 1998, which differs from the improvement seen nationally and in some other areas.
- c) *Bullying*: both local and national surveys indicate a similar prevalence of bullying amongst children and young people. In the TellUs survey one in three pupils reported being bullied in the last four weeks, one in twenty reported being bullied every day.
- d) *Number of Looked After Children*: data show a persistent pattern of a higher proportion and number of children in care in Leeds than in similar areas. Latest data show over 1300 children and young people in care, whereas the average in similar authorities is just over 900.
- e) *Persistent absence*: Attendance continues to be a very significant national and local issue, as confirmed by the recent publication of data by DCSF. Leeds has high rates of persistent absence (those pupils that miss more than 20% of their school sessions) in secondary schools. This has been reduced but is still nearly one in ten (10%) of all secondary students, though this is significantly higher in a small number of more deprived schools.
- f) *Key Stage 3 results*: after improvements in recent years, Key Stage 3 results in Leeds were less positive in 2007, failing to keep pace with similar areas and the national trend.
- g) *Skill levels at 19*: recent data suggest that the proportion of 19 year olds in Leeds with Level 2 (equivalent to 5 or more grades A*-C at GCSE) and Level 3 (equivalent to A-Levels) qualifications is below the national

average.

6 The Leeds Strategic Plan (incorporating the Local Area Agreement)

The Strategic Plan (incorporating the Local Area Agreement), and the relevant priorities and outcome measures, are set out in another report to this meeting of the Board. The priorities for children and young people in these documents have been taken from the existing Leeds Children and Young People's Plan and are therefore supported by the detailed analysis, participation and involvement already undertaken. The improvement priorities for children and young people are spread across all the vision for Leeds themes.

7 Feedback from inspectors and government

Feedback from inspectors and government is important in shaping the CYPP Review, and the priorities and plans for the year ahead. This includes not just the formal recent inspections of the Annual Performance Assessment (October 2007) and the Joint Area Review (December 2007), but also frequent meetings with other representatives of government, e.g. the National Strategies team in education, the National Support Team for teenage conception, or Government Office about a range of issues. Areas for improvement identified and agreed through these meetings include:

- a) *Overall effectiveness*: OfSTED have judged both the overall effectiveness and capacity to improve of Leeds children's services as 'good' in the most recent APA 2007. In that APA, all outcomes areas are also judged to be 'good', apart from 'Stay Safe', which was judged 'adequate'.
- b) *Be Healthy*: reducing teenage conceptions; raising immunisation rates; increasing the proportion of Looked After Children with regular health checks,
- c) *Stay Safe*: increasing the timeliness of Core Assessments and Looked After Children reviews; preventing children coming into care
- d) *Enjoy and Achieve*: reducing absence, particularly persistent absence; reducing the proportion of students leaving schools with no GCSEs; narrowing the gap for some vulnerable groups and schools below floor targets in primary
- e) *Positive Contribution*: reducing the number of Looked After Children in the Youth Justice system
- f) *Economic Wellbeing*: reducing the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET); improving access for all students over 14 to choice in vocational learning;

8 The wider context

Since its formation, the new Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) has been developing new approaches to its wide agenda. Many of these were signaled in the national Children's Plan in December 2007, and will be expanded in the many plans that are scheduled for publication this year. The key issues from the Children's Plan were included in reports to this Board and Executive Board last month, but are repeated below for information:

- a) The central role of parents and families rather than services in bring up children, and the barriers raised for families by poverty
- b) A new and stronger emphasis on enjoyment, emotional wellbeing and managed risk
- c) New approaches to schools, putting them at the centre of communities and as a key part of local governance
- d) The leadership role of councils, working in partnership through children's trust arrangements
- e) A commitment to the key role of developing the role of commissioning, and integrated commissioning through children's trust and local partnerships

9 Summary

A lot of review activity has already been done as part of implementing the CYPP Review that was done last year. We are now in the main part of the formal activity to ensure that a high quality CYPP Review is delivered and can influence the way services are delivered to children and young people.

10 Next steps

- 10.1 Final timescales for the CYPP review cannot be fully confirmed until OfSTED guidance is available for the review and the Annual Performance Assessment. At present the proposed process is as follows:
- *March:* Confirmation of OfSTED guidance. Development and consultation of draft review
 - *April – June:* amendment and approval of CYPP review through Integrated Strategic Commissioning Board, Children Leeds Partnership. Executive Board. Parallel approval of Leeds Strategic Plan and LAA. Publication of Leeds OfSTED JAR report in May.
- 10.2 Overall, the CYPP Review is likely to be a more limited process and document this year than previously. This is because much of the review of progress has already been undertaken for the Joint Area Review and other external reporting, and much of the prioritisation and target-setting has been undertaken as part of the Leeds Strategic Plan and LAA.
- 10.3 Whilst the CYPP Review will be more straightforward, there is a need for further work to prepare for updating the full Children and Young People's Plan. The first Leeds CYPP runs from 2006 to 2009 and therefore there will be much work to be undertaken during 2008 to engage partners in refreshing and updating our medium term strategy for the years ahead so that we have a CYPP for 2009 – 2012.

6.0 Recommendations

The Board is recommended to:

- 1) Consider the report
- 2) Advise on the Board's views on progress and priorities to inform the CYPP Review.