



Report of the Director of Children's Services

Executive Board

Date: 11th June 2008

Subject: The 2008 Review of the Children and Young People's Plan

Electoral Wards Affected:

All

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call In

Not Eligible for Call In

(Details contained in the report)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.0 This report seeks endorsement from Executive Board for the 2008 Review of the Children and Young People's (CYP) Plan, attached at appendix 'A'.
- 2.0 The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) sets a requirement that each local authority should undertake and publish an annual review of its Children and Young People's Plan.
- 3.0 Guidance relating to the Children's Services Inspection Framework has changed this year, meaning that unlike in 2007, the 2008 review is no longer used as the principle evidence of progress for the Annual Performance Assessment. As such the style and content of the Plan represents a more straightforward statement of progress, priorities and vision.
- 4.0 The original CYP Plan runs from 2006 until 2009, so a thorough consultation will begin later in 2008 to shape a fully revised Plan for 2009. In addition, a significant amount of self-assessment work was undertaken for the Joint Area Review inspection at the end of 2007. In light of this, the approach to the 2008 review has been more 'light touch' with an emphasis on continuity from the 2007 review, enabling services to build on the progress made so far on the existing priorities and plan ahead for the more detailed consultation ready for the 2009 Plan.

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 This report presents the 2008 review of Leeds' Children and Young People's Plan (appendix A) and seeks the endorsement of it by the Executive Board.

2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The first Leeds Children and Young People's Plan was approved and published in 2006. The plan is for the period 2006-2009 and included the overall strategy, needs analysis, priorities and issues and actions for delivery.
- 2.2 The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) sets a requirement that each local authority should undertake and publish an annual review of its Children and Young People's Plan. However, guidance relating to the Children's Services Inspection Framework has changed since 2007 in turn changing the requirements relating to the content and purpose of the Children and Young Peoples Plan review, specifically:
- There is no longer a requirement that the Children and Young People's Plan review should be used as the principle evidence of progress for the Annual Performance Assessment. As such the Plan is a more straightforward statement of progress, priorities and vision with the large quantity of performance data required in 2007 removed.
 - Ofsted has reverted back to asking local authorities to record performance using a specific self-assessment recording format and therefore this data is not included as part of this year's CYPP review.

3.0 THE 2008 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN REVIEW

- 3.1 As the original Plan developed in 2006 runs for three years, in 2009 a fully revised medium term Plan will be produced to set out our approach to improving outcomes for the future. Work on the 2009 Plan will begin in late summer 2008 to enable a thorough, detailed consultation process and crucially to tie in with budget commissioning, planning and service planning processes across the council and its partners.
- 3.2 This forthcoming big review, along with the self-assessment undertaken during our Joint Area Review and the wider consultations on outcomes, priorities and targets for the Leeds Strategic Plan and LAA all suggest that it would not be timely or necessary to carry out a major consultation exercise in developing the 2008 review. Instead, a more 'light touch' refresh from 2007 was felt to be a more sensible approach.
- 3.3 The annual review this year draws on the strengths identified in 2007 of having more focused, targeted priorities. It does this in part by drawing on a 'results based accountability' approach, advocated by the government as a helpful tool for use in children's services to improve outcomes. This measures

progress against the priorities and subsequently enables a 'report card' for each one that covers:

- Performance against targets (the 'scorecard')
- Explanation of the factors behind the figures (the 'story behind the data')
- Progress against the Plan
- The actions we will take over the coming year to further improve performance and outcomes (the 'changes to the plan')

3.4 This more targeted reporting approach, coupled with the changes to the APA reporting process outlined above, explains why the range of data that was included in the 2007 review is not included this time. Importantly, this year's review is more detailed in the information it provides specifically about the Leeds priorities (which were agreed by the Executive Board last year).

Consultation, Priorities and Approach

3.5 Though a light touch approach has been taken this year, a range of consultation work has taken place to ensure that the priorities and content of the Plan continue to provide an accurate picture of the situation in Leeds, this has included:

- An Open Forum consultation event, attended by over 140 people from across children's held in January.
- Discussions at the Children Leeds Partnership
- An online questionnaire, widely promoted and accessible to all through the Children Leeds website.
- A report to the Children's Services Scrutiny Board in March 2008.

3.6 The outcome of this work has suggested a need to maintain the existing priorities, to continue the focus on these areas and build on the progress made so far. This approach is supported by the findings from the Joint Area Review. The priorities set out in the Plan therefore cover the following areas:

- Safeguarding
- Safe communities
- Emotional well-being
- Activity and obesity
- Sexual health
- Secondary progress
- Early learning
- Positive opportunities
- Qualifications and skills at 19
- And an overarching, ongoing commitment to narrowing the gap for the most vulnerable children and young people

3.7 Improving outcomes against these priorities will be achieved by building on the progress made so far to embed a clear 'Leeds Approach' to all our work with children, young people and families. This can be summarised as

services that are personalised to individual needs, developed in partnership across relevant agencies, guided by the participation of those we work with, focused on the prevention of problems before they escalate and underpinned by a focus on safeguarding. A number of the case studies highlighted in the Plan demonstrate how this focus in increasingly supporting the way we deliver services. This success is balanced against recognition that adopting this approach consistently across everything we do remains a key challenge for the council and its partners.

3.8 In addition to this ongoing approach, the 2008 Review places a stronger emphasis than previously on encouraging all those working across children's services to 'think family'. This acknowledges greater recognition and promotion nationally over the past year for the fundamental role of parents and families in raising and supporting children and young people. This is reflected in the re-formulation of government departments (i.e. the introduction of the Department for Children, Schools and Families) and the key messages of the 'Building Brighter Futures' national Children's Plan. The emphasis on this in Leeds is demonstrated by the multi-agency development of a Family Support and Parenting Strategy over the past year. The 2008 Review builds on this by highlighting the importance of making wider support for families a more immediate consideration of those working with children and young people.

3.9 The 2008 Review also draws on the direction that children's services in Leeds are moving in and the learning from several of our pilot initiatives, by highlighting the importance of local leadership. To ensure that we are more responsive we want our services to be led locally, and for those staff and partners working closest with children, young people and families to have more control and lead the way forward. The 2008 Review therefore places more emphasis on locality leadership as a driver for future success.

4.0 ACHIEVEMENTS AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

4.1 The 2008 Review draws attention to a variety of achievements over the past year, which, as recognised by the Joint Area Review inspection, demonstrate the impact that the Leeds approach is having. For example:

- *Be Healthy*: the LPSA target for raising the proportion of pupils taking part in two or more hours of sport per week was exceeded, as were targets for raising breastfeeding rates and reducing waiting times for mental health and sexual health services.
- *Stay Safe*: there has been significant progress in improving social care performance on a range of key measures (such as initial and core assessments) and some improvements in the general quality of care provided in residential units, as reflected in Ofsted inspections.
- *Enjoy and Achieve*: Leeds' young people achieved their best ever GCSE exam results in 2007, including sharp improvement for some targeted schools and pupil groups, helping to narrow the gap. In addition the city made good improvements to the proportion of five year olds achieving good

standards in the Foundation Stage Profile, particularly for those children in more deprived areas.

- *Positive Contribution:* Leeds exceeded its target for reducing youth offending, and also a range of important local indicators for engaging young people in positive activities across the city.
- *Economic Wellbeing:* the last year saw some significant improvements in the proportion of young people achieving better qualifications at age 16 and 19, and good progress towards raising the proportion of school leavers participating in learning or work.
- *Service Management:* Leeds has exceeded its targets for developing extended services around schools, met its target for creating Children's Centres and made further progress on the cultural change that Every Child Matters requires.

4.2 The 2008 Review has contributed to an intensive period of self-assessment and inspection over recent months. Whilst this has rightly recognised the many successes and good progress made by the local partnership, it has also emphasised that significant challenges remain. There are some outcomes where there are ambitious targets in the Leeds Strategic Plan that will require the council and all its local partners to further focus the city's resources, effort and creativity in addressing these challenges.

- *Teenage conception rates:* the latest data show that Leeds has seen a marginal increase in conception rates since 1998, and therefore the city is well below trajectory to meet national targets. This is an important area as research suggests conception rates are an important proxy indicator for overall wellbeing and has strongly links to young people's aspirations, opportunities and deprivation.
- *The numbers of Looked After Children and Young People:* the relatively high numbers of young people in care in Leeds has been widely reported as an important issue for the city. The latest data show that at year end the overall number of Looked After Children and Young People has remained at broadly the same level as last year and so the targets for reduction have not been met. This is a key issue in two ways – firstly in the challenge it offers to ensure preventative support is further strengthened and targeted to ensure children do not need to enter care, and secondly because of the challenges these high numbers pose to delivering stable, high quality care for these young people. In light of this, targets for reducing the number of Looked After Children and Young People, and improving the stability of placements and timeliness of reviews have all been included in the Leeds Strategic Plan.
- *Attendance:* Raising attendance has been an acknowledged priority for Leeds over recent years. There have been improvements but recent data has re-emphasised the national and local challenges about raising attendance, and in particular about addressing the small but significant

minority of pupils and schools that have high levels of persistent absence, particularly in secondary schools.

- *Learning outcomes for 14-19 year olds*: Both local analysis and the Joint Area Review have raised concerns about learning outcomes for 14-19 year olds. Assessment of data released in the autumn showed particular concerns about the significant minority of learners leaving school with no GCSEs, and significant achievement gaps for some learners (e.g. those eligible for Free School Meals) and some schools.
- *The proportion of young people not in education, training or employment (NEET)*: The latest (provisional) data for NEET shows a rise in the non-participation rates amongst 16-18 year olds, meaning that Leeds now requires sharp improvement to meet targets on this national priority. In addition the JAR made specific recommendations about increasing the proportion of Looked After Young People and young offenders that are in education or work.

4.3 In order to improve these outcomes and build on Leeds' progress with the Every Child Matters agenda, the authority and its partners will need to increase the pace of change in the way children's services are organised and managed. In particular over the next year there is a need to drive forward workforce reform, continue strengthening local partnership development and embed new 'integrated processes' for joint working such as the Common Assessment Framework and ContactPoint.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNCIL POLICY AND GOVERNANCE

5.1 There are no direct implications for Council Policy and Governance.

6.0 LEGAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no direct legal and resource implications from this report.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

7.1 The 2008 review of the Children and Young People's Plan provides a renewed framework for integrated working within children's services, helping all staff to develop their work around a shared understanding of priorities and purpose. It demonstrates that significant progress is being made across the partnership and this was confirmed by the JAR inspection. The review also sets out clearly those challenges that remain to improve outcomes for children and young people in the city and highlights areas where the partnership really needs to focus its efforts.

7.2 The 2008 Review provides a robust platform, along with the JAR findings, to commence the more fundamental review ready to develop a new Children and Young People's Plan to commence in 2009.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Executive Board is recommended to:

- Approve and endorse the 2008 Children and Young People's Plan Review.