



---

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

### Children's Services Scrutiny Board

Date: 8<sup>th</sup> January 2009

Subject: Leeds Strategic Plan Performance Report for Quarter 2 2008/09

---

#### Electoral Wards Affected:

Ward Members consulted  
(referred to in report)

#### Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

---

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the revised approach to performance reporting and accountability arrangements for the Leeds Strategic and Council Business Plans and to provide a performance report by exception (ie red and amber) on the progress against improvement priorities relevant to the Board at Quarter 2 2008/09.

It outlines how the development of the partnership approach to the Leeds Strategic Plan and the changes that will result from the implementation of the comprehensive area assessment have required us to review and revise our council performance management framework and associated reporting processes. As a result, this has seen a significant change, in particular, the identification of lead and contributory officers for each improvement priority and the introduction of a reporting process that will provide a single source of performance information to be used by the full range of different stakeholders in the accountability process.

An overview of current performance information at the mid-year point is provided although this needs to be interpreted with some caution given the newness of the reporting process. A more robust and comprehensive position of performance progress against the Leeds Strategic and Council Business Plans should be available at the end of year one of implementation. In addition, there is a need to ensure that year end data is reported by partners and the council in a full and timely fashion so that any necessary remedial action can be expedited promptly.

## 1.0 Purpose of this Report

- 1.1 This report provides a strategic overview of performance against those improvement priorities within the Leeds Strategic Plan 2008-11, and specifically in relation to Children's Services priorities. In particular the Action Tracker Summary Sheet (appendix 1) provides an overall assessment of progress against each of the improvement priorities relevant to the Board; a rating of Red, Amber or Green is applied to indicate the status of each improvement priority.
- 1.2 In appendix 2 to this report the Action Trackers are provided on an exception basis for those areas of under performance and/or of concern in relation to the improvement priorities for Children's Services, within the Leeds Strategic Plan, as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2008. In addition, performance indicator information is provided for those indicators from the 198 National Indicator Set which are not included within the Action Trackers provided together with any locally agreed indicators where appropriate. Through this the Board will continue to receive the full set of performance information.

## 2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 Executive Board approved a new corporate planning framework for the council in July 2007. The strategic element of this framework includes two high level plans which set the policy objectives for the organisation and our partnership working. These are:
- **Leeds Strategic Plan 2008 to 2011** - which sets out the customer/citizen (external) focused strategic outcomes being sought by the council and its partners for the city. This plan includes our requirements to produce a Local Area Agreement and is the main delivery mechanism for the Vision for Leeds 2004 to 2020.
  - **Council Business Plan 2008 to 2011** - which sets out what the council needs to do internally to enable the organisation to achieve the Leeds Strategic Plan. That is outlining the business development, organisational change, process transformation and financial planning activities that we will be undertaking over the next three years.
- 2.2 Both these plans include a set of outcomes, improvement priorities and aligned performance indicators with three year targets. Through our performance reporting and accountability arrangements we need to track our progress against the improvement priorities as well as against the indicators to provide both a qualitative and quantitative picture of performance. This is because the scope of most of the improvement priorities is wider than that of the performance indicator and without some form of contextual reporting we would not be able to capture or monitor this progress.

## 3.0 Main Issues

### 3.1 *Comprehensive Area Assessment*

A key aspect of a robust performance management framework is to highlight an organisation's self-awareness. This will be a fundamental part of the CAA process where councils will be expected to carry out an annual self evaluation that will be crucial in determining the overall CAA judgement of the area and the organisation, having particular importance in relation to the Managing Performance KLOE.

The joint inspectorates' proposal for consultation, issued in summer 2008, notes that:

*"Councils and their partners, and their representative bodies, are developing approaches to self-evaluation. While we are not making it a requirement of CAA, we do expect that each area will wish to complete an annual self-evaluation and we will take full account of it and any service level self-evaluation. We do not intend to repeat the work carried out already by the council or its partners. We will expect that any self-evaluation is based on **verifiable evidence**. The more robust the self-evaluation the more reliance we will be able to place on it.*

**CAA will draw as far as possible on the information used by the council and its partners to manage performance and deliver improvements set out in the Local Area Agreement and Sustainable Community Strategies. This approach will minimise the administrative burden imposed by CAA and will make optimum use of self-evaluation.”**

The self evaluation will enable the partnership to work through and be able to demonstrate that it is sufficiently self-aware of key issues and that there are effective plans in place to address any concerns. It will demonstrate that the partnership is aware of where there are gaps in performance that need to be addressed or where more focused attention is needed to ensure that the partnership will deliver its outcomes. It will also highlight where action plans are in place to address these issues. This is important in ensuring self awareness and preparedness to really deliver on improvements.

As such, it is important that timely, appropriate and accountable performance information is available to the relevant audiences so that problems in relation to performance and/or data quality are flagged, the focus of improvement activity can be challenged and that appropriate action is being taken and reported to address areas of under performance.

Within the council Lead Chief Officers have the key role in making this happen through co-ordinating the activities of contributors and providing an overview of the progress against the improvement priority for which they are accountable. This overview position is described in the Action Trackers previously approved by CLT and agreed by Lead Officers, and updated at Qtr 2 and Qtr 4 of the performance reporting and accountability process. The Action Trackers at Qtr 2 & Qtr 4, therefore, provide a single source of performance information for the full range of different stakeholders in the accountability process.

### 3.2 *Role of Scrutiny Board*

A key performance management role of Elected Members is to ensure that delivery of our strategic outcomes and improvement priorities within both the Leeds Strategic Plan and Council Business Plan is on track. Members need to be made aware of any issues and areas of under performance, and be assured that actions are being taken to improve performance, that the appropriate level of resources are available and that problems or blockages to delivery are identified and addressed. However, it is recognised that the volume of information within the Action Trackers produced for each six months could hinder Scrutiny Boards in carrying out their role in the accountability process. Therefore the approach from Quarter 2 is to provide the Action Trackers by exception, highlighting just those areas that are under performing or causing concern ie those traffic lighted amber or red. This is supplemented by a performance indicator report that includes all of the performance indicators relevant to the Board - except for those that already appear within the action trackers themselves.

The Scrutiny Board role is to challenge the council's performance to raise standards acting as a balance to the Executive Board by examining and questioning the range of actions, activities and decisions, and also considering and challenging the work of partnership bodies contributing to the delivery of improvement priorities.

### 3.3 *Information Provided*

Therefore within this report the following information is provided:

**Appendix 1 Action Tracker Summary Sheet** - this sheet sets out all the improvement priorities relevant to the Board and shows the full set of overall progress traffic lights.

**Appendix 2 Action Trackers** – this appendix includes the action trackers for the improvement priorities that have been given an *amber* or *red* rating for overall progress. There is a guidance sheet to assist members in interpreting the information provided.

**Appendix 3 Performance Indicator Report** – this appendix lists the Q2 performance indicator results for the indicators taken from the *green* action trackers, along with those from the rest of the 198 national indicator set and any locally agreed indicators for which quarterly results are available.

#### **4.0 Implications for Council Policy and Governance**

4.1 Effective performance management enables senior officers and Elected Members to be assured that the council is making adequate progress and provides a mechanism for them to challenge performance where appropriate. Effective performance management also forms a key element of the organisational assessment proposed under the new Comprehensive Area Assessment. The CAA will examine and challenge the robustness and effectiveness of both our corporate performance management arrangements and those across the partnership.

#### **5.0 Legal and Resource Implications**

5.1 The implementation of these new performance reporting arrangements is achievable within current resources across the organisations as they essentially replace an existing similar process.

#### **6.0 Conclusions**

6.1 The development of the partnership approach of the Leeds Strategic Plan, the introduction of a Council Business Plan and the changes resulting from CAA have required us to review and revise our council performance management framework and associated reporting processes. As a result, this has seen a significant change in identifying lead and contributory officers and partners with accountable roles for each improvement priority within the Leeds Strategic Plan and Council Business Plan as appropriate. There is a need to fully complete this framework and strengthen a culture of accountability within the council and with partner organisations through our scrutiny arrangements.

6.2 At Qtr 2 each Lead Chief Officer/partner has completed an Action Tracker against each of the improvement priorities, which has significantly increased the amount of performance information produced. As such, in order for Elected Members to fulfil their role effectively through the scrutiny process, these action trackers are reported by exception; highlighting just those areas that are under performing or causing concern. This is supplemented by a complete set of performance indicator information to enable members to maintain an overview of performance.

6.3 As the lead partner for the Local Area Agreement and Leeds Strategic Plan, it is fundamentally important that the council can demonstrate to partners, Government Office and through CAA that it has an integrated, robust performance management framework that is fit for purpose.

#### **7.0 Recommendation**

7.1 That members of Scrutiny Board note the content of the report and comment on any particular performance issues of concern.

#### **Background papers**

None