



Leeds
CITY COUNCIL

Originator: Adam Hewitt

Tel: 0113 24 76940

Report of the Director of Children's Service

Scrutiny Board (Children's Services)

Date: 10th December 2009

**Subject: Children's Services and the Children and Young People's Plan
Update (December 2009)**

Electoral Wards Affected:

All

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity



Community Cohesion



Narrowing the Gap



1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Children's Services Scrutiny Board has a well-established process of receiving regular update reports several times during its workplan year. These provide an overview of some key children's services developments and also focus on progress against one or more of the priorities from the Children and Young People's Plan.
- 1.2 These reports aim to give members: a feel for the national and local strategic 'direction of travel' across children's services; an insight into key initiatives and developments; and a 'manageable' way of looking across the various priorities within the Children and Young People's (CYP) Plan over the course of the year.
- 1.3 The September 2009 update report coincided with the launch of the new Children and Young People's Plan for Leeds (2009-14), which sets out immediate and longer-term priorities for children's services. Members identified that they wanted that September report to focus on a priority from

the new Plan (reducing the number of young people not in education, employment, or training) and a key strategic development (the transfer of powers from the Learning and Skills Council to the local authority in relation to the commissioning of 14-19 learning and skills provision).

- 1.4 The Board wishes to continue the pattern of addressing a priority and a key strategic development within this update report and as such they have identified the following areas of interest:
- The CYP Plan priority of providing young people with places to go and things to do.
 - The strategic development of locality working arrangements for children's services.
- 1.5 The report starts by providing an update on significant national and local strategic developments including an overview of important recent safeguarding activity, an update on work relating to the recommendation from the 2008 Joint Area Review (JAR) and Annual Performance Assessment (APA) inspections and new children's trust guidance. It then discusses the CYP Plan priority and finally the key strategic development around locality working.

2.0 An important period of development

- 2.1 Following from some of the themes discussed in the September update report - around the new Ofsted inspection regime, the safeguarding agenda and the launch of the new Children and Young People's Plan - Children's Services in Leeds continue to go through an important period of development.

Announced Inspection of Children's Services

- 2.2 The September 2009 update report informed members about the new CAA Ofsted inspection framework for children's services. It discussed the unannounced inspection that took place in July 2009 (considered further below) and the wider framework, including the announced inspection. Ofsted carried out its announced inspection of safeguarding and looked after children's services in Leeds between 23rd November and 4th December 2009. The inspectors met with a wide variety of groups and individuals including a significant number of parents, carers and young people. At the time of producing this report the findings from the announced inspection had not been published (publication is due in early January 2010). More details on the outcomes of this and any actions that follow will be reported to the scrutiny board at a future meeting.
- 2.3 The announced inspection will provide a detailed, current analysis of performance in safeguarding work and services for looked after children. In addition, the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) for Leeds is due to be published on 9th December and will be reported to the Council's Executive Board on that day. This will include an annual rating on children's services

performance drawn primarily from data drawn together through inspections conducted and performance evidence gathered over the past year.

- 2.4 The revised Ofsted inspection regime is highlighting important issues for children's services nationally and influencing a changing focus and approach around safeguarding and other areas of children's services work. To help better understand this national context members may wish to review the Executive Summary of Ofsted's 2008/09 Annual Report, attached at appendix 1.

Revised Guidance for Children's Trust Arrangements

- 2.5 Previous update reports have informed the scrutiny board on the government's ongoing work to review and refine children's trust arrangements across the country to make them more effective as a means of improving partnership and ultimately outcomes for children and young people. On 13th November 2009 the government launched its consultation on New Statutory Children's Trust Guidance and New Children and Young People's Plan Regulations.
- 2.6 The consultation brings together guidance on Children's Trusts and Children and Young People's Plans into one piece of statutory guidance. It also includes further advice arising from the recent changes to the Children Act 2004 made by the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning (ASCL) Act 2009. The document also includes the draft new Children and Young People's Plan regulations. The consultation is on both the draft new statutory guidance and the draft new regulations.
- 2.7 The Executive summary of this consultation is attached at appendix 2. Of particular significance for Leeds is the requirement to establish a single Children's Trust Board, with greater statutory responsibility across all the partners involved for developing, producing and crucially delivering the city's Children and Young People's Plan. This greater shared responsibility extends particularly to schools. The current Trust Arrangements in Leeds make a distinction between the large body of stakeholders on the Children Leeds Partnership and the smaller group of senior leaders that constitute the Integrated Strategic Commissioning Board, it is likely that these arrangements will need to be refined to meet the requirements of the new guidance. Wider consideration will also be needed as to how to ensure all partners are sufficiently engaged in these arrangements to provide the ownership of and involvement in delivering outcomes that the new statutory guidance requires.
- 2.8 It is important to note that the size and diversity of Leeds and its population poses particular challenges and that the current children's trust arrangements were established with this in mind and to balance the importance of city wide commissioning, broad partnership working and local ownership and delivery. These related strands will continue to inform future arrangements in Leeds. Members may wish to consider this in more detail in view of the locality working developments discussed later in this paper.

Children's Services Review

- 2.9 Several considerations - the changing context for children's services around inspections, trust arrangements and safeguarding; the desire across Leeds to learn from progress and challenges over the last three years; and most importantly the need to ensure children's services move forward in a way that best delivers the priorities of the new Children and Young People's Plan - make this a timely opportunity for a wider review of children's services in Leeds.
- 2.10 During autumn 2009 a review was launched of Leeds children's services leadership, management and partnership arrangements. The full scoping document for this review is attached at appendix 3. This review has been led corporately by the council and has included consultation with a variety of key stakeholders. The main objectives are:
- a) review the progress made to date in children's services;
 - b) assess the effectiveness of our current leadership, managerial and partnership arrangements, and;
 - c) make proposals for any changes that may be considered necessary.
- 2.11 Its findings are scheduled to be reported during December 2009.

3.0 Continued Prioritisation of Safeguarding

- 3.1 As reported in the September overview report to the Scrutiny Board, a wide variety of work is ongoing to strengthen safeguarding practice, with a particular focus on addressing the issues raised in the July 2009 unannounced inspection. Much of the detail of this work has been reported to the scrutiny board's safeguarding working group, however the below provides an updated summary.

3.2 Activity relating to referrals, guidance and social care practice

- The retrospective audit, the ongoing quality assurance of all 24 hour decisions and the implementation of the new Quality Framework have created a rich mix of data and intelligence for senior managers. This has informed improvement planning, for example around improving performance and learning for key managers, creating additional capacity and designing for future delivery models.
- In August 2009 two additional Heads of Service roles for social care fieldwork were established, creating focussed leads for each locality area. In addition, a new Head of Disability Services post was established in October 2009. These new Heads of Service each spend direct time with team managers observing operational practice and arrangements, and are able to track activity through supervision, locality meetings and quality assurance activity.

- Children and Young People's Social Care are introducing a number of Advanced Practitioner roles that will provide better support and guidance to social care teams. Nine of these posts have already been appointed, with further recruitment in the new year.
- Children and Young People's Social Care Procedure Handbook has been completely revised and re-launched.
- A suite of clear and succinct threshold guidance documents have been developed in partnership with Education Leeds, the PCT and the Leeds Safeguarding Children Board. These were implemented in September 2009.
- Council-wide safeguarding procedures were finalised in October and have been agreed corporately.
- A Children and Young People's Social Care managers' seminar programme commenced in July 2009 and included early sessions around analysis of working practices and the arrangements to support good practice. This led to the revision of Section 47 guidance for social care staff and the associated guidance for using the Electronic Social Care Record (ESCR) system in Section 47 circumstances.
- The ESCR system has been improved following consultation with staff, who were asked to identify their 'top 10' priorities. The formal review of ESCR has been completed, and a programme has been established to undertake a procurement exercise for a new system.
- New practice introduced in the contact centre has provided those taking calls with more specialist guidance on how and where to allocate cases relating to children and young people. This has helped to ensure the right services get involved at the right stage. Through this work inappropriate referrals have reduced significantly and the percentage of 'no further action' cases has fallen from 18% to less than 2%, demonstrating that the appropriate thresholds are now being deployed. The impact of this initial change of approach has been positive and work is now underway to look at how to take the benefits of these new measures and implement them over the longer-term.

3.3 Safeguarding Board review

In addition to this activity, an independent review is also being carried out of the work and role of the Leeds Safeguarding Children Board. This review takes into account the changing context of safeguarding work and in particular the need to strengthen the performance management and quality assurance capacity and function of the Board. The findings from the review are scheduled to report in January 2009. Further additional information will be brought to the scrutiny board at an appropriate time.

4.0 Joint Area Review (JAR) and Annual Performance Assessment (APA) Recommendation Tracking

- 4.1 Whilst improving safeguarding is a priority for all services, focus also continues on making improvements across the full range of priority areas within children's services. An important element of this is the continued tracking of progress against recommendations from previous inspections, in particular the Joint Area Review and the Annual Performance Assessment.
- 4.2 The Children's Services Scrutiny Board has previously received information drawing together and reporting on recommendations and actions from these inspections. Much of this work is now incorporated into other areas of service improvement, in particular the various initiatives being implemented in Children and Young People's Social Care, the delivery and monitoring of priorities in the 2009-14 Children and Young People's Plan and work monitored through national and local key performance indicators. The table attached at appendix 4 provides a summary of what the recommendations from the APA and JAR inspections were and where these are being taken forward and monitored. This will allow scrutiny members to cross reference against the other performance information they regularly receive. These areas of work continue to be extremely important and members may wish to identify any particular areas where they would like a more specific update in the future.

5.0 Priority from the Children and Young People's Plan: Providing Places to go and things to do

Why is this a priority?

- 5.1 Throughout consultation in the development of the CYP Plan, young people told us that having places to go and things to do is the number one priority from their perspective. We have responded by including it as one of the priorities in the new CYP Plan.
- 5.2 Young people and those working with them recognise that achieving this priority has multiple benefits. It helps to improve young people's health, happiness, confidence and wellbeing. It also contributes to addressing the challenges and targets associated with other CYP Plan priorities.
- 5.3 The Breeze Youth Promise contains a wide range of entitlements under the headings of "Somewhere to go" and "Something to do".

National Context

- 5.4 The "Youth Matters" Green Paper set out, in 2005, an expectation that Local Authorities, through Children's Trusts, would commission and provide activities and facilities for young people. Youth Matters also called on Local Authorities to develop an annual local offer which is communicated to and

delivered for young people. This led directly in Leeds to the establishment and release of the Breeze Youth Promise in April 2009.

5.5 Implementation of Youth Matters is through the Education and Inspections Act of 2006. This places a statutory duty on Local Authorities to secure, as far as is reasonably practical, sufficient educational and recreational leisure time activities for young people for the improvement of their wellbeing. This statutory duty focuses primarily on the provision of youth work and of positive activities.

5.6 Leeds has an excellent reputation nationally for its approach and achievements related to Youth Matters and the Education and Inspections Act. This is evidenced by, for example, national conference inputs, recent front page coverage in Youth Work Now magazine, and a prominent feature in the August edition of The Edge which is the newspaper about youth affairs for Elected Members.

Measuring Performance

5.7 The lead role for “providing places to go and things to do” rests with Children’s Services through the Integrated Youth Support Service. This priority is a good example, however, of a number of Services from different Directorates playing a role.

5.8 The two national indicators which are linked to this priority are:-

- NI 110 Young People’s participation in positive activities, as evidenced through the Tell Us survey.
- NI 57 Children and Young People’s participation in sporting opportunities.

5.9 Leeds also has a number of relevant local indicators, as described elsewhere.

5.10 Last year the number of Breeze Card holders rose to 104,000. An ambitious 2009/10 target of 116,000 was exceeded by the end of quarter two (121,650 achievement recorded). Breeze Card has the largest take up in England of cards for young people.

5.11 Breeze Card enables us to record the number of positive activities in which Breeze Card holders participate. Last year’s result was 423,174. The quarter two result of 338,468 suggests that the 2009/10 target of 500,000 will be met.

5.12 Similarly, the quarter two result of 2,399 for the number of children and young people involved in the Targeted Activity Programme suggests that last year’s achievement of 3,826 will be exceeded and the 2009/10 target met.

5.13 Quarter two performance data is contained in full in a paper elsewhere on the agenda.

5.14 Key areas of current activity

- Breeze on Tour was an unqualified success again this summer. More than 16,000 children and young people attended the events, the highest attendance ever. As part of the Breeze International Youth Festival 1,562 young people took part in performances.
- Arrangements have been made for all Looked After Children to hold a Breeze Card.
- The 2009 Breeze Has Talent events culminated in a high quality “finals” event with 11 acts demonstrating to a packed audience at West Yorkshire Playhouse that Leeds really does have talent.
- The Breeze website is being updated to make it even more attractive and engaging for young people. The redesign is using the BBC site as a model.
- The Youth Service, in partnership with VCFS organisations, is on target to exceed significantly its 2009/10 targets for the number of young people reached and for the number participating regularly in youth work programmes.
- The Youth Service is delivering approximately 500 youth work programmes a week in approximately 100 venues.
- Five new mobile youth work units were introduced this spring, resulting in a fleet of 10. This means far more capacity to reach out to local communities as and when required.
- Youth work now takes place on Friday evenings across the city. The Leeds response to the DCSF challenge to provide weekend work has been praised nationally by DCSF.
- Furthermore, the “Friday Night Project” has been successfully piloted in South and West Leeds. This provision is run through a partnership of council services and external organisations and offers sports, arts and crafts, music, and dance to young people aged 8 to 18. The Police have said that there are clear reductions in anti social behaviour reporting when FNP is in action.
- We are on target to open the myplace funded world class youth hub centre in November 2010.
- An additional promise has been developed for Looked After Children. An example of work is the Footsteps project which has engaged Looked After Children in creating heritage tours of the city centre.
- Find Your Talent is having a strong impact in localities and in the city centre. The new Culture Network is enabling young people to make their own decisions about cultural opportunities and to be linked more clearly to creators and providers of activities.
- Eleven of the outdoor play areas, approved by Executive Board in June, are scheduled to be open by March 2010.
- Since free swimming was introduced in April 2009 for under 16s, the number of swims for the first six months of this year has increased by 31% on the same period last year.
- 15,716 school pupils have visited museums and galleries within Leeds during the first six months of 2009/10.
- The new city centre arts space is now available within Leeds Art Gallery.
- 9804 individual young people took part in children’s activities in libraries in the period April to September 2009 and a further 2,333 young people took

- part within groups. The summer Reading Challenge worked especially well.
- A specific group targeted this year by Libraries has been autistic children and their carers who have developed Boardmaker to help them communicate. This work led Leeds to win the national Libraries Change Lives Award.
 - Party In The Park had an amazing line up and 70,000 young people enjoyed the acts and fairground.

Next steps and forthcoming challenges

- 5.15 Senior officers from Government Office and from the DCSF Youth Task Force express consistently a high regard for Leeds in terms of its provision for places to go and things to do. The brand and programmes of Breeze, in particular, are viewed as exceptional provision and practice.
- 5.16 Some Breeze equipment needs replacement in order to maintain the quality and quantity which have enabled Breeze on Tour to be so successful. In addition, young people are developing proposals for more equipment and are wanting to fund this themselves through the Youth Capital Fund.
- 5.17 At present, no funding for Find Your Talent or for PAYP (Positive Activities For Young People) is in place beyond 31/3/11. These losses of external funding place pressures on Leeds in terms of sustaining the existing levels of delivery of some aspects of what is highlighted in this report.

6.0 Strategic Development: locality working arrangements for children's services.

- 6.1 The original development of the children's trust arrangements in Leeds was designed with a strong emphasis on making locality working key to the delivery of improved outcomes. This approach continues to be a central feature of the new Children and Young People's Plan and is widely recognised as an important element of how children's services must now address its particular challenges around safeguarding.
- 6.2 A number of developments are currently helping to formalise, clarify and take forward the arrangements for partners to work together locally, including the involvement of elected members. The information below summarises these developments. In doing so it talks mainly about the practical arrangements being made and therefore recognises that members may appreciate a more specific understanding of how these arrangements are operating and impacting locally. Whilst it is not within the scope of this paper, if members would therefore like a case study of locality working arrangements in action at a future meeting then children's services officers would welcome the opportunity to arrange this.
- 6.3 The Children's Services Scrutiny Board has previously been informed about a number of pilot initiatives and other projects (such as the West Leeds Project and the Leadership Challenge), which, since the initiation of Children's Trust

Arrangements in Leeds in 2006, have helped build understanding of the most effective ways for partners from different services to work together and establish shared leadership and ownership around improving local outcomes.

- 6.4 Through this process of learning and development local partnerships have evolved that bring key local children's services partners together around a more consistent approach to monitoring and addressing outcomes.
- 6.5 Consultation work has been taking place to help formalise the model that has been developed, this includes reports to the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee in November and to Executive Board on 9th December 2009. These papers discuss partnership arrangements at both an area and locality level and recognize that these are evolving as the implications of national guidance for children's trusts are understood.
- 6.6 These papers propose that five Area Children Leeds Partnerships are established based on the current inner/outer area committee wedge model. The five Area Children Leeds Partnerships will provide a strong bridge between city wide structures and more local arrangements through extended services clusters. Appendix 5 to this report sets out an initial draft of the terms of reference and constitution for an Area Children Leeds Partnership.
- 6.7 The papers also propose that local children and young people partnerships are established based upon extended services clusters including schools, children's centres and a range of partners. These local partnerships will have a key role in enabling local services to work better to improve outcomes for children, young people and families and will build on the geographical model operating below the five Area Children Leeds Partnerships.
- 6.8 The approach proposed secures a role for Elected Members at the area and locality levels. The Children's Champion from each Area Committee will sit on the appropriate Area Children Leeds Partnership (meaning there are two elected members on each of these partnerships) and the local children and young people's partnerships will also include elected member representation. The proposed area and locality arrangements can link effectively to the current city-wide Children's Trust arrangements and any successor Children Trust Board resulting from the government consultation discussed elsewhere in this report. Members may wish to refer to the 9th December report to Executive Board for more information about these developments.
- 6.9 Both supporting and running in parallel to these developments has been the progress in taking forward the role of the local Children's Champions. Children's Champions have been working closely with Locality Enablers throughout 2009 to develop the role, understand key issues in their local area and in a number of cases get involved in initiatives to address specific priorities (such as reducing teenage conceptions). Locality Enablers and the Executive Member for Children's Services are now working with Children's Champions to strengthen understanding and involvement around the safeguarding and integrated locality working agenda. This is supported by a paper to Area Committees during December.

- 6.10 To further support local improvement, a report to the December 2009 round of Area Committee meetings proposes arrangements for improved performance management information and processes at a local and area level. This paper proposes that from February 2010, Area Committees will receive performance information which will outline the current performance of all local children's services settings, including schools, childcare provision and children's homes. The information will also include key performance measures for the Children and Young People's Plan priorities such as the number of young people not in education, training and employment, GCSE results and attendance rates. Area Committees are being consulted on a framework for supporting this through the report.
- 6.11 The combination of this work – formalising the arrangements for partnership working at area and locality level, developing the role of children's champions and improving performance management information to elected members, will help to strengthen locality working and accountability. The case study work discussed earlier can provide more information on this if members wish.

7.0 Conclusions

- 7.1 This continues to be a challenging, but key period of development for children's services in Leeds. A significant amount of activity, both strategically and practically at the front line is being done to ensure services meet these challenges. At the same time services are continuing to focus on the full range of priorities within the Children and Young People's Plan, as highlighted in the update on providing places to go and things to do. Work at locality level is key to supporting this and the developments outlined in this area are therefore an important step forward.

Background Papers:

Report to Children's Services Scrutiny Board: September 2009: Children's Services and the Children and Young People's Plan Update (December 2009)

Report to Corporate Governance and Audit Committee: 12.11.09 - Children's Trust Arrangements: Locality Arrangements and Governance

Report to Executive Board: 09.12.09 - Children's Trust Arrangements: Locality Arrangements and Governance