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**Meeting of Executive Member for Children and Young  
People's Services, and Advisory Panel**

**4 September 2008**

Report of the Director of Learning, Culture and Children's Services

**Service Plan Performance 1st Quarter 2008/09 – Children and Young  
People's Services**

**Summary**

- 1 This report analyses performance by reference to the service plan, the budget and the performance indicators for all of the services funded through the Children & Young People's Services budget.

**Background**

- 2 In line with the council's integrated reporting arrangements this report seeks to provide members with an opportunity to reflect on progress in the first quarter of the financial year 2008/9 against actions, performance indicators and finance projections. A common proforma has been developed and used for services in the directorate which summarises progress against the actions listed in the new service plans, records variations from the budget and comments on the performance indicators for which information has become available during the reporting period. These are attached as appendices to the covering report (Annex 1).
- 3 Executive Member and Advisory Panel (EMAP) members will recall that the planning process for 2008/09 for Learning, Culture and Children's Services included some important changes. For 2008/09 we responded to concerns about the length and complexity of some of the service plans that were submitted in previous years and the difficulties that this presented in monitoring progress during the year. We reduced from 16 to 5 the number of Service Plans reflecting the responsibilities of each of the Assistant Directors. The Plans are based on the new structure for the department and indeed producing the plans in this way has been an important step in establishing and implementing that new structure. Members of EMAP will find that this year's plans are more concise, more focused and more strategic as a result. We hope and anticipate that this will improve the process of monitoring progress against the plans. Members of EMAP will be aware that monitoring reports focus on three things: the key strategic actions identified in the service plan, financial performance and interim outcomes against key performance indicators. We have also reverted to quarterly reporting rather than reporting as previously on 3 monitoring periods each year.
- 4 A summary of the main findings on progress on services within the Executive Member's portfolio is included below.

## **Consultation**

- 5 Not applicable.

## **Options**

- 6 Not applicable.

## **Analysis**

- 7 The service plan monitoring reports show steady progress in the first period of the year against the service plans. The following comments identify some of the key achievements in the year to date and identify areas where further work is needed.
- 8 The performance of pupils this year at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 and the GCSE examinations will be fully reported at the next monitor. There have been some well publicised national delays in the complete release of all results. The limited provisional unvalidated results and the comparative national results released to date are encouraging.
- 9 The monitoring reports are attached and are detailed as they are also required for use within the service to drive forward improvements. However, to assist EMAP members the following particularly encouraging points of progress against key themes have been extracted:

## **Integrated Services**

- 10 It is encouraging to see that the planned children's centre development remains generally on timescale. By April 2008 all 8 centres in the city achieved "designation" status. The recent quarter has seen the opening of new children's centres at New Earswick (incorporating a new library learning centre) and the Avenues Children Centre in Tang Hall. Previously separate social care staff have now moved into the Avenues. The building work is now complete at St Lawrence's Children Centre and work is progressing well at Haxby Road.
- 11 Our local Young People's Service was successfully established on 1 April 2008 as planned, incorporating all Connexions staff who have been through induction and team building processes. Another highlight is the partnership with Yorkcares and local employers, including City of York Council (CYC), who have put in place arrangements to provide carefully designed and fully supported work placements for an initial group of 6 care leavers. These placements will begin in July and will provide an opportunity for the young people to experience the world supported by a mentor from the employing agency. The project known as Starting Blocks will be carefully evaluated and is designed to be sustainable in the longer term.
- 12 We are excited about progress in establishing a co-located transitions team for children and young people with learning difficulties/disabilities which has been finalised with key protocols in place.
- 13 A well-attended multi-agency 'Anti-Bullying Strategy Group' has been established. This group is developing a new approach to survey the prevalence and attitude to bullying in schools. A high profile regional conference is planned for York in November 2008.

## **New Provision**

- 14 The Primary Capital Strategy for the authority was approved by EMAP and submitted to the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) by the June deadline. We await September's response which, we anticipate, will result in the development of 2 new merged schools and the resources to implement future recommendations from the current reviews of primary provision in the south and east of the city.
- 15 Within Resource Management, progress on our One School Pathfinder is reported at Joseph Rowntree School and the building work is on or ahead of timescale for the new secondary schools for York High and Manor CE schools.
- 16 CYC has successfully bid to be part of 'Staying Put' a government pilot programme to enable Looked After Children (LAC) to stay on in their foster placements beyond the age of 18. The quarter has seen the important, formal launch of Children and Inclusion (CANDI), the forum for parents and carers of children and young people with learning difficulties/disabilities.
- 17 Our School Improvement service report refers to the completion of the curriculum resource pack "Reflections of Traveller Culture' which was launched at the Beacon Open Day and has been disseminated locally and nationally. In addition, completion and dissemination of the 'All about Us' DVD gave local Traveller young people a voice, an opportunity to learn new skills and work in partnership with a range of service providers.
- 18 EMAP members will recall from previous discussions that our IT and Creative & Media diplomas are licensed for delivery from 2008, Environment & Land Based Business, Administration & Finance, Manufacturing & Product Design and Hair & Beauty diplomas from 2009 and our 2013 entitlement provision map (basis for commissioning 2009 onwards) is nearing completion. It is encouraging to also report that the Alternative Learning Programmes (ALPs) have been successfully extended in-house to include provision previously delivered by Rathbones.

## **Organisational Effectiveness**

- 19 New services and new buildings draw understandable attention but we should not underestimate the work undertaken on policies/procedures and systems to improve organisational effectiveness. A major piece of work that has been previously reported in detail to EMAP is around our Behaviour and Attendance Strategy in schools. The work aims to reduce the numbers of children who need to be permanently excluded but to also ensure for those that are that services at The Bridge and the Pupil Referral Unit are engaging the young people in meaningful accredited activity. Good progress is being made in this area.
- 20 In addition, the new multi agency Strategic Partnership for LAC should be highlighted. It is now established with clear terms of reference and themed subgroups to drive the continuous improvements in outcomes for LAC. These subgroups address the health, education and transition needs of our LAC.
- 21 The new Children's Workforce Development Council standards for foster carers have also been successfully launched in this first quarter at a conference with local carers. Arrangements to support the full implementation of these standards have been agreed with colleagues from Adult Learning and the Training and Development Unit.

- 22 Also welcomed, following the publication of new DCSF guidance, is the review of local procedures about Young Runaways. Similarly, a multi agency group is currently developing local guidance about safeguarding disabled children and young people.
- 23 ICT Broadband Procurement and Learning Platform Procurement are progressing well. The first quarter saw the successful delivery of the school admissions round with high levels of parental first preferences secured and the appeals process managed within statutory timeframes. Also welcomed is the re-tendering of school transport provision securing significant savings and in our view an improved quality of provision.
- 24 It should also be acknowledged that this quarter has seen a major focus on supporting managers/staff through a key stage of the Job Evaluation process. Schools in particular have required significant support through a challenging period.

### **Specific Performance Outcomes**

- 25 There is something of a frustration that many indicators, from the national indicator set, are still to be defined in detail or await first year benchmarking data and therefore, targets are not in place. This adds to the usually partial picture on performance that we see at first quarter. However, in that context it is specifically encouraging to note:
- % of looked after children cases which were reviewed within required timescales
  - % of care leavers in suitable accommodation and in employment, education or training
  - The further increase in assessments of children in need completed within timescales
  - The low reregistration rates and high review completion rates for children on the child protection register
  - Reduced number of fixed term exclusions in the primary sector and significant reductions in permanent exclusions in primary, secondary and special school sector
  - The number of days being provided for pupils on the Education Otherwise roll continues to increase. With the additional alternative provision being offered from September and the reduction in exclusions this number should increase
  - Not in Education Employment and Training (NEET) figures for the 1st quarter are in line past trends at 4.7% (231 young people age 16 to 18). We will review the profile of this indicator
  - The continued greater access to parenting programmes for parents
  - Increased to 40 the number of quality assured sports clubs engaged with schools sports partnerships which is on track and with a new Extending Activities Fund being managed by Active York
  - Our draft attendance returns for the first two terms show that in secondary schools total absence was 7.06% (comprising 5.84% authorised and 1.22% unauthorised). The whole year figures for 2006/07 of 7.62% absence show that this is an improvement

- Primary figures for the same period were 4.34% (4.02% authorised and 0.32 unauthorised). The whole year figures for 2006/07 show that this is an improvement in primary attendance from 4.63%.
- The 2 year old pathfinder has allowed 500 previously unengaged vulnerable families to access voluntary and informal learning whilst the children access registered childcare across all settings.
- Departmental sickness absence levels have fallen again and remain the best performance across the council

## **Challenges**

- 26 The scale of the LAC population in the city continues to pressurise existing resources and as a result creates financial pressures through the greater use of independent fostering agency placements. NEET figures are in line with past trends at 4.7% (231 young people aged 16 to 18) but we are confident that further tracking and targeted support from the post 16 team working from Castlegate and in the localities will reduce the numbers.
- 27 The challenge of promoting Integrated Working and Information Sharing remains and new initiatives are planned with the wider school community. We now have 112 Common Assessments completed; 150 practitioners trained, increasing contacts to the Index, and 83 Lead Practitioners allocated.
- 28 Finally, and as reported in a separate EMAP paper, work is now under way to start the extensive consultation process that will underpin production of our third Children and Young People's Plan, to be published in April 2009.

## **Corporate Priorities**

- 29 The service plans funded through the Children & Young People's Services budget were developed within a clear planning framework and under an overarching, statutorily required, partnership document - the Children and Young Peoples Plan 2007-10. The service plans do contribute to key corporate priorities including:
- Increase people's skills and knowledge to improve future employment prospects
  - Improve the health and lifestyles of the people who live in York, in particular among groups whose levels of health are the poorest
  - Improve the life chances of the most disadvantaged and disaffected children, young people and families in the city
  - Improve our focus on the needs of customers and residents in designing and providing services
  - Improve leadership at all levels to provide clear, consistent direction to the organisation
  - Improve the way the Council and its partners work together to deliver better services for the people who live in York
  - Improve efficiency and reduce waste to free-up more resources

## Implications

30 The report has the following implications:

### Financial

- 31 Based on the actuals to date and other information on future expenditure plans and income generation, an assessment has been made by budget managers of the likely net outturn for each service plan and cost centre. At this stage in the year there is no reason to suggest that most budgets will not come in at or about the level of the current approved budget. There are though a number of exceptions to this and these variations are summarised in the Annex, with full details provided in the budget section of each service plan profile.
- 32 The original net budget for Children & Young People's Services for 2008/09 was set at £29,179k and no changes have been made so far this year. In total the projected net outturn for 2008/09 is £29,981k, leaving a projected net overspend of £802k or 2.7% (0.3% of gross budgets).
- 33 Members will be aware that the majority of the Children & Young People's Services budget is now funded from the ring-fenced Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). As a consequence the net projected overspend for the portfolio is split:

Dedicated Schools Grant	+ £173k
General Fund (Council Tax)	+ £629k

### Dedicated Schools Grant

- 34 Full details of all the variations are provided in the annex but in summary the major variations are:
- **Out of City Placements (Education) +£248k.** The major impact is from 3 new and unexpected residential placements at a total estimated annual cost of £548k pa (£263k in 2008/09). It is proposed to fund this with a budget virement from the Inter Authority Recoupment budget.
  - **Inter Authority Special School Recoupment -£280k.** Changes to the way in which charges for Inter Authority Recoupment can be calculated mean that a greater level of overheads can now be included in the charge for each pupil. York is currently a net provider of places in maintained special schools and (despite a budget saving being taken in 2008/09) this has resulted in a net underspend on the overall recoupment budget. It is proposed to vire this underspend to help cover deficits in other DSG funded budget areas.
  - **Behaviour Support Service +£164k.** Additional costs of supply teachers and teaching assistants partly offset by increased income transferred from schools for excluded pupils. It is proposed to part fund this with a budget virement of Area Based Grant income from the Education Development Service. Members should also note that, as reported at the July meeting, a full review of the service is currently being undertaken, with a further report due to be presented later this term.

- **Education Development Service -£100k.** Additional Standards Fund income has been carried forward from 2007/08. This in turn has freed up some of the non ring-fenced Area Based Grant in 2008/09. It is proposed to vire this budget to help fund the overspend projected within the Behaviour Support Service.
- **Dedicated Schools Grant Income +£108k.** Actual pupil numbers were 20.6 fte (0.1%) less than estimated reducing the DSG by £78k. In addition the carry forward from 2007/08 was £30k less than expected.

35 Under the terms and conditions of the DSG any end of year overspend either has to be funded by a contribution from the council's General Fund budget or carried forward and funded from the following financial year's DSG. The current presumption is that the projected net overspend of £174k would be carried forward to 2009/10 and become a first call against the DSG in that year.

### General Fund

36 Full details of all the variations are provided in the annex but in summary the main pressure points are:

- **Fostering & Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) fees +£177k.** The current projection is for an overspend on the overall fostering budget of £277k. The Looked After Children population continues to increase, from 166 at the end of 2007/08 to 194 at the end of the first quarter of 2008/09. Management action has already been taken to try and reduce the impact of this on the General Fund by persuading the Schools Forum to allow an additional £100k to be charged to the Schools Budget (and hence the DSG) reducing the General Fund overspend to £177k. In addition the local fostering programme continues to be developed, which should over time help to reduce dependence on the more expensive IFAs. It is also proposed that the Executive be asked to release the sum of £80k that has been provided in the Corporate Contingency budget which would, if approved, further reduce the overspend to £97k.
- **Out of City Placements (Care) +£185k.** The major impact is from 3 new and unexpected residential placements at a total estimated annual cost of £124k pa (£96k in 2008/09) and two short-term children's home placements costing over £40k in 2008/09.
- **Children's Care Legal Fees +£170k.** Due to a higher than usual number of complex (i.e. expensive) court cases involving York children, together with a general increase in the cost of cases resulting from a national trend for courts to call in more expert witnesses. In addition there is the new impact of changes to public law charges imposed by central government (estimated at £90k for the year). It is proposed that the Executive be asked to release the sum of £142k that has been provided in the Corporate Contingency budget which would, if approved, reduce the overspend to £28k.
- **Music Service Income +£85k.** A projected underachievement of income in the Music Service due to a lower than budgeted number of pupils currently taking music lessons, together with a 5% increase in the income target this year. It is proposed that the Executive be asked to release the sum of £40k that has been provided in the Corporate Contingency budget which would, if approved, reduce the shortfall to £45k.

- 37 If all of the requests to the Executive for release of contingency funding totalling £262k are agreed then the net projected General Fund overspend will be reduced to £367k. Officers will continue to work to identify further savings to bridge the remaining budget gap, including reviewing savings options that are being developed as part of the 2009/10 budget process to identify any that could be implemented prior to 1 April 2009.

#### Budget Virements Required

- 38 The council's financial regulations require that any virements between service budgets of more than £100k be agreed by the Executive Member as part of the budget monitoring report. Full details of virement requests are contained in the paragraphs above but in summary the following are put forward for approval

**Table 1 - Virements recommended for approval**

	Virement £(000)
Education Out of City Placements (Recurring)	+250
Inter Authority Recoupment (Recurring)	-250
Behaviour Support Service (Non Recurring)	+100
Education Development Service ABG (Non Recurring)	-100
<b>TOTAL</b>	-

#### **Human Resources (HR)**

- 39 Whilst there are no specific HR implications arising from this report the report does recognise and report in part the findings of the staff survey.

#### **Other Implications**

- 40 There are no specific equalities/ legal/IT/ property or crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

#### **Risk Management**

- 41 All of the original service plans include a section on risk management. Performance sessions within the directorate update those risks in the light of experience. In addition there is always a degree of risk associated with setting the revenue budget. The key to minimising this risk is the effective operation of monitoring and control processes. This report is part of that process, where updated figures and corrective actions are proposed. There are no specific risks arising from the recommendations in this report.

#### **Recommendations**

- 42 That the Advisory Panel advise the Executive Member to:
- note the performance of services within the directorate funded through the Children & Young People's Services budget
  - agree the budget virements set out at table 1



- request that the Executive agree to release the following amounts currently contained within the Corporate Contingency Budget:
  - > £80k for Children's Social Care Fostering
  - > £70k for Children's Social Care Legal Fees
  - > £72k for Increased Legal Fee Charges from the Justices Department
  - > £40k for Music Service Income Shortfall

Reason: In order to ensure appropriate performance management arrangements are in place for the work of the directorate and that revenue budgets are monitored and controlled effectively.

## Contact Details

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**Report  
 Approved**



**Date** 18th August  
 2008

## Specialist Implications Officer(s)

*Financial Implications.*  
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**Wards Affected:** *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

**All**

**For further information please contact the author of the report**

### Background Papers:

Learning Culture and Children's Services Service Plans 2008/09.

### Annex 1

Summary of Service plan monitoring reports including key performance indicators and budgets.