

Meeting of Executive Member for Children's Services and Advisory Panel

6 September 2007

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

Service Plan Performance Monitoring Period 1 (1 April – 31 July 2007) - Children'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'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 against actions, performance indicators and finance projections. A common proforma has been developed and used for all services in the directorate which summarises progress against the actions listed in the service plan, 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). Service Managers have been asked to use no more than two sides of A4 for their monitoring report.
3. A summary of the main findings on progress on services within the Executive Member's portfolios is included below.

Options

4. This is not a paper which has specific options but members clearly have opportunity as part of the monitor to clarify progress or otherwise on key activity

Analysis

4. 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. The performance of pupils this year in SATs at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 and the GCSE examinations will be fully reported at the next monitor in December. The provisional results and the comparative national

results released to date are most encouraging.

5. The monitoring reports demonstrate particularly encouraging progress against the following themes:

Integrated Services

- 6.1 It is encouraging to see that the planned children's centre development remains on timescale. By April 2008 there will be eight centres in the city and two of our centres have already achieved "designation" status. Considerable work has been undertaken to add to and maximise the capital resources available to the project, to ensure the development has strong and rational strategic coherence, to ensure that existing mainstream services are fully engaged and to ensure the mainstreaming of our existing Sure Start programme.
- 6.2 Two existing centres at Hob Moor and Clifton include relocated staff and services from the previous family centres at Holgate and Clifton respectively. Plans are on target for the relocation of Heworth Family Centre into the planned Children's Centre at Tang Hall.
- 6.3 The city centre one-stop shop at Castlegate providing integrated advice and guidance for young people has now had official opening events and is proving a valued resource. The reports indicate progress with additional services such as sexual health and care leavers contact being available there. Progress continues in developing the Integrated Youth Service provision required for 2008.
- 6.4 The school improvement monitor highlights the success of the Able Gifted and Talented summer school and the very well received Independent and State School partnership

New Provision

- 6.5 It is encouraging to see plans on track for an additional new Enhanced Resource Centre for pupils with Autism. The greater recognition of the needs of children on the autistic spectrum at primary age requires a strategic response. The development of provision such as this can only assist in ensuring the needs of these young people can be met locally. The reports attached also highlight our continued success in having comparatively low levels of children requiring specialist residential placements.
- 6.6 Whilst there have been some building delays, it is also encouraging to see that the planned Danesgate Skill Centre will be operational from late October 2007. The Schools Out provision in the city has continued to grow and has proved an enormous success and we have also seen increased child care provision most notably for 2 year olds as part of our Pathfinder status being available.
- 6.7 We would also highlight the extension of the Duke of Edinburgh award schemes and increased accreditation activity within the youth service. Within

Planning and Resources, progress is to programme on our One School Pathfinder at Joseph Rowntree School and planning permission for York High and Manor has been obtained and the building work will begin in the autumn.

Organisational Effectiveness

- 6.8 An effective organisation reflects and learns and there are a number of references to specific evaluation activity eg Peer Support schemes; Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL); Intensifying Support programme. It also acts and the references to new procedures being introduced, new guidance being published in a number of differing areas are also welcomed. In this respect the published Accessibility Strategy and the Access to the Curriculum documents are particularly noteworthy.
- 6.9 A major piece of work is referred to around the Behaviour and Attendance Strategy for schools. The work aims to reduce the numbers of children who need to be permanently excluded but also to ensure for those that are that services at The Bridge and the Pupil Referral Unit are engaging the young people in meaningful accredited activity. Key recommendations arising from the positive inspection of Fostering and Adoption services earlier in the year have now been responded to. Significant procedural work on accessibility, sustainability and school travel has been prepared and is in use.

Specific Performance Outcomes

- 6.10 It is specifically encouraging to note:
- the increase in assessments of children in need completed within timescales
 - the completion of all statutory assessments of children's special educational needs within timescale
 - the increase in looked after children with a personal education plan in place
 - the greater access to parenting programmes for parents of children known to the Youth Offending Service
 - the low re-registration rates and high review completion rates for children on the child protection register
 - the increase in young people accessing youth service activities

Challenges

- 6.11 As acknowledged earlier, the growth in the number of permanently excluded children is being the subject of considerable reflection and planning activity. Whilst further progress is required, there is evidence of an increase in service provided for those that are excluded. Whilst delays in website development have delayed the publication and access to a complete "Youth Offer", the service has published programmes of activities and opportunities in each locality. The scale of the looked after children 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.

Staff Survey results

6.12 Results are not included within the attached service plan monitoring reports but are clearly significant to any reflections on organisational progress and potential. The survey of local authority employees is conducted every two years. The findings again see LCCS scoring in advance of other council departments across most key questions. What is additionally encouraging is that when we look at service arms within the directorate we see a consistency of response in most key areas. As examples:

- Overall job satisfaction 80% - significantly above council average
- 92% of staff believe they achieve something useful
- 11% above CYC average for being happy to say they work for the council
- 12% above CYC average for department acting on new ideas

Corporate Priorities

7. The service plans funded through the Children's Services budget were developed within a clear planning framework and the *Children and Young People's Plan 2007-10*, an overarching partnership statutorily-required document. 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

8. The report has the following implications:

Financial

8.1 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.

8.2. The original net budget for Children's Services for 2007/08 was set at £25,990k. Since then there have been a number of changes made (the annex provides details) resulting in a latest approved net budget of £25,989k. In total the projected net outturn for 2007/08 is £26,506k, leaving a projected net overspend of £517k or 2.0%.

8.3 Members will be aware that the majority of the Children'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	+ £146k
General Fund (Council Tax)	+ £371k

Dedicated Schools Grant

8.4 The most significant item contributing to the projected overspend is the £288k increased demand being experienced within the Nursery Education Grant budget due in part to the impact of the Pathfinder projects. More details are provided in the annex but in summary it is still hoped that some of the additional cost will be funded by the DCSF, further reducing the projected overspend.

8.5 Under the terms and conditions of the DSG any overspends either have to be funded in year 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 overspend would be carried forward to 2008/09 and become a first call against the DSG in that year.

General Fund

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

- **Home to School Transport +£146k.** This monitor has been prepared before the retendering of transport contracts in time for the Autumn term and is therefore based on the summer term and projected data only. Considerable work is currently being undertaken by the transport team and the council's transport consultants Kendric Ash. It is not yet known what effect the major retendering exercise will have on expenditure, although it is hoped that this will reduce the overspend being reported. A clearer picture will be available for the second monitor.
- **Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) fees +£185k.** The number of Looked After Children has risen significantly over the last 18 months, up to 160 earlier this year and this has been reflected in the increased need

to place children with IFAs. Although it is too early to be certain, it looks like the peak in numbers has passed, with 156 LAC at present. Again a clearer picture will be available at the time of the second monitor.

- 8.7 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 2008/09 budget process to identify any that could be implemented prior to 1 April 2008.

Budget Virements Required

- 8.8 The council’s financial regulations require that any virements between service plan heads of more than £50k are agreed by the Executive Member as part of the budget monitoring report. Full details of virement requests are contained in the service plan annex but in summary the following are put forward for approval

Table 1 - Virements recommended for approval

	Virement £(000)
Alternative Learning Packages:	+80
Inter Authority Recoupment	-80
Schools Specific Contingency (re Westside Review)*	+165
Dedicated Schools Grant*	-165
TOTAL	-

* subject to the approval of the Executive.

Human Resources (HR)

- 8.9 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.
- 8.10 There are no specific equalities/ legal/IT/ property or crime and disorder implications arising from this report

Risk Management

9. All of the original service plans include a section on risk management.

Recommendation

10. The Executive Member is recommended to:
- note the performance of services within the directorate funded through the Children’s Services budget and agree the budget virements set out at table 1.

Reason: To enable the corporate service plan monitoring requirements to be fulfilled and to facilitate effective budget management

Contact Details

Author:
Peter Dwyer
Director, LCCS
Tel No: 554200

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:
Peter Dwyer
Director of Learning, Culture and Children's Services

Report Approved

Date 23rd August 2007

Specialist Implications Officer(s)

Financial Implications.
Name: Richard Hartle
Title: Head of Finance (LCCS)
Tel No. 01904 551550 x 4225

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

All

For further information please contact the author of the report
Annexes

Annex 1: Summary of Service plan monitoring reports including key performance indicators and budgets