

**Meeting of Executive Members for Children's
Services and Advisory Panel**

6 December 2007

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

**Service Plan Performance Monitoring Period 2 - 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 second period of this 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 2 sides of A4 for their monitoring report. A number of these reports have included information now available from the 2007 Audit Commission survey of the views of schools on the local authority in their performance analysis.
3. A summary of the main findings on progress on services within the Executive Member's portfolios is included below.

Consultation

4. There was widespread consultation activity in the production of the original service plans and the views of stakeholders were fully considered in agreeing the specific priorities included within the plans.

Options

5. This is not a paper where the offering of specific options is applicable

Analysis

6. The service plan monitoring reports show continued progress in the second 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 monitoring reports demonstrate particularly encouraging progress against the following themes:
- **Integrated Services** - It is encouraging to see that the planned children's centre development remains on timescale. By April 2008 there will be 8 centres in the city and 2 of our centres have already achieved "designation" status and considerable progress in indicating staff working in those centres has been completed. National announcements indicate an expectation that York will develop a further 4 centres by 2011. Further details on local proposals will be coming to EMAP in 2008. For residents of York good information about where to get assistance has long been recognised and it is good to see the partnership YorOk service directory website now live. The Directory creates a single place where young people, parents and professionals can access updated information on local and national services. A new partnership strategy for child and adolescent mental health services has been developed ensuring that individual partners provide an integrated contribution to this important agenda. The City Centre One-Stop Shop at Castlegate providing integrated advice and guidance for young people continues to be popular and it is encouraging to see more services being provided from that site eg advice to care leavers. Progress continues in developing the Integrated Youth service provision required for April 2008 and now that national funding levels have been announced approval will be sought from members on the recommended organisational structure of the proposed integrated youth service/connexions
 - **New Provision** - Within Planning and Resources progress on our One School Pathfinder at Joseph Rowntree School is to programme with a shortlist of 2 preferred bidders and decision by the end of November. Construction work on York High has commenced on time and planning permission in place and overall programme at Manor is on timescale. It is encouraging to see plans for an additional new Enhanced Resource Centre for pupils with Autism being on track and now approved by Executive Member and planning of the new provision is underway Importantly national announcements on the Primary School "Building Schools for the Future" will necessitate a recommended strategy coming through EMAP prior to anticipated Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) approval. Whilst there have been some further building delays to the planned Danesgate Skill Centre the building should be handed over by the end of November and operational by January 2008. The school improvement monitor provides a positive reference to our progress in developing new diplomas for September 2008. The Youth Service report also highlights the development of a new volunteering programme "Up 2 You", a new residential drama project in Fulford and new youth service provision in Huntington.
 - **Organisational Effectiveness** - An effective organisation reflects and learns and there are a number of references to specific evaluation and standards activity eg 2/3 and 4 year old child care pathfinder, Peer Support schemes; Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL); introduction of

Financial Management Standards for schools. EMAP welcomed the results of the Staff Survey previously and it is encouraging to note progress in developing a recruitment and retention strategy in Early Years. We would highlight results of recent inspections with some further schools achieving outstanding results and the Glen Short Stay Centre receiving a certificate of Outstanding Provision from the OFSTED regulators. It is of concern that one school has been served with a notice to improve. The effective work of the reintegration panel in ensuring “hard to place” young people are reintroduced to mainstream schooling is significant.

- **Specific Performance Outcomes**

- It is encouraging to see a further reduction in the overall numbers of children outside of mainstream education provision and whilst the increase in the level of service provided to those young people is welcomed there is still further progress needed to meet our target
- It is pleasing to see the authority achieve its best result for 4 years in the % of looked after children achieving GCSE qualifications
- The Youth Offending Teams performance against key indicators make positive reading with lower than target use of custody and very strong access to mental health services. Further progress needed on restorative justice interventions and education training and employment of young offenders.
- Previous progress in completing assessments of the most vulnerable has been maintained and in the case of initial assessments improved
- The child protection indicators make encouraging reading and the level of unallocated work within children’s social care is at its lowest level for the year
- The excellent performance in the completion of all statutory assessments of children’s special educational needs within timescale has been maintained
- Particular attention should be drawn in the School Improvement report to the excellent Key Stage including GCSE results for the city, with performance consistently ahead of national levels of improvement and some of the highest ever results for the city being reported. These results include improvements for children with special educational needs
- The low reregistration rates and high review completion rates for children on the child protection register have been maintained
- The Able Gifted and Talented strategy has made good progress which was recognised by the schools in their judgement of this area of local authority work in the 2007 Audit Commission survey of the views of schools
- Data on primary school attendance demonstrates overall improved levels of attendance than the previous year and ahead of national levels. On recently released DCSF data the primary school

attendance improvement makes York the 8th best performing authority in the country

- The increase in young people accessing youth service activities has further improved and remains ahead of target and the increase in access to counselling in schools is noteworthy
- The stabilising and recent reduction in the looked after/ care population is significant and now clear evidence that the number of new admissions to care has reduced
- **Challenges:** Whilst the overall number of children outside mainstream schooling is welcomed there remains significant work to reduce the numbers within that group who are permanently excluded. In addition we need to increase still further the level of activity provided to those excluded young people. The Children and Families report highlights challenges facing all authorities in introducing electronic social care records. Being a pathfinder in this area has brought the challenge earlier to our attention and resourcing of this area of work needs stabilising. Future monitoring reports will also need to see progress on the health and safety agenda, in improving HR processes and in targeted reductions in sickness absence levels. The attendance levels of looked after children and performance in ensuring care leavers have good access to education training and employment will be subject to additional monitored. Levels of total absence in secondary schools is also of some concern this year and the principal education welfare officer continues to work with the School Improvement service and our regional adviser to support those schools where absence or number of persistent absentees.

Corporate Priorities

7. The service plans funded through the Children's Services budget were developed within a clear planning framework and under an overarching partnership statutorily required 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

Financial

8. 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.
9. 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 £25,985k. In summary the projected net outturn for 2007/08 is £26,405k, leaving a projected net overspend of £420k or 1.6% (0.1% of total turnover).
10. 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	- £32k
General Fund (Council Tax)	+ £452k

Dedicated Schools Grant

11. The net projected position has moved from an overspend of £146k at monitor 1 to an underspend of £32k, a reduction of £178k. The major changes from monitor 1 are set out briefly below with full details of each in the Annex.
 - A reduction in the projected underspend on Out of City Placements of £74k.
 - An increase of £83k in the projected overspend on support required for statemented children from Learning Support Assistants.
 - A £45k underspend on staffing due to vacancies across the Sensory, Physical & Medical support teams in SEN, following a restructure of the service.
 - A £182k reduction in the projected overspend on Nursery Education Grants following successful negotiations with the DCSF to allow some of the pathfinder grant to be used to support the base budget pressure.
 - A decrease in the projected overspend on Home Tuition of £37k.
 - A projected revenue underspend of £65k due to a delay in the establishment of the Danesgate Skills Centre.

12. The latest approved DSG budget for 2007/08 already assumes a deficit of £198k. The net projected underspend of £32k against these approved budgets would reduce this deficit to £166k.
13. Under the terms and conditions of the DSG any deficits 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 final deficit amount would be carried forward to 2008/09 and become a first call against the DSG in that year.

General Fund

14. Monitor 1 highlighted a projected net overspend after mitigating action of £371k. The individual service plan financial monitoring sheets in the Annex now show a total projected overspend of £759k. To offset this mitigating action is being taken to hold back expenditure or redirect resources totalling £307k, with the details again shown in the Annex. The result of this action leaves the net projected overspend of £452k which is a worsening of the position reported in monitor 1 of £81k. The major changes from monitor 1 are set out briefly below with full details of all variations from the approved budget shown in the Annex:
 - An increase of £70k in the projected overspend on children's social care legal fees.
 - A projected underspend of £33k on Leaving Care budgets due to a lower than usual number of children moving to independence in the first half of the year.
 - A high number of staff vacancies within the Pathway Team in the first half of the year saving £28k.
 - A significant shortfall in the level of income being generated within the music service, estimated at £65k for the year.
 - A net increase in the projected overspend on Home to School Transport costs of £40k.
15. Officers will continue to work to identify further savings to bridge the remaining budget gap before the end of the financial year. This will include work in the following areas:
 - A review of the charging structure within the music service, including the concessions policy to ensure it is still operating effectively and only targeting those in genuine need of support.
 - Exploring further options to charge more current general fund expenditure to the Schools Budget and hence the DSG, particularly around SEN transport costs.
16. 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.

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

Risk Management

18. All of the original service plans include a section on risk management. The collective overall judgement on progress within the service is such that whilst we have identified some key operational and financial risks they do not constitute a level of concern to impact upon the overall progress of the service

Recommendations

19. The Executive Member is recommended to:
- Note the performance of services within the directorate funded through the Children's Services budget

Reason: to meet the agreed service planning reporting arrangements for the service

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Report Approved

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Date 21 November 2007

Specialist Implications Officer(s)

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

All Y

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers

None

Annexes

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