
Meeting of Executive Members and Children's Services Advisory Panel

18 March 2008

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

Learning, Culture and Children's Services - Service Plans: 2008/2009

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the Service Plans for council services that are wholly or partially funded from the children's services budget.

Background

2. Across the council, Directorates have been completing Service Plans and then seeking their approval at their respective Executive Member(s) and Advisory Panel (EMAP) meetings. The plans follow a standard template and take the reader through stages of description, analysis and review, and identification of key priorities for the coming year. The process of completion of the plans is essential to both the quality and likely impact of the final documents. Great store is placed within this Directorate on:
 - ensuring that the plans accurately reflect key strategic drivers impacting upon the service and that their production reflects analysis across the service and its partners on historic performance/emerging priorities;
 - insisting that the plans are closely aligned with the priorities identified in the Corporate Strategy and the Children and Young People's Plan for the city;
 - the plans being produced through a process which engages the whole service and facilitates the process where more detailed operational work plans/personal development plans can be produced;
 - ensuring that the actions in the plan are challenging but deliverable and expressed in a way that facilitates forthcoming monitoring arrangements.
3. The planning process this year for *Learning, Culture and Children's Services* has included some important changes. For 2008/9 we have responded to concerns about the length and complexity of some of the service plans that were submitted to the Executive Members in previous years and the difficulties that this presented in monitoring progress during the year. Attached are not the 16 Service Plans from different sections as produced in 2007/8 but 5 Service Plans reflecting the responsibilities of each of the Asst

Directors. The Plans are based on the new structure for the department. 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 also 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 performance against performance indicators. For 2008/9 it is envisaged that monitoring reports will be produced on a quarterly rather than on three occasions each year.

4. EMAP members will also be aware that The Children Act 2004 requires local authorities to produce a Children and Young People's Plan. An up-dated *Children and Young People's Plan: 2007 - 2010* for the city was endorsed by the Executive at a meeting on the 27 February 2007. The priorities in the Plan are fully reflected in the departmental service plans. This key partnership document has since been updated with an update published December 2007 in time for the Joint Area Review (JAR) in January/February 2008. Analysis arising from that review and the feedback to date from the JAR has impacted significantly on the priorities contained within the attached service plans.
5. The Plans are heavily influenced by and contribute significantly to the priorities of the council as agreed in the Corporate Strategy and to the wider Community Strategy of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). For 2008/9 we have also needed to encompass in our analysis changes in the national reporting expectations. As part of a planned reduction in reporting expectations, a new national indicator set (NIS) has been established (198 indicators). It is from this group that negotiations are currently underway to establish the particular 35 indicators which, when added to the statutory education indicators, will form the Local Area Agreement for York. You will see from the Service Plans that we have ensured that all relevant children and young peoples indicators in the NIS are included in our plans

Consultation

6. As indicated throughout the report, the Service Plans attached have been produced following a period of internal consultation. Importantly, they are contributing to strategic priorities in the Children's and Young People's Plan which were identified following widespread consultation with children and young people and the wider public.

Options

7. These plans have been produced by service managers in response to the strategic plans for the authority. The Executive Members can modify service plans within the planning framework for the authority.

Analysis

8. As described above the plans themselves have been produced through a process of detailed analysis and every effort has been made to ensure strategic coherence with corporate, community, partner and national priorities.

Corporate Priorities

9. In particular the service plans take particular account of the need identified in our corporate strategy :
 - to increase people's knowledge and skills to improve future employment prospects
 - to improve the health and lifestyles of people in York, in particular among people whose levels of health are the poorest
 - to improve the life chances of the most disadvantaged and disaffected children, young people and families in York
10. The Plans are also consistent with the values and direction statements within the corporate strategy.

Implications

Financial

11. Service Plans have been produced on a timescale that ensures they reflect the budget settlement for 2008/09. Each individual plan sets out the current approved budget for 2007/08 with further details of growth and savings items approved in the 2008/09 budget process.

Human Resources (HR)

12. Whilst there are no direct implications for HR arising from this report, it should be noted that progress against all of these plans is dependent upon the people at all levels within the service. As a result delivery against the priorities in the plan can be affected positively or adversely by HR factors.

Equalities

13. There are no specific implications in this report but again the service plans attached have been influenced by a recognition of the

Legal

14. There is no statutory requirement for the production of service plans, though there is a strong expectation by District Audit and by inspection regimes such as Ofsted that they will be produced in order to support effective Performance Management.

Crime and Disorder/ Information Technology /Property

15. Whilst there are no specific implications for these categories of this covering report the reader will identify again that there are considerable activity and progress expected in these service plans which will carry significance for these categories.

Risk Management

16. The risk to the authority of not maintaining service plans is that the service will lack any framework for agreeing and monitoring progress against its agreed and approved priorities. Without such a framework performance of the service would be adversely impacted upon with subsequent operational, reputation and financial risks.

Recommendations

17. The Executive Members for both Children's Services and Youth and Social Inclusion are recommended to approve the Service Plans attached to this report:

Reason: In order to ensure that managers in LCCS are in a position to implement the strategic priorities for the directorate.

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Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

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Director of Learning, Culture and Children's Services

Report Approved

Date 2 March 2008

Specialist Implications Officer(s)

Financial

Richard Hartle

Head of LCCS Finance Title

4225

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

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

Annexes: Service Plans (5)