

PROGRESS ON IMPROVEMENT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES

PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITY: CHILDREN'S SERVICES

CABINET

24 JANUARY 2008

Wards Affected

Countywide.

Purpose

To update Cabinet on the performance of the Children and Young People's (CYP) Directorate as part of the continuing performance management process specifically established since the Joint Area Review (JAR) inspection in 2005.

Key Decision

This is not a Key Decision.

Recommendation

THAT

- (a) **Cabinet note the significant progress reported and the cessation of formal intervention by Government Office West Midlands; and**
- (b) **Cabinet return to the usual performance monitoring and reporting of the Directorate.**

Reasons

Previous Cabinet meetings have required special focus on performance monitoring of the CYP Directorate since the JAR inspection in 2005. It has been a requirement to update Cabinet on progress at quarterly intervals. As at January 2008, with the cessation of formal intervention by Government Office West Midlands (GOWM) and the regular forms of scrutiny and performance management now being well established, it seems appropriate for Cabinet to consider reducing the need for additional reporting mechanisms.

Considerations

1. The new Director of Children's Services established a positive relationship with GOWM early in April 2007 and agreed three key success criteria, against which progress could be more effectively monitored with a view to reducing/removing formal intervention from GOWM as soon as possible thereafter.

2. The success criteria were:

	Success criteria	Evidence	Timescales
Performance Management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Embedded practice in monitoring performance at all levels of the organisation 2. Good management and performance data 3. The interrogation and interpretation of data 4. Appropriate response and action that flows from the understanding of the DMT 	<p>Quarterly performance digest</p> <p>Paper trail through minutes of CYP DMT and team meetings</p> <p>Observation at CYP DMT – Rob Willoughby</p> <p>Identification of areas for concern/celebration by CYP DMT and subsequent action taken/plans being informed by this evidence</p>	<p>Initiate immediately</p> <p>PM on agenda of DMT</p> <p>Monthly management meetings and team meetings</p>
Change management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strategic plan agreed which sets out the way forward and timescales for closures/ amalgamations 2. Develop a growing awareness in Herefordshire of the need for change in school provision and a shared vision 3. Build support for a new approach in the education community 4. Develop policy objectives of members as part of the process before recommendations are developed 5. Be clear about both the objectives of the strategic plan as well as the weaknesses to be overcome 6. Political approval for the plan 	<p>Paper trail of data/meetings and consultation process for the strategy</p>	<p>Autumn term</p>
Children with Disabilities Strategy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strategic document approved 2. Appropriate action taken to develop 	<p>Completed document – to high quality, relevant to Herefordshire context, evidence based and</p>	<p>September 2007</p>

	taken to develop services according to need identified through the strategy	costed Paper trail of consultation, formal approval process Issues/areas identified for development to meet need and in our plans	
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3. Subsequently, meetings took place, both formally and informally, to agree actions and progress. Formal Improvement Board meetings were held on 27 June and 21 September 2007, where the criteria were set and actions monitored. Minutes of these meetings are attached as Appendix 1.
4. It was clear that the relationship between the Directorate and GOWM had improved but the Children's Services Adviser, Mr. R Willoughby, was also invited to monitor performance through attendance at Children and Young People Directorate Management Meetings, which he did on a number of occasions.
5. In September, the Directorate prepared and underwent their Annual Performance Assessment (APA) by Ofsted. A self-evaluation document has to be completed before the inspection. This forms the basis of their enquiry during a day visit where they interview officers and key partners. The Cabinet Member and Scrutiny Chair were both involved in the preparatory meetings, which was helpful and gave a very positive message to all partners.
6. GOWM were keen to know the outcome of the APA before making their formal recommendations to the Minister.
7. The final APA letter was published at the end of November and is attached at Appendix 2. In summary, this is a very positive letter. There are, of course, many things we do well but the key points were:

Outcome area	Strengths
Be Healthy "The contribution of services to improving outcomes for children and young people in this aspect is good"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Very good progress towards the provision of a comprehensive Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) ▪ Good access and services for looked after children and children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities ▪ Programmes to address local priorities including obesity, substance misuse and sexual health
Stay Safe "The contribution of services to improving outcomes for children and young people in this aspect is adequate"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strengthened arrangements to combat bullying ▪ Significant increase in numbers of referrals to social care and the proportion of referrals leading to initial assessments ▪ Compliance with requirements for allocation of child protection cases and timeliness of reviews ▪ Enhanced effectiveness of Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board ▪ Good arrangements to support looked after children, including placement stability and quality of foster care

Outcome area	Strengths
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very good planning and provision for young people leaving care
Enjoy and Achieve “The contribution of services to improving outcomes for children and young people in this aspect is good”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Substantial improvement in educational standards since 2005 Good educational outcomes for looked after children, and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities Increased places for young children in Early Years settings Increase in the proportion of schools judged to be good or better
Make a Positive Contribution “The contribution of services to improving outcomes for children and young people in this aspect is adequate”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of a family support strategy to improve coordination and provision of earlier intervention and preventative services Good consultation processes for children and young people Well used, specific consultation and review processes for vulnerable groups Timely reviews of looked after children and high participation rates
Achieve Economic Wellbeing “The contribution of services to improving outcomes for children and young people in this aspect is adequate, with several good features”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good outcomes in terms of basic qualifications and training Successful reduction in the numbers of 16 to 18 years olds not in education, employment or training, including looked after children Transition plans for up to 90% of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities Suitable accommodation for all young care leavers
Service management “The capacity to improve, including the management of children’s’ services is adequate, with some good features”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good partnerships between agencies to improve health and welfare for children and young people. Good leadership and management of school improvement services and effective participation by schools

There are also some things, which were agreed as requiring further improvement, and these were:

Outcome area	Areas for improvement
Be Healthy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving the oral health of children and young people
Stay Safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving performance against timescales for initial and core assessments Auditing of compliance with safe recruiting practices across agencies Provision to combat domestic violence
Enjoy and Achieve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standards at Key Stage 1 Absence in secondary schools
Make a Positive Contribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addressing the numbers of first-time entrants into the youth justice system, the rate of recidivism and the

Outcome area	Areas for improvement
	proportion of young offenders who are in education, employment and training
Achieve Economic Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improving progress towards developing an area-wide programme for 14-19 learning
Service management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Embedding performance management across all service areas ▪ Ensuring a sufficient proportion of local authority resources is allocated to children's service, in the light of demographic pressures and falling rolls

8. GOWM confirmed the view of the Minister in their letter dated 8 November 2007 which is attached as Appendix 3.
9. Subsequently, a 'Priorities Meeting' was held with key partners and GOWM and the following are key areas which will be used to inform the new Children and Young People's Plan in 2008 and also the 'Local Area Agreement' Priorities and future funding decisions:
 - Improve dental health of children and young people
 - Increase the percentage of initial assessments completed in timescale
 - Improve educational attainment, particularly at Key Stages 1 and 2
 - Reduce offending of young people
 - Deliver the revised strategy for a coherent area-wide 14-19 curriculum
 - Deliver an effective strategy for education, employment and training of 16-19 year olds, particularly vulnerable groups
10. There are established patterns of monitoring and reporting performance of the Children's Trust and the Directorate, both with the Cabinet Member and the Children Services' Scrutiny Committee. The newly established Quarterly Performance Report forms the basis of this.
11. It is important to monitor progress carefully as there is still much developmental work to be completed. The close working relationship with GOWM will be a requirement of all local authorities as they develop their Children's Trust arrangements and it is clear that Herefordshire now has a much more positive relationship with GOWM on which to build.

Alternative Options

No alternative options proposed.

Risk Management

Consultees

Not applicable.

Appendices

1. Improvement Board minutes of meetings dated: 27 June and 21 September 2007

2. APA Letter

3. GOWM formal notification letter of the Minister's decision regarding formal intervention.

Background Papers

Previous improvement reports to Cabinet.