

## EXECUTIVE

**DATE:** 5TH JANUARY 2009

**SUBJECT:** ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES 2008

**REPORT BY:** CORPORATE DIRECTOR, CHILDREN & LEARNING

**CONTACT OFFICER:** GAVIN SANDMANN TEL 548021

### IMPLICATIONS:

LEGAL	✓	STAFFING	
EQUALITIES	✓	COMMUNITY SAFETY	
FINANCIAL	✓	RISKS	✓

### OTHER

### CONSULTATIONS:

COUNCILLORS CONSULTED	SCRUTINY COMMITTEE CONSULTED
STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTED	OTHER

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**WARDS AFFECTED:** ALL

**LEAD EXECUTIVE MEMBER(S):** CLLR T KHAN AND CLLR S RODEN

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### RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. Executive is recommended to:
  - i) note the report, and
  - ii) agree the content of the draft action plan attached as Appendix A to the report.

### REPORT

2. An annual performance assessment (APA) is undertaken every year in children's service authorities by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted).

3. The APA focuses on the contribution that the **council's services** have made in the previous twelve months towards improving outcomes for children and young people.
4. It analyses a wide range of published evidence, including data, indicators, the council's Children and Young People's Plan, any reviews of this plan and other reference or supporting information. Inspectors discuss any issues that have arisen during the analysis of information with senior managers from the council.
5. The views of children and young people are also collected as part of the annual performance assessment process. Children and young people in randomly selected primary and secondary schools complete a confidential online questionnaire. A short report is produced of all the responses which forms part of the information considered for the assessment.
6. Ratings are made on the overall effectiveness of children's services along with grades for the five outcomes for children and young people and a rating for the council's capacity to improve. The children's services grade provides the score for the children and young people service block of the comprehensive performance assessment (CPA) in 2008.
7. Luton's 2008 APA scores, published on 17<sup>th</sup> December, are:

#### **Grades**

**4: outstanding; 3: good; 2: adequate; 1: inadequate**

<b>Assessment judgement area</b>	<b>APA grade</b>
Overall effectiveness of children's services	<b>3</b>
Being healthy	<b>3</b>
Staying safe	<b>3</b>
Enjoying and achieving	<b>3</b>
Making a positive contribution	<b>3</b>
Achieving economic well-being	<b>3</b>
Capacity to improve, including the management of services for children and young people	<b>3</b>

8. On each of these judgement areas the inspectors have concluded that the authority's contribution to improving outcomes for children and young people is good.

## Summary of findings

9. The published report highlighted a number of major strengths. These include:
  - the majority of schools and early years settings are graded good or better for their overall effectiveness and there are no council schools or early years settings currently in a category of concern
  - child protection procedures operate well and all children subject to child protection plans are appropriately allocated and reviewed
  - standards at Key Stage 1 are better than in similar councils in reading, writing, and maths, and GCSE pass rates are improving at a faster rate than other similar councils
  - healthy lifestyles are well-promoted in schools with the authority reaching the national target for schools achieving Healthy School status
  - teenage conceptions continue to fall annually and are now considerably lower than the national average
  - the work of the youth offending service is good
  - good and increasing opportunities for children and young people to express their views in schools and across the council
  - the overall proportion of young people who are 'not in education, employment or training' (NEET) has fallen and is now below the national average
  - the council's capacity to improve its services for children and young people is good.
10. The report also identified a number of areas for development. These are set out in the attached draft action plan (see Appendix A).
11. The 2008 APA represents further evidence of the effectiveness of the Council's and its partners' work to improve outcomes for children and young people, helping to ensure that they are safe, healthy and successful in Luton. Staff in schools, the Children & Learning department, other Council departments, voluntary organisations and partner agencies are thanked for their contributions to helping secure this outcome and for their future efforts to improve services for children and young people in the town.
12. On December 8th the Chief Inspector of Ofsted wrote to Chief Executives of Children's services Authorities in England asking them to validate the reliability and accuracy of APA performance information supplied by their Local Authority this year. This letter was sent in the wake of the issues being identified in Haringey following the tragic death of Baby P. The Chief Executive, in consultation with the Corporate Director of Children and Learning, was able to send such a verification informing the Chief Inspector of the robust performance quality, management and monitoring procedures being used in Luton.
13. Furthermore the Corporate Director - Children and Learning, in the wake of the Baby P case, has conducted a thorough review of child protection in Luton. Luton remains focussed on maintaining the highest levels of protection a local Authority can provide and will continue to seek improvement whenever

evidence suggests it can be made. Regular reports have been provided to the portfolio holder(s) on this matter.

14. From 2009, APAs will be replaced by a new inspection system – the Comprehensive Area Assessment – that will ensure a stronger focus on front-line practice, including annual unannounced inspection visits in every local authority to complement a three year more intensive programme of inspection. These will be used to bring forward full inspections where there are concerns about the welfare and safeguarding of children.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

15. The Finance Manager, Children and Learning confirms there are no financial implications contained within this report, 18<sup>th</sup> December 2008.

### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

16. Ofsted is required under Section 138 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to undertake an annual inspection of children's services. Richard Stevens, Legal Services has seen and cleared this report, 18<sup>th</sup> December 2008.

### **RISK IMPLICATIONS**

17. Failure to build on the APA and bring about improvements to services across the partnership would seriously jeopardise outcomes at a subsequent inspection, potentially leading to an outsourcing of services.

### **EQUALITIES, INCLUSION AND COHESION IMPLICATIONS**

18. Issues around equality, diversity and community cohesion are key areas for an APA. Serving such a diverse community, children's services in Luton need to be culturally sensitive. This was agreed by the departmental equalities officer on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2008.

### **OPTIONS**

19. Executive can:
  - i) note the report;
  - ii) agree the content of the draft action plan; or
  - iii) do neither, and ask for more information.

### **APPENDIX**

20. Appendix A - APA draft action plan 2009/10

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

21. Annual performance assessment of services for children and young people in Luton Borough Council 2008 – published by Ofsted on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2008.