

**COMMITTEE:** CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY

**DATE:** 20 FEBRUARY 2007

**SUBJECT:** C & Y P<sup>1</sup>: SELECTION OF A TOPIC FOR SCRUTINY

**REPORT BY:** SCRUTINY OFFICER

**CONTACT OFFICER:** FAUZIA SAEED (CONTACT NO: 546780)

**IMPLICATIONS:**

**LEGAL**

**COMMUNITY SAFETY**

**EQUALITIES**

**ENVIRONMENT**

**FINANCIAL**

**CONSULTATIONS**

**STAFFING**

**OTHER**

**WARDS AFFECTED: NONE**

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### **PURPOSE**

1. To select a range of topics for scrutiny by this committee and if possible to scope the first topic. (Scoping questions and the 6 stage scrutiny process are attached as Appendices 2 & 3).
2. To receive the Annual Performance Assessment of services for children showing the current strengths and weaknesses in services to Children and Young People. (Attached as Appendix 4)
3. To agree good practice authorities from which Members would like to receive a presentation and those that are appropriate to visit using the proposed methodology for selecting good practice authorities that Luton can learn from.(Appendix 5)
4. To submit a selection of topics related to the Every Child Matters Agenda that are being scrutinised by other local authorities.

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<sup>1</sup> Children and Young People

5. To agree to explore the possibility of setting up a Children and Young People's scrutiny group to assist with the scrutiny of Every Child Matters Agenda.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

6. **The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:**
  - (i) **Agree a range of topics for scrutiny to set a work programme for the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.**
  - (ii) **Indicate the first topic that the committee would like to scrutinise.**
  - (iii) **Using the selection methodology indicate the good practice authorities from which they would like to receive a presentation in relation to the selected topics and those that merit a visit.**
  - (iv) **Authorise the setting up of a young people's scrutiny group to assist with the Scrutiny of Children and Young people.**
  - (v) **Consider including the topic suggested by the LGBT<sup>2</sup> Equalities Forum in the list of topics for scrutiny.**

## **BACKGROUND**

7. This Scrutiny Committee came into being by bringing together the children and youth responsibilities of the former Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee and responsibilities towards Children from the Social Inclusion Scrutiny Committee. Leisure was also included in its remit. These changes were made in order to bring all matters related to Children and Young People under the umbrella of a single committee. Many other Local Authorities have adopted the same approach.

## **TOPIC SELECTION**

8. Topic selection is of crucial importance to the success of a scrutiny. A considered choice of topics will benefit the users of the service, extend the democratic base, and motivate those involved in the provision of the service to aspire to excellence. Poor selection of topics on the other hand can waste Member and Officer time, result in unconstructive outcomes, demotivate those involved, and is a lost opportunity to receive feedback from users, good practice authorities, members, and other experts and practitioners to improve services.

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<sup>2</sup> Equality Group set up for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people in Luton.

9. Apart from the Every Child Matters Agenda the selection of topics can also be influenced and informed by sources such as:

- a) The views of the Children and Young people of Luton
- b) Corporate Priorities outlined in Luton Children and Young People's Plan
- c) New legislation
- d) Member suggestions
- e) Officer suggestions
- f) Area Committee Referrals.
- g) Suggestions from Partners.
- h) Internal or External Review of Service e.g. Annual performance Assessments.
- i) Reference from the Executive.
- j) Government or other watch bodies.
- k) Suggestions from the C&YP 's Strategic and Safeguarding Boards.
- l) Suggestions from the Equality Forums.

#### **A SELECTION OF TOPICS PLANNED/OR COMPLETED BY OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITIES**

10. Some of the topics currently being scrutinised by other local authorities are listed below. This list will give the committee an idea of the nature of scrutinies being held across the country. It also highlights common areas of concern such as:

- a) Improvement of the recruitment of Social Workers within Children' s Services
- b) Looked after children (various aspects)
- c) Obesity amongst Children and young people
- d) Special Educational Needs Provision
- e) School Meals
- f) School Workforce Reforms
- g) Teenage Pregnancy
- h) Primary Care Trust & Children's Health Services
- i) Children's NHS Foundation Trust - Financial Savings Measures
- j) Children's Patient & Public Involvement Forum Annual Report
- k) Maternal Health/Maternity Services
- l) School Playing Field Disposal Policy
- m) Children's Dental Health
- n) Key Stage 1-4 Attainment (including a focus on black and minority ethnic pupils)
- o) Quality and Improvement Support Service Reorganisation
- p) School Organisation Plan
- q) Parenting Strategy

11. The committee is requested to set a work programme by selecting and prioritising a range of topics bearing in mind the objectives of the Every Child Matters Agenda. The service priorities also need to be borne in mind so that the committee's work will be of added value to the work that is already being implemented for improving performance. Please see a table on the strengths and areas for improvement produced by the Service attached as Appendix 4.
12. In order to include suggestions from the Equality Groups, the Council's scrutiny section has been trying to approach the Equality Forums to reach out to them and seek suggestions for scrutiny topics. A specific suggestion has been put forward by the LGBT Group to this committee to consider selecting the impact of homophobia and homophobic bullying on the educational attainment of young Lesbian and Gay people in Luton as a topic for scrutiny.
13. Research has shown that the issue is quite well documented and other local authorities have conducted scrutiny of this topic. If the Committee decides to choose this as a topic for one of their initial scrutinies it will be vital to consider involving young Lesbian and Gay People in the Scrutiny.
14. The other forums have as yet made no suggestions specific to children and young people in Luton. Further attempts will be made during the year to seek their suggestions for scrutiny topics.
15. The Scrutiny Officer is due to attend the next Children's Panel to seek the views of the young people in relation to topics for scrutiny on the 13 February. Hence, she will be able to report orally the suggestions to this committee on the 20 February.

#### **TOPICS SUGGESTED BY THE DIRECTOR AND HIS SENIOR MANAGERS TEAM**

16. The Director of Children and Learning advised this committee on where Luton was at the moment in relation to outcomes for children in Luton as follows:

#### **SERVICE PRIORITIES**

The following service priorities have been identified:

- a. Reducing above average number of Looked After Children
- b. Long-term stability of Looked After Children
- c. Absence from school of Looked After Children
- d. Time lines of reviews of Looked After Children
- e. Teenage Pregnancy
- f. Financial pressures within Health
- g. Underperforming groups in Education

- h. Bullying strategies
- i. Rates of referrals to Social Care
- j. Completion of initial assessments
- k. Reducing re-offending rates
- l. Recruitment and retention of social work and teaching staff
- m. Workforce strategy
- n. Campus Luton impact on raising attainment
- o. Multi-agency performance management
- p. Joint Commissioning Statement
- q. Education Standards

Learning from Councils achieving a score of “4” in Annual Performance Assessments

### **LUTON’S 5 PRIORITIES**

Agencies in Luton (Children & Young Persons Strategic Board) have agreed that the following issues should be looked at:

- a. Immunisation and Vaccinations
- b. Obesity
- c. Children with Disabilities
- d. Raising Educational Achievement
- e. Improving support for vulnerable families/children

### **JOINED UP PROCESSES**

- a. Children’s Database
- b. School Liaison Meetings
- c. Multi-agency Family Support Panels
- d. Common Assessment Framework
- e. Lead Professional
- f. Cross Service evaluation of schools

### **TOPIC SELECTION PITFALLS**

Some of the pitfalls in selecting a topic are outlined below. Members can reject a topic keeping the following considerations in mind:

- a. The topic selected is too broad
- b. The rationale for the scrutiny is unclear
- c. The topic is of low public concern
- d. The topic does not address aims and priorities
- e. The topic could be adequately addressed by other means and procedures
- f. The topic is already being addressed
- g. Scrutiny is unlikely to result in service improvements
- h. The objectives cannot be achieved within given timescales

17. Members are requested to scope the first topic using the agreed scoping questions template attached as Appendix 3 to this report. The investigation can commence immediately after the meeting has prioritised a list of topics and agreed the first topic that they would like this committee to scrutinise

## **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP**

18. A scrutiny without any input from children and young people is against the grain of inclusion and involvement. Often Adults views do not coincide with those of Young People. It is difficult for Adults to see the issues from their perspective. Scrutiny experience of working with representative groups of older people and people with Learning difficulties by this authority has not only been acknowledged locally but also by some of the external performance assessment organisations. In the past it has also provided feedback from Service Users at a short notice.

## **SCRUTINY PROCESS**

19. The Scrutiny six stage process is attached to this report as Appendix 2 and is also available on the council's website. To assist with the scoping of a scrutiny topic a number of questions that can be asked in relation to a topic have also been appended to this report as a guide (See Appendix 3). This list does not preclude any additional questions.
20. The involvement of children and young people is vital but by no means is it a small task. The involvement of C&YP will also depend on the topic under scrutiny. Members could consider seeking advice from the Children and Learning Directorate on how best this diverse client group can be involved in the scrutinising of services they receive.
21. To assist with the prioritisation of topics the scrutiny officer will produce a matrix plotting the topics and the sources of the suggested topics. This will be sent to Members in advance and tabled at the meeting.
22. Based on the information in this report, previous reports by the Scrutiny Officer and the Director of Children and Learning, Members are requested to choose and prioritise a selection of topics and the top performing authorities they would like to visit and/or receive evidence from at their committee.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

23. There are no legal implications to this report and this has been agreed with the relevant solicitor in Legal Services on 6 February 2007.

## **EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

24. The issue of equalities for children has come to the forefront since the Governments Agenda on Every Child Matters following the Victoria Climbié's Case. This report is about the selection of a topic for scrutiny by the committee and whatever topic is selected the equalities dimension will be addressed. The Scrutiny Department has made a specific attempt to seek the views of all the Equalities Forum for suggesting topics that are of concern to them. The LGBT group has suggested the committee scrutinises the impact of homophobia and the impact of homophobic bullying on the LGBT Children and Young People.

## **APPENDICES**

- APPENDIX 1 - Benchmarking & Best Practice In Children's Services  
APPENDIX 2 - The Six-Stage Scrutiny Process  
APPENDIX 3 - Stage One of the Scrutiny Process - Planning the Scrutiny /A  
Checklist of Scoping Questions  
APPENDIX 4 - 2006 Annual Performance Assessment of Services for Children  
and Young People in Luton Borough Council - Key Strengths and  
Areas for Improvement  
APPENDIX 5 - Aspects for Focus in A Future Joint Area Review or the next  
Annual Performance Assessment Report<sup>3</sup>  
APPENDIX 6 - Methodology For Selecting Authorities To Explore Best Practice  
APPENDIX 7 – Topic Selection Matrix

## **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972, SECTION 100D**

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<sup>3</sup> Annual Performance Assessment Report

## APPENDIX 1

Performance data is available from organisations such as:

1. **BENCHMARKING & BEST PRACTICE IN CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

Data for most performance indicators in Children & Learning is available by local authority and can be analysed to show the result, rank and by comparative authorities. There are different sources for this information primarily as follows:

2. **SOCIAL CARE INDICATORS** CSCI Performance Assessment Data and Information (PADI) tool showing data for each year (latest: 2005/6)
3. **DfES** statistical releases for each of the statutory returns
4. **EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, ABSENCES AND EXCLUSIONS:**  
DfES statistical releases

### **BENCHMARKING & BEST PRACTICE IN CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

Data for most performance indicators in Children & Learning are available by local authority and can be analysed to show the result, rank and by comparative authorities. There are different sources for this information primarily as follows:

#### **Social Care Indicators:**

CSCI<sup>4</sup> Performance Assessment Data and Information (PADI) tool showing data for each year (latest: 2005/6)

DfES statistical releases for each of the statutory returns

#### **Educational Attainment, Absences and Exclusions:**

DfES statistical releases

#### **Youth Offending:**

Quarterly league table produced showing all youth offending services (156) produced by the Youth Justice Board.

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<sup>4</sup> Commission for Social Care Inspection



## APPENDIX 2

### THE SIX-STAGE SCRUTINY PROCESS

	Stage	Details
1	<u>PLANNING</u> Scoping, planning, method, evidence, witnesses, stakeholders, publicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define the scope of the topic; identify all the aspects, which need to be considered but exclude those which should not.</li> <li>• Plan how the study is going to be carried out, decide what information is required and who should be called as witnesses to give evidence.</li> <li>• Identify people and organisations who have an interest in the topic and should be invited/involved/consulted.</li> <li>• Decide whether and how the work of the panel should be publicised.</li> <li>• Plan the process for collecting evidence and interviewing witnesses (e.g. whole panel, individual Members etc.)</li> </ul>
2	<u>EVIDENCE</u> Evidence and information gathering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carry out the plan, site visits if appropriate,</li> <li>• consult stakeholders to find out their views,</li> <li>• collect information</li> </ul>
3	<u>REVIEWING</u> Analyse the evidence/information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify any gaps in the evidence or information, follow up to fill the gaps,</li> <li>• check any information or evidence which conflicts,</li> <li>• Identify common threads.</li> </ul>
4	<u>CONCLUDING</u> Reach conclusions and formulate recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conclusions should be based on the evidence and information.</li> <li>• Consult stakeholders about the recommendations.</li> </ul>
5	<u>REPORTING</u> Report preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare and agree a report to the Executive/Council.</li> <li>• The report should describe the work that has been done, summarise the evidence and information about the topic, justify the conclusions based on the evidence and argue the case for any recommendations.</li> </ul>
6	<u>MONITORING &amp; REVIEW</u> Monitoring the outcomes from the review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decide how and when to follow up on the recommendations.</li> <li>• Call for an action plan to be developed if considered appropriate.</li> <li>• Set a date or frequency for follow up that is realistic (base the frequency or interval on the timescales in the action plan so that some actions have been implemented by the first review).</li> <li>• If the results of the review are unsatisfactory make further recommendations for consideration.</li> </ul>

## **APPENDIX 3**

### **STAGE ONE OF THE SCRUTINY PROCESS - PLANNING THE SCRUTINY A CHECKLIST OF SCOPING QUESTIONS**

1. What is the purpose and objective of the scrutiny?
2. What is the scope of the topic – what is included/excluded?
3. What evidence and information would be useful?
4. Who is interested in or affected by this topic/service?
5. Who are the main players in this service?
6. Who should be consulted about this topic/service?
7. Who should be asked to give evidence to the Committee?
8. How is the scrutiny to be conducted?
9. Should individual Members be nominated to deal with specific aspects?
10. What should the timescale be?
11. What level of publicity is appropriate for this topic?
12. What are the resource implications of carrying out this Scrutiny?

## 2006 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN LUTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

### Key strengths and areas for improvement

Key strengths	Key areas for improvement
<b>Being healthy:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inter-agency collaboration to improve health</li> <li>• Healthy lifestyles/healthy schools</li> <li>• Health input into children's centres.</li> </ul>	<b>Being healthy:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teenage pregnancy rate</li> <li>• Identification of hard to reach families</li> <li>• Financial pressures within health.</li> </ul>
<b>Enjoying and achieving:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No permanent exclusions of looked after children</li> <li>• The number of looked after children who gain one GCSE and five or more higher grade GCSEs</li> <li>• Percentage of young people leaving care with five or more good GCSEs</li> <li>• Preparation for primary SIP was seen as outstanding</li> <li>• The vast majority of permanently excluded pupils receive at least 20 hours tuition a week, well above the national average.</li> </ul>	<b>Enjoying and achieving:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the numbers of looked after children absent from school</li> <li>• Below national average standards in all key stages</li> <li>• Improve standards in mathematics in Key Stages 2 to 4.</li> </ul>
<b>Making a positive contribution:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved opportunities for children and young people to participate in the planning and provision of services</li> <li>• Consultation booklet for reviews of looked after children</li> <li>• Being young in Luton Survey.</li> </ul>	<b>Making a positive contribution:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the re-offending rate</li> <li>• Lack of appropriate anti-bullying strategy.</li> </ul>
<b>Achieving economic well-being:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of care leavers in employment, education and training has improved</li> <li>• Increased number of children's centres</li> <li>• Reduction in the number of young people not in employment and education</li> <li>• Some 90% of children with disabilities have a transition plan</li> <li>• Increase in the number of direct payments for children with disabilities</li> <li>• Funding of voluntary organisations to signpost families towards financial aid</li> <li>• Extended curriculum choices via consortiums and Campus Luton.</li> </ul>	<b>Achieving economic well-being:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure value for money for 14-19 provision</li> <li>• Raise standards on level 3 courses.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Management of children's services:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustained effective partnership working</li> <li>• Clear CYPP with contributions from all stakeholders</li> <li>• Member commitment</li> <li>• Equality impact assessments</li> <li>• Targets linked to performance management at a service level</li> <li>• Performance is aligned with cost</li> <li>• Improvement in practice learning and qualification levels</li> <li>• School advisory team.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Management of children's services:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment and retention of social work and teaching staff.</li> <li>• Joint commissioning strategy</li> <li>• Multi-agency performance management frameworks.</li> </ul>
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## APPENDIX 5

### ASPECTS FOR FOCUS IN A FUTURE JOINT AREA REVIEW OR THE NEXT APA<sup>4</sup>

- a. • Timeliness of initial assessments.
- b. • Attendance of looked after children.
- c. • Progress with workforce strategy.
- d. • Progress with commissioning strategy.
- e. • Multi-agency performance management.
- f. • Education standards at all levels.
- g. • Impact of Campus Luton on raising attainment.

**METHODOLOGY FOR SELECTING AUTHORITIES TO EXPLORE BEST PRACTICE**

1. Select the topic or performance issue to be explored.
2. Rank authorities latest performance using the appropriate performance indicator(s) relating to the topic. Consider top 10-15 ranked authorities (if numerator/denominator available, be mindful of statistical significance in looking at actual performance).
3. Of those, select those that have had APA judgements as being a 'good' or better authority. Identify which are comparator or most similar Authorities.
4. Conduct initial exploration of reasons for good performance and willingness for further approach.
5. The result should be a list of a small number of authorities, perhaps no more than 3 authorities to explore further with visits and to get process and practice information and further performance analysis.

<b>Topics</b>	<b>Scrutiny by other authorities</b>	<b>Service Priorit ies</b>	<b>C&amp;YPS B<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>Equality Forum (LGBT)</b>	<b>APA Indication (swot)</b>
1. Bullying Strategies – special reference to the impact of Homophobic bullying and its impact on educational attainment	Y	Y(Campus Luton)	N	Y	Y
2. Children's Health	Y(Dental Health only)	Y	Immuni sations		Y
3. Children's NHS Foundation Trust - Financial Savings Measures	Y				
4. Children's Patient & Public Involvement Forum Annual Report	Y				
5. Children with disabilities	Y	Y	Y		
6. Improvement of the recruitment of Social Workers within Children's Services	Y	N	N		
7. Key Stage 1-4 Attainment (including a focus on black and minority ethnic pupils) esp. Mathematics	Y	Y		Y	Y
8. Looked after children (various aspects)	Y	Y	N		
9. Maternal Health/Maternity Services	Y				
10. School Playing Field Disposal Policy					
11. Obesity amongst Children and young people	Y	Y	Y Healthy lifestyle		Y
12. Parenting Strategy/ 13. Improving Support for Vulnerable Families and Children esp. Hard to Reach	Y	Y	Y		Y
14. Primary Care Trust & Children's Health Services	Y				
15. Reoffending					Y
16. School Meals	Y				
17. School Organisation Plan	Y				
18. School Workforce Reforms	Y				
19. Special Educational Needs Provision	Y				
20. Teenage Pregnancy	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

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