EXECUTIVE

DATE: 12TH MARCH 2007

SUBJECT: EVERY DISABLED CHILD MATTERS: LOCAL AUTHORITY CHARTER

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR, CHILDREN & LEARNING

CONTACT OFFICER: CHRISTINE GOLDSON  548103

IMPLICATIONS:

LEGAL   ✓   STAFFING
EQUALITIES ✓   COMMUNITY SAFETY
FINANCIAL ✓   RISKS

OTHER

CONSULTATIONS:

COUNCILLORS CONSULTED SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
CONSULTED

STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTED OTHER

WARDS AFFECTED: All

LEAD EXECUTIVE MEMBER(S): Children and Learning

RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. Executive is recommended to authorise the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services to sign the Every disabled Child Matters: Local Authority Charter on the Council’s behalf.

REPORT

2. The Every disabled Child Matters campaign challenges councils to sign up to a new charter which commits local authorities to providing a range of services for disabled children and their families by January 2008, and also to addressing the needs of disabled children in their strategic planning and local area agreements.
3. The campaign is being led by four national organisations working with disabled children – Contact a Family; The Council for Disabled Children, Mencap and Special Education Consortium and was launched at the Local government Association / Association of Directors of Social Services Conference in October 2006.

4. The charter was developed following research into Children and Young People’s Plans found a lack of involvement of disabled children and their parents in drawing up plans.

5. The charter focuses on 9 priority areas: see appendix. The Local Authority Charter can also be accessed via the following link: http://www.edcm.org.uk/pdfs/edcm_lacharter.pdf

6. We are currently responding to the Charter in the following ways:

   6.1 In Luton data is collected through the Early Years Panel and Special Education Assessment team and the Disability Register for children and young people with complex needs and disabilities.

   6.2 The Care Coordinator Service is in place for children under 3. This is a multi-agency service offered by staff from education, health and social care. The lead professional role for older children is being developed for older children and young people through the integrated processes pilot in January 2007.

   6.3 The parent partnership service holds an annual parents conference, coffee mornings and training sessions for parents. Working closely with the Behaviour and Tuition Service, the focus of some of the training for parents has been behaviour and exclusion.

   6.4 Parents receive Information from the Edwin Lobo Centre following multi-disciplinary assessments of their child; advice and information is also offered to parents in their homes from professionals working in social care; education and health. The Children’s Information Service is currently developing more accessible information for children with disability and their families, particularly in relation to suitable provision and childminders. The Pursuing Perfection group which includes parents of children at Lady Zia Wernher have developed an information booklet for parents of children with complex needs to be distributed in 2007 and put on CIS website.

   6.5 There is an ongoing programme of staff training related to disability and equality. The professionals working directly with children and young people with complex needs have opportunities to attend specialist training to enhance their skills and knowledge. Information on the support services employed by Children & Learning Department is available to parents and schools. Outreach services from special
schools have been developed to complement work of support services.

6.6 The LBC Disability Equality Scheme has only been in place since December 2006 and included disabled groups in the consultation process. High schools have been encouraged to consult with disabled pupils when developing their equality schemes for December 2006 and we will be working with primary and special schools on this for December 2007.

6.7 The Children and Young People’s plan identifies 5 priority areas; one is ‘Improving services for children with a disability’ and states that services will be integrated, coordinated and tailored to the needs of individuals.

6.8 A wider focus has been adopted for children and young people with disability to encompass their participation in the leisure opportunities and community life.

6.9 Parents of disabled children are involved in service planning and monitoring through the multi agency Pursuing Perfection group at Lady Zia Wernher school; the parent’s reference group and parent’s conference; Autism steering group; evaluation of care coordinator service and support from SEN team for under 5’s.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7. There are no legal implications to this report. The Council’s solicitor has seen and cleared this report on 14th February 2007.

EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

8. The Charter confirms Luton’s commitment to meeting the needs of Children with Disability and their families.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9. There are no financial implications contained within this report. The Finance Manager, Children and Learning, has seen and cleared this report 13th February 2007.

APPENDIX

Local Authority charter attached

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Disability Discrimination Act 2005
LBC Disability Equality Scheme December 2006
Children and Young People’s Plan 2006-2009
Local Authority Charter

By January 2008, we will ensure that in our authority...

- We know how many disabled children live in our area and that all agencies in our area are planning services on the basis of this knowledge.
- There is a key worker service in our authority providing support to families who are accessing more than one specialist service.
- Our parent partnership service is sufficiently resourced to provide advice, information and support to parents of disabled children and young people who have been excluded from school.
- Parents and carers in our area are getting accurate and timely information and advice on the full range of services available to them and their families.
- All staff have received both disability equality training and training to ensure that they have core competencies to work with disabled children; relevant staff have received specialist training and other staff know how to contact them for information.
- Disabled children are involved in drawing up our Disability Equality Scheme and also in monitoring its effectiveness in eliminating discrimination.
- Our Children and Young People’s Plan explains how we will provide specialist services and also make all universal services including extended schools and children’s centres accessible to disabled children.
- Our Local Area Agreement includes targets for the level of service to be delivered to families with a disabled child.
- Disabled children and families are involved in the planning, commissioning and monitoring of services in our area, including both specialist and universal services.

Signed

Lead Member for Children’s Services (or equivalent)
NAME OF LOCAL AUTHORITY HERE