



DERBY CITY COUNCIL

COUNCIL CABINET
19 February 2008

ITEM 25

Report of the Cabinet Member for Corporate
Policy and the Cabinet Member for Children
and Young People

**Corporate Assessment and Joint Area Review of Children and
Young People's Services**

SUMMARY

- 1.1 During September and October 2007 a Corporate Assessment – CA - of the Council and a Joint Area Review - JAR - of children's services in Derby City were conducted. The Corporate Assessment Team comprised of Audit Commission inspectors as well as a Peer Member and a Peer Officer. The Joint Area Review Team comprised representatives from OfSTED, the Healthcare Commission, and the Audit Commission.
- 1.2 The CA Team assessed the Council against four corporate themes of ambition, prioritisation, capacity and performance management as well as achievement in four areas – sustainable communities and transport, safer and stronger communities, healthier communities and older people. The fifth achievement area – children and young people – was assessed as part of the Joint Area Review.
- 1.3 The JAR inspection team assessed the contribution of local services to securing good outcomes for children and young people. The inspection findings were also informed by the outcome of the Annual Performance Assessment - APA of Children's Services.

RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To note the positive outcome of the Corporate Assessment of the Council.
- 2.2 To note the positive outcomes and judgements of the 2007 Joint Area Review of Children and Young People's Services particularly on quality of services provided to children, young people and their families by the Council, other statutory agencies and wider partnership.
- 2.3 Areas for improvement identified in the Corporate Assessment Report will be addressed as part of the Transforming Derby programme.
- 2.4 Recommendations from the JAR inspection report will be addressed in plans for 2008/09 and beyond, particularly in the new Children and Young People's Plan for 2008 – 2011.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is the expectation of the Audit Commission and OfSTED that the CA report and the JAR report will be presented to an 'open meeting of the relevant executive committee of the Council'.

Corporate Assessment and Joint Area Review of Children and Young People's Services

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 1.1 The Corporate Assessment – CA – and the Joint Area Review - JAR - took place during three weeks in September and October 2007. The first week of the assessments in September covered initial fact-finding, data analysis and preliminary interviews with lead officers to set the scene and shape the full inspections to be carried out over two weeks in October.
- 1.2 Pre-publication copies of the Corporate Assessment Report and the Joint Area Review Report are included at Appendix 2 and Appendix 3 to this report. Both reports are strictly embargoed until they are published by the Audit Commission and OfSTED on 19 February 2008

Corporate Assessment

- 1.3 The purpose of the Corporate Assessment is to assess how well the Council engages with and leads its communities, delivers community priorities in partnership with others, and ensures continuous improvement across the range of Council activities.
- 1.4 Overall the Council was judged to be performing well with an overall score of 3 for the Corporate Assessment. In the last Corporate Assessment in 2004 the Council was also rated as a 3. New rules known as 'the harder test' introduced in 2005 means that to retain our current rating is a significant achievement. The scores for the individual blocks which make up the assessment show that we have also improved, particularly in relation to our ambition.

Theme	Score
Ambition	4
Prioritisation	3
Capacity	3
Performance Management	3
Achievement	3
Overall Corporate Assessment Score	3*

*The Corporate Assessment score feeds into the overall Comprehensive Performance Assessment – CPA – score which is currently four stars.

- 1.5 The Corporate Assessment Team identified three areas for improvement. These are...
- The need to strengthen neighbourhood level communication so that we can widen neighbourhood participation and engagement.
 - The need to capture and use all customer contact data to ensure services best meet need.
 - The need to refocus our approach to consultation and engagement to ensure older people's wider needs, for example in relation to active ageing, are fully understood and integrated into our priorities.

Joint Area Review

- 1.6 The JAR took place at the same as the Annual Performance Assessment – APA. The outcomes of the 2006 APA informed the focus of the 2007 JAR investigations. The outcome of the 2007 APA contributed to the findings in the JAR report and the JAR report in turn informed the final grading and outcome of the CPA.
- 1.7 Unlike the APA, which was an assessment of universal services and how well they met all aspects of the five Every Child Matters framework, the JAR was a more in-depth and focused inspection on particular vulnerable groups.
- 1.8 The JAR was based very significantly on self-evaluation, inspection and data analysis of the performance of partners. In addition to this, a large amount of documentation and data collection was also required by the inspection teams. The inspection aimed to validate and challenge our local judgements through a demanding programme of interviews, site visits and focus groups.
- 1.9 The JAR inspection assessed the contribution of local services in ensuring the needs of three particular vulnerable groups were reviewed:
- effective care for those at risk or requiring safeguarding
 - the best possible outcomes for those who are looked after
 - the best possible outcomes for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The effectiveness of meeting the needs of these groups is common to all JAR inspections. In addition, two focused investigations were also carried out:

- access to and the effectiveness of sexual health services for children and young people, including teenage pregnancy support
- the quality, availability and suitability of accommodation for young people.

These additional investigations and field work were identified through data analysis, and performance information from partner agencies and organisations.

As a part of the focused scrutiny, the case files of ten children and young people from the Children and Young People's Department and those from partner agencies were examined in depth. The inspection team in particular sought evidence of how well agencies worked together to meet children, young people and their families needs.

Judgements were also made on the quality of service management and capacity to improve.

- 1.10 Overall services to children, young people and their families were graded 3 – good. The following is a summary of the individual grade inspections from the report.

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

	Local services overall
Safeguarding	3
Looked after children	3
Learning difficulties and/or disabilities	3
Service management	3
Capacity to improve	3

- 1.11 The recommendations and detailed commentary on important weakness identified in the report will be addressed through business planning for the Children and Young People's Department. Other areas for improvement need to be identified through the review of the Children and Young People's Plan 2008 – 11 and partnership working through the City for Children and Young People.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

2 None

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Joint Area Review

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Background papers: None

List of appendices: Appendix 1 – Implications

Appendix 2 – Pre-publication copy of the Corporate Assessment Report – to be tabled at meeting
Appendix 2 – Pre-publication copy of the Joint Area Review – Derby City Children's Services Authority Area – to be tabled at meeting

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

- 1 None to this report

Legal

- 2 The statutory processes relating to the CA and JAR are noted in the report.

Personnel

- 3 None

Equalities impact

- 4 None

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 5 The CA assessed the Council in relation to its delivery of all of its priorities.

The JAR assessed performance across the range of services for children and young people and the five outcomes in the Every Child Matters framework. These can be seen to relate to all six of the priorities in the current Corporate Plan, given the all-embracing nature of the children and young people's agenda.