

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Children & Families Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 14 September 2009
Report of: Strategic Director, People
Subject/Title: Performance and Outcome Reporting Arrangements :
Children & Families

1.0 Report Summary

1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline the interim arrangements for the reporting of performance across Children & Families Services. The information outlined should be seen as interim for three reasons.

- (a) There needs to be considerable work undertaken within C & F services to align various performance data systems to create a universal, accessible and live reporting structure. This must deliver monthly, quarterly etc information that can be used by members, officers and service teams to determine progress and then necessary levels of support and challenge across schools, services and settings.
- (b) To take the opportunity to establish a performance reporting system which adopts a common format across the People Directorate. This would create a consistency in reporting through to various committees and help to support the overall monitoring of the wider Corporate Business Plan.
- (c) To review and align the C & F reporting arrangements with the needs and expectations of Partners and Partnerships for example, Children's Trust, Local Safeguarding Children Board, Local Area Partnerships etc.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 It is for the Scrutiny Committee to note and comment on the interim arrangements in terms of the template presented for a C&F Performance Reporting Score Card (Appendix A). These interim arrangements will run through to the end of Quarter 2 (September) following which a revised format will be proposed which has a more integrated and graphical format. Appendix B presents an option in terms of a future reporting format which will be presented to Committee later this term.
- 2.2 Members are invited to feedback views on the reporting format from the example given.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 The proposed interim arrangements as shown within Appendix A have only been in existence since April 2009 and therefore this process at an early stage

of development. Previously within Cheshire County Council, no overall report card system was in place which captured performance in this format. This reporting structure will bring Cheshire East in line with most other Local Authorities in its overall reporting arrangements and this is a positive step forward at an early stage of the new Council.

4.0 Wards Affected

4.1 All localities will be affected by this reporting framework. Ultimately, Ward information will be presented which will allow clear comparative information to be available which will highlight areas of high performance/outcomes as well as those which may identify real areas of need and therefore potential additional support and development.

5.0 Local Ward Members

5.1 None identified

6.0 Policy Implications including - Climate change - Health

6.1 The Corporate Plan outlines the organisation's 20 priorities which reflect the needs to our communities. These priorities are aligned to local partnership arrangements as part of the Local Area Agreement. The proposed reporting template will include many of these priority areas (in the majority of cases, through identified National Indicators) as they apply to C&F and the direct work of service teams.

6.2 In creating the format and style of the interim score card, it has been a deliberate decision to maintain a real sense of priority and avoid a format which includes over-elaborated detail and information. Through discussion with key performance managers, the following priority areas have been agreed:

- 6 Local Area Agreement National Indicators
- 10 Statutory National Indicators
- 8 Other critical National Indicators
- A variety of other locally identified priority areas.

7.0 Financial Implications for Transition Costs (Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)

7.1 None

8.0 Financial Implications 2009/10 and beyond (Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)

8.1 The establishment of an effective and robust performance reporting regime will require an evaluation of the job descriptions of staff identified within the Quality assurance section of the Improvement & Achievement Service. There will be some integration of personnel across different teams which may result in some

financial savings as clarity is reached over the size and function of performance staffing.

9.0 Legal Implications (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)

- 9.1 The proposed reporting system will enable the Authority to meet its statutory and non statutory reporting obligations regarding performance against key indicators.

10.0 Risk Management

- 10.1 The key risk is that without a structured and ultimately integrated performance reporting system, the Local Authority would not be in a position to report accurately on its performance against key indicators and undertake a quarterly review of progress.

11.0 Background and Options

- 11.1 The use of a Performance Score Card has been adopted across numerous organisations over recent years and is now in common use across Children's Services in other Local Authorities. There are various styles and formats for these reporting systems but primarily the format highlights the following information:

- a. The key priority areas for the Service generally shown against National Indicators and often classified against ECM outcomes.
- b. Against each priority, progress data often shown graphically is presented which illustrates progress over the last quarter and compared to previous reported time periods.
- c. Commentary in terms of explanation or identification of trends as illustrated in the data presented.
- d. Crucially, actions required resulting from the trends and data presented often including an appropriate timescale and staffing responsibilities.

- 11.2 Since April 2009, a group of staff have been responding to the Score Card agenda and have created an interim template which captures the key corporate priority areas and which identifies trends, actions and staffing responsibilities. Whilst the format agreed captured these priorities, it was important to see this format as 'work in progress' in that as new service structures and priorities are identified, there will be a need to further rationalise priorities and integrate the template within a wider corporate format.

- 11.3 One of the key drivers for this score card system was the need to create a template which supplied all the relevant data to respond to the variety of national, regional and local returns which are required throughout the year. These returns include such organisations as DCSF, The National Strategies, Government Office North West and Ofsted.

- 11.4 An added complication for Cheshire East in terms of populating the agreed interim score card was the range and diversity of performance data which is

currently stored and accessed across Service Teams. A clear and urgent requirement of C&F will be to significantly streamline data systems so that eventually, the Service will operate with a small number of integrated IT systems which are fit for purpose, accessible to all and contribute to informing staff of the outcomes of their work and the priorities for the future.

- 11.5 There are plans to hold an initial meeting in early September (which will result in the formation of a Performance Steering Group) to begin the process of aligning C&F performance systems with those across other parts of the service. This work is being coordinated through Pauline Walsh (People Directorate lead on Commissioning and Standards).

Options

- 11.6 Whilst it is proposed that the interim score card template is accepted until the end of Quarter 2, work continues to be developed in finding a more universal format which can be applied across the Directorate. The two further appendices show two current formats that will be considered over the coming months. These are:

Appendix B	An excel based structure which identifies specific information for Looked After Children within Cheshire East.
Appendix C	A more comprehensive and established format from Salford City Council which has been identified as good practice and which could be used to establish a longer term format for Cheshire East.

Clearly, these options will be worked upon to develop our reporting format and any proposals will be brought before relevant members and committees.

12.0 Overview of Year One and Term One Issues

- 12.1 If Cheshire East C&F should proceed with the programme, the following milestones would be expected:

- Interim template utilised up to the end of Quarter 2 (end of September)
- Proposals for a revised structure/template to be made available by mid October based upon Appendices B&C.
- A revised Quarter 3 template to be used and evaluated (December)
- Clarification of roles & responsibilities of staff responsible for performance data management (end of October)

13.0 Access to Information

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

Name: Mark Bayley
Designation: Quality Assurance Manager
Tel No: 01244 972411
Email: Mark.bayley@cheshireeast.co.uk