

Leicester
City Council

**WARDS AFFECTED
ALL WARDS (CORPORATE ISSUE)**

FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND MEETINGS:

Cabinet

21st May 2001

**BEST VALUE REVIEW - YEAR TWO
SERVICES TO VULNERABLE CHILDREN
FUNDAMENTAL CHALLENGE, FINAL SCOPE
AND ROUTING FOR THE REVIEW**

Report of the Assistant Director, Children & Family Services

1 BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek Cabinet approval to the outcome of the fundamental challenge stage of the review process, the recommended future routing of the review and the final review scope for services to Vulnerable Children, in accordance with the Best Value Review Process.

1.2 BACKGROUND

The background to this report is common to all other reviews and is addressed in the covering report of the Assistant Chief Executive.

The scope for Services to Vulnerable Children approved by Cabinet remains unchanged and a copy of the original and now final scope is attached in appendix 1 to this report for Member's convenience.

The theme for the review will address the following challenge:

“To advance the delivery of services to Vulnerable Children in order to improve life chances, revitalise neighbourhoods and promote independence”

This is represented diagrammatically within the attached final scope document Appendix 1.

The Review will focus on the service user's experience of the service provided by the Business Units within the Review. Particular attention will be paid to the configuration of services, accessibility, and delivery methods as experienced by service users within the context of the key areas highlighted in Section 3.3.1.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are recommended to:

- (i) To carry out a review of the outcome of the fundamental challenge stage of the review and assure themselves that the process of Best Value has been met.
- (ii) Agree the proposed review routing.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Fundamental Challenge

3.1.1 Analysis of the Services

The provision of services to Vulnerable Children is an area of the Council's responsibilities, which is heavily regulated by statute. At this stage due to the large scale of the review, a full appraisal of all of the services has not been completed. However, it appears that none of the services covered by the review significantly exceed the minimum statutory requirements. It is intended to appraise services from this perspective during the service assessment stage of the review.

However, this is not to say that the manner in which the services are currently delivered is necessarily achieving Best Value when considered against the scope for the review and the 4C's of Best Value. It is intended that the review will examine all service areas to identify where greater efficiencies and quality can be achieved.

The following table identifies whether the services covered by the review are statutory, as defined by legislation, or discretionary. To identify services which may possibly be considered of lower importance to the Council's main objectives, discretionary services have been sub-divided into core i.e. central to one or more of the Council's key strategies or other discretionary i.e. a peripheral service. A more detailed breakdown of the information presented is available from the BV Lead Officer.

Service	Type of service			Level of Service			Justification (Nature of Commitment e.g. ref. to Act.)
	Statutory	Core Discretionary	Other Discretionary	No Change	Reduce	Decommissio	
Children and Family Resources	*			*			Children Act 1989 part (III) (CA,89) Central to the support of Quality Protects Management Action Plan (QPMAP) The Early Years Development and Child Care Plan (EYDCP) Children's Services Plan (CSP) Health Improvement Programme (HImP) Education Development Plan (EDP) Behaviour Support Plan
Adoption	*			*			QPMAP + CSP Children Act 1989 Adoption Act 1976 * Adoption Agencies Regulations 1983 and 1997 Human Rights Act 1998 and Inter-Country Aspects 1999 Act LAC (98) 20 AND LAC (99) 29 and Human Rights Act. 1998
Leaving Care Services	*			*			CA,89 + QPMAP + CSP The Children (leaving care) Act 2000
Children's Residential	*			*			CA,89 + QPMAP + CSP Human Rights Act. 1998
Fostering	*			*			QPMAP + CSP Children Act 1989 Human Rights Act. 1998
Special Needs Teaching Service	*	*		*			Education Development Plan (EDP) Behaviour Support Plan 1996 Education Act
Student Support Service	*	*		*			1996 Education Act SEN Code of Practice EDP Behaviour Support Plan
Special Education Service	*	*		*			1996 Education Act SEN Code of Practice EDP Behaviour Support Plan
Psychology Service	*	*		*			1996 Education Act SEN Code of Practice EDP Behaviour Support Plan
Admissions and Exclusions	*	*		*			EDP Behaviour Support Plan

Early Years	*	*		*			EDP EYDCP
Education Welfare Service	*			*			School Standards and Framework Act 1988 Education Act EDP Behaviour Support Plan
Ethnic Minorities and Traveller Achievement Grants		*		*			EDP Human Rights Act. 1998
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service	*	*		*			CA,89 + QPMAP + CSP +HImP
Shoppers Play Centre			*	*			EYDCP

3.1.2 Specific Issues relating to services

Adoption

All aspects of adoption work will be further determined by the passage of the Adoption and Children Act, expected before the end of this Parliamentary session. There will be a requirement to significantly increase the numbers of adopters recruited and children placed from care. There will be an increase in post adoption placement support required by the new legislation. Changes to regulations and the Adoption National Standards will require tighter time scales in recruitment and placement.

Leaving Care

The “Children Leaving” Care Act 2000 will require and incremental increase in the level and complexity of the service over the next five years.

External Scrutiny

The recent SSI/Audit Commission Joint Review (Social Services) and Ofsted Inspection (Education) have made a number of recommendations regarding future delivery of services. The Review outcomes must be compatible with delivering any formal action plans resulting for each of these inspections.

3.1.3 Decommissioning

At this stage of the review no services have been identified for decommissioning. However, it is envisaged that there will be a considerable challenge to the current configuration of service delivery and provision during

the next stage. Therefore as a result it may be that decommissioning, re-commissioning and reconfiguration is recommended in the improvement plan.

3.2 Final Scope and Strategic Direction

This fundamental challenge does not recommend any change to the scope presented to Cabinet.

3.3 Routing of BV Review

3.3.1 It is recommended that all services within the scope are routed through the service assessment route of the Best Value process. This is fundamentally necessary because the review intends to consider the following key areas:

- The most appropriate departmental and business unit structure and associated systems to deliver high quality, timely, locally accessible and responsive services.
- Ensuring effective user participation and empowerment.
- Removing unnecessary professional boundaries.
- Achieving the most economic and efficient use of available resources through integrated partnerships and strategic alliances

In addition, at present there is an inconsistent application of the corporate Performance Management Framework in so far that, while each service links to one or more key strategic plans, these plans do not always reflect in the individual targets set for front line staff.

Investigation into the application of the Best Value 4C's also shows that their application within different services is inconsistent.

The following table provides a summary of compliance for each service with the Council's Performance Management Framework together with an assessment of performance over the previous 18 months.

Service	How Commissioned	Performance Management				Route PM/SA
		Framework In place Y/N	Range of PI's. Cover out of 8 key areas*	No. PI's	% met	
Children and Family Resources	Internal & Multi Agency Partnerships	Y	5	17	50	SA
Adoption	Internal / Joint arrangement with County	Y	3	11	100	SA
Leaving Care Services	Internal & External	Y	3	5	N/A	SA

Children's Residential	Internal & External	Y	5	11	40	SA
Fostering	Internal & External	Y	3	30	50	SA
Special Needs Teaching Service	Internal	Y	6	22	50	SA
Student Support Service	Internal & External	Y	6	17	24	SA
Special Education Service	Internal & External	Y	4	9	N/A	SA
Psychology Service	Internal	Y	8	17	88	SA
Admissions and Exclusions	Internal	Y	4	9	N/A	SA
Early Years	Internal & External	Y	1	1	46	SA
Education Welfare Service	Internal	Y	3	9	N/A	SA
Ethnic Minorities and Traveller Achievement Grants	Internal	Y	N/A	N/A	N/A	SA
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service	Internal & Multi Agency Partnerships	Y	TBC	TBC	TBC	SA
Shoppers Play Centre	Internal	Y	TBC	TBC	TBC	SA

* key areas are defined in the Assistant Chief Officers covering report page 5 Q4
N/A – Not applicable.
TBC – To be confirmed.

It is intended to isolate the key performance indicators for services to Vulnerable Children, in order to focus the measurement of overall service performance during the service assessment stage.

3.3.2 Summary in terms of the duty to deliver Best Value i.e. evidence of 4C's

Challenge

Each of the services within the scope of the review can demonstrate that they contribute to the Councils strategic aims and objectives. However, the approach is both inconsistent and lacks integration. This issue needs to be challenged within the context of the review.

Through comprehensive consultation the review will consider how the service user accesses and experiences the service with a view to achieve greater integration and reduce duplication.

Compare

Many of the services within the scope use both National and local benchmarking such as PAF indicators in order to assess improvements. However, the application of benchmarking and methodologies for comparison is not uniform. Therefore a coherent overall view of the improving performance of services to Vulnerable Children cannot be achieved at this time. As part of this process a benchmark of expenditure will be undertaken against comparator authorities.

Consult

A number of systems for consultation exist. However these are often service issue specific and are not integrated across business units. Considerable effort will be required to achieve meaningful consultation on both specific services and generic services for Vulnerable Children. It is worth noting that by implication many of the service users receiving these services are socially excluded and consequently hard to reach.

Compete

Given the structural configuration of the business units that provide services to Vulnerable Children, it cannot be demonstrated that the most appropriate means of providing services has been achieved. Therefore, during the review the structure of external business(s) within the market will be assessed, to if they have the potential to provide suitable alternative approaches. This will allow the closest fit for the purpose of judging our competitive position. Certain services are already out sourced and the experience gained will be taken into account.

4 FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The following table illustrates a best estimate of the build up of cost for each service delivered within the scope. Reflecting:

- The minimum cost that is currently incurred in meeting a legally defined statutory minimum service.
- The cost of providing a core discretionary service
- Other additional costs incurred to enhance either a statutory or core service.

Service	Type of service			Total Budget
	Statutory Minimum Cost £k	Core Discretionary Cost £k	Other Discretionary Cost £k	
Children and Family Resources	4288			4288
Adoption	734			734
Leaving Care Services	1592			1592
Children's Residential	6258			6258
Fostering	3236			3236
Special Needs Teaching Service	773	1160		1933
Student Support Service	1160	167		1327
Special Education Service	3798	24		3822
Psychology Service	474	881		1355
Admissions and Exclusions	286			286
Early Years	810			810
Education Welfare Service	589			589
Ethnic Minorities and Traveller Achievement Grants		3645		3645
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service	77			77
Shoppers Play Centre		75		75
Totals	24075	5952		30,027

The following has an effect on the service budgets for the year 2001/2002:

- It is likely, based upon expenditure in 2000/2001, the service budgets profiles for 2001/2002 have the potential to significantly exceeded and this must be considered and challenged within the context of the review.

- There is a significant impact upon the budget for Leaving Care Service for the year 2001/2002 through the inclusion of a Care Leavers Specific Grant of £984k.
- A reduction in SSA of £882k has been made to the overall SSD Children's Services budget. However, at this time the impact upon the budget for services to Vulnerable Children cannot be quantified. (Hence budgets above are overstated by £885K.)
- SSD budgets include all overheads. Education budgets although including staffing on costs excludes external overheads e.g. legal services, IT support etc.

The Chief Financial officer has set out specific financial objectives for consideration in each review, see Assistant Chief Executives covering report. The review will take into account these objectives during the service assessment stage. Some of the services to Vulnerable Children are funded through ring fenced government specific grants. Therefore the future requirement to consider a 2% saving generated by the review will be effected. The focus in the areas funded through these specific grants will be to ensure that grant funding is used to maximum effect in providing Best Value.

The current ring fenced specific grants monies contained within the Review total £984K.

5 **EQUALITIES**

By mainstreaming equalities the review will:

- focus policy objectives on equality and on the effective distribution and delivery of services.
- involve people directly in equality issues, by including equality in all consultation
- ensure peoples equality needs at the heart of change strategies
- increase visibility of equality issues to all stakeholders
- ensure that, as far as possible, we meet our human rights obligations to Vulnerable Children.

Already we know that the take up of Children and Families services is not representative of the demographic profile of the cultural diversity of the community of Leicester. Within the City over half of the 0 to 18 year population is from minority groups whereas the take-up of service from minority groups remains disproportionately low.

The reasons for this will be explored vigorously, together with any other issues that emerge within the context of this review and improvement options put forward. To this end the review will incorporate equalities minimum standards into its assessment process.

6 **SUSTAINABLE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

The review will evaluate, where appropriate, the use of Information and Communications Technology. This will be a key factor when considering the most economic and efficient use of available resources through integrated partnerships and strategic alliances.

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Best Value Review
Scope for Services to Vulnerable Children

The Best Value Review of services to Children and Families will focus on the issue of vulnerable children. It will use the definition set out by the Department of Health in their document a "Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need" namely:

"Vulnerable Children are those disadvantaged children who would benefit from extra help from public agencies in order to make the best of their life chances"

Within this definition it is the duty of the local authority under Part III of The Children Act, 1989 to both safe guard and promote the welfare of vulnerable children.

The review will take place within the context of the following key strategic initiatives:

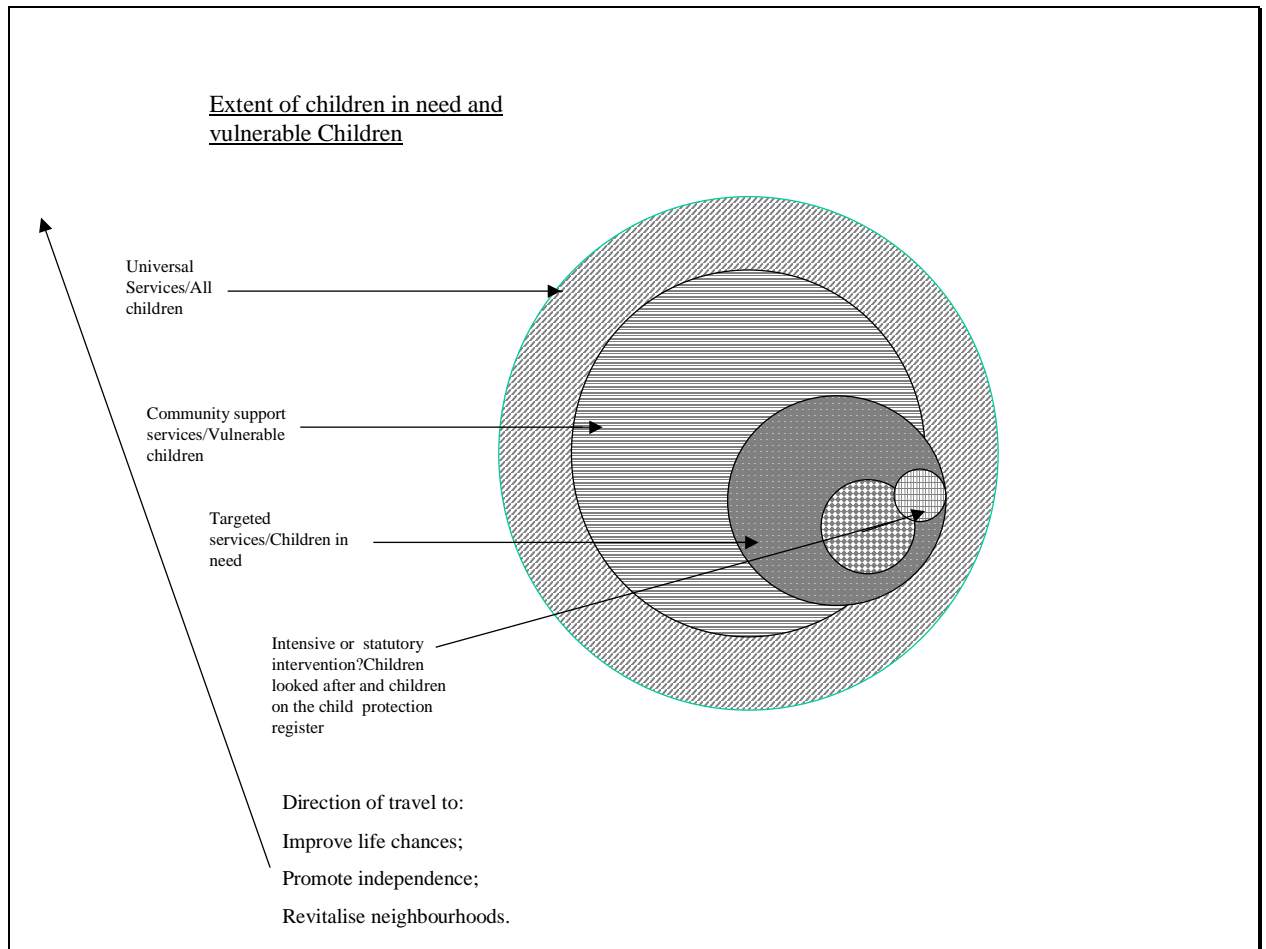
Corporate

- Neighbourhood Renewal
- Best Value Performance Plan
- Community Plan
- EMAS
- Equalities
- Revitalising Neighbourhoods

Service Specific

- Children's Services Plan
- Crime and Disorder Strategy
- The early Years Development and Child Care Plan
- Education Development Plan
- Health Improvement Programme
- Quality Protects
- Behaviour Support Plan
- The Housing Strategy

The review will follow the principle that both best value and improved life chances will be delivered if children can be moved to a position where the level of targeted support can be progressively reduced. Ultimately to the point where they receive universally delivered services. The following, model based upon national figures of need illustrates these support levels.



To achieve this objective the review will consider the following key areas

- The most appropriate departmental and business unit structure and associated systems to deliver high quality, timely, locally accessible and responsive services.
- Ensuring effective user participation and empowerment
- Removing unnecessary professional boundaries
- Achieving the most economic and efficient use of available resources through integrated partnerships and strategic alliances.

When addressing the above the following detailed issues will be addressed

- Reducing the impact of school exclusion and non attendance
- Increasing the pace of service delivery
- Recruiting and retaining staff
- Refocusing from statutory intervention to providing community support
- Promoting independence

The following business units will be included within the review

Education Department

- Admissions and Exclusions
- Early Years

- Psychology Service
- Educational Welfare Service
- Special Education Service
- Special Needs Teaching Service
- Student Support Service
- Ethnic Minorities and Traveller Achievement Grants (EMTAG)
- Shoppers Play Centre

Social Services Department

- Adoption
- Children's Residential
- Children and Family Resources
- Fostering
- Leaving Care Team

Multi Agency Services

- Child and Adolescent Mental Service (CAMHS)

The following Business Units have been excluded from the review

- Awards and Grants - because service is not targeted at vulnerable children

Finally account will need to be taken of the interfaces to the following areas of service to be reviewed in years 3, 4 and 5 of the Best Value programme.

- Youth Offending Team
- Child Care Operations
- Disabled Children Services
- Children and Family Access
- Independent Monitoring
- Youth Services
- Homelessness services
- Community Services.