

# Strategic Management Plan 2008

## Introduction

### Our Vision

Children and young people deserve the best start in life and we want them to enjoy life, to achieve, to stay safe from harm, to be healthy and to grow up to be successful adults in a loving, caring environment

The overarching vision for public services in Swindon is outlined in the Community Strategy, which was prepared in partnership with other agencies in Swindon. The Local Strategic Partnership has consulted widely on a refreshed Community Strategy which looks at a vision for Swindon for the next 20 years. This was launched in February 2008. Each agency has their own Corporate Plan, but each Plan outlines how we all work in partnership, aligning and pooling our resources to achieve our priorities and to ensure that the people of Swindon receive a good quality service.

Swindon Borough Council has made 50 promises to the people of Swindon, which will be achieved by 2010. Eight of the key promises are linked to the priorities for Children and Young People services, and are detailed in the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP). The agenda for change outlined in the Children Act 2004, ties into the Local Government White Paper, 'Strong and Prosperous Communities', published in October 2006, which advocates the development of the neighbourhood agenda for empowering communities. Since the publication of the Children and Young People's Plan, further plans, policies and statutory requirements have been introduced and the actions in the reviewed CYPP will be amended to take account of:

- Education and Inspection Act 2007
- Child Care Act 2006
- Adoption Act 2006
- A new duty on schools to promote well-being and community cohesion
- New guidance concerning the refocusing of Children's Trust Arrangements to enhance the duty of cooperation.

The Children and Young People's Plan details our plans for the implementation, planning and commissioning of services to meet the requirements of the Children Act 2004.

As part of that implementation, staff providing universal and targeted services to children and young people are to be co-located in four geographical teams across Swindon, with a fifth service for Disabled Children and Young People. Five Integrated Service Managers have been appointed to take this work forward. There will be close links between children's centres, extended services and the multi-agency teams.

The June 2007 review of the Children and Young People's Plan measured progress to date and particularly since the Joint Area Review (JAR) of Children Services in Swindon carried out in June 2006. It takes account of the findings of the JAR, our action in response to those findings, as well as new developments and changes. It evaluates the impact of what we have done on outcomes for children and young people. At the same time, it considers how we can maintain the momentum of progress. Following the JAR, we produced an Action Plan to address its recommendations and findings.

New guidance on Local Area Agreements means that we have to publish a new Local Area Agreement for Swindon in April 2008. We have used this opportunity to publish a new Children & Young People's Plan 2008-2011, setting priorities for children and young people based on the findings of this review of the Children & Young People's Plan, together with a refreshed needs assessment undertaken in 2007, results from the Tell Us Survey 2007 and consultation with stakeholders, parents and carers and young people which took place in November 2007.

Clear and challenging objectives and targets, as set out in the new CYPP and LAA, have been agreed with partners and are shared across services. The priorities identified in the LAA remain the key matters on which we need to make progress as evidenced by the review of the CYPP and the needs assessment, both of which form part of the Annual Performance Assessment. We are clear that we need to develop a more robust and action- focused overall approach to diversity and equalities throughout Children Services.

Participation by young people in service development is well established and is leading to improvements in existing and new services.

A multi agency Children's Workforce Strategy is in place to support recruitment and retention initiatives and the development of multi agency training programmes based on common core skills. A broader Children Services Workforce Development Programme, to include school staff, is being developed for implementation in 2008.

We need to monitor and evaluate the impact of our service delivery, and this Strategic Management Plan therefore incorporates the aims of the five business units within the Children Services Directorate. Milestones are drawn up which ensure that all Children Services Plans are effectively and regularly monitored through the Strategic Management Plan, by the Children Services Leadership Team, the Children's Trust Performance Group and Corporate Board. Risk Registers are in place for the Children and Young People's Plan, Integration, Local Area Agreement and Strategic Management Plan.

The implementation of the Every Child Matters Agenda is moving on well within Swindon, and there are two key contributors to our good progress in this area. One is the major commitment that headteachers and governors have put into the well-being of all children and to the extended schools agenda. The second is the excellent partnership working that has developed,

both with partners outside the Council and also within the Children Services Directorate.

Overall, we have made good progress on implementing the Every Child Matters agenda. Outcomes have improved and as we increase our knowledge and understanding of needs, we are able to better target our resources to make a difference. However, we do need to make faster progress in some areas, and these are documented and targeted. We know that circumstances change, as revealed by our latest needs analysis, and we have developed a new Children and Young People's Plan in response.

We are now about to travel on a different stage of our journey, where we need to develop a new relationship with schools and our partners in order to drive forward a step change in the development of Children Services.

We are taking on the challenge of improving standards of service in Swindon and in the context of our good progress on implementing 'Every Child Matters' are committed to raising achievement and improving life chances for all our children and young people in Swindon.

**John Gilbert**  
**Group Director, Children**  
**April 2008**