

# Future Children's Services: Children and Families Directorate Improvement Journey

Monday 14<sup>th</sup> February 2022 (updated April 2022)

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**BE BOLD**  
**BE BIRMINGHAM**



# THE DIRECTORATE



# Role of the DCS – overview of responsibilities

## APPENDIX A

**Professional responsibility for the leadership, strategy and effectiveness of local authority children's services**

**Responsible for securing the provision of services which address the needs of all children and young people, including the most disadvantaged and vulnerable, and their families and carers**

**Work closely with other local partners to improve the outcomes and well-being of children and young people**

**Responsible for the performance of local authority functions relating to the education and social care of children and young people**

**Ensuring that effective systems are in place for discharging these functions, including where a local authority has commissioned any services from another provider rather than delivering them itself**

**Have regard to the General Principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and ensure that children and young people are involved in the development and delivery of local services**

**Working  
together for our  
children and  
young people**

Department  
for Education

**Statutory guidance on the  
roles and responsibilities  
of the Director of  
Children's Services and  
the Lead Member for  
Children's Services**

For local authorities

April 2013

Birmingham City  
Council

Our community

Birmingham  
Children's Trust

Our children,  
young people  
and their  
families

Birmingham  
Children's  
Partnership

Wider partners  
including  
voluntary and  
community sector

Early Years,  
Schools and Post  
16 settings



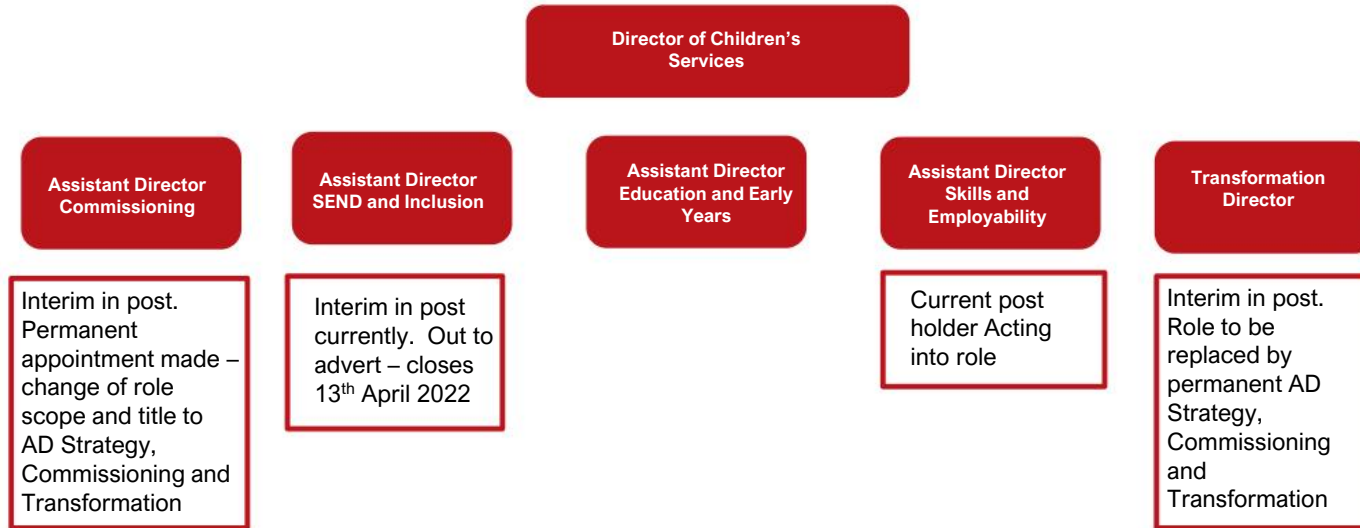
# Directorate Functions

## APPENDIX A

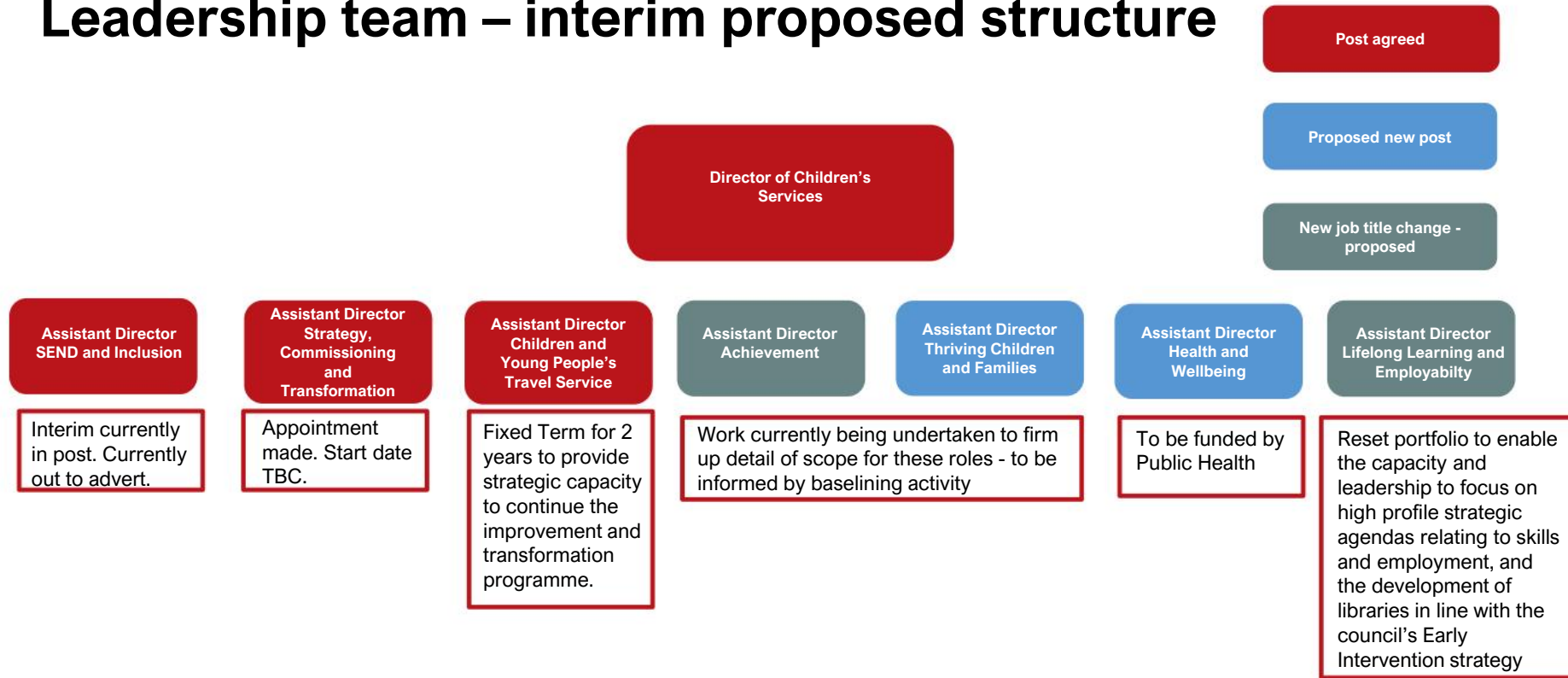
### Functions

Education and Early Years	Inclusion and SEND	Skills and Employability	Commissioning
Virtual School for Children in Care	Special Educational Needs Assessment and Review (SENAR)	Youth Service including Youth Centres	Intelligent Client Function for BCT
Early Help and Safeguarding Advisors support to schools	Home to School Transport	Libraries Service (Central - LoB)	Commissioning and Contract Management on behalf of Education and Skills and Public Health of circa £481m of third party spend
Child Employment Licensing	Pupil Support Service including Specialist Teachers and support (Communication, Autism, Audiology, Hearing Impairment, Physical disabilities, Sensory)	Libraries Service (Community)	
Children Missing Education	Occupational Therapy	Archive and Collections Services	
Elective Home Education	Educational Psychology	14-19 Partnership (14-19 progression service)	Supporting on directorate wide initiatives i.e. covid response, risk management, bid applications
Early Years and childcare including Children's Centres, Sufficiency and funding	Special Educational Needs Coordinator support, Portage	Youth Education and Employment (14-19 Service)	
School and Governor Support	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS)	Careers Services	
School Admissions, Attendance and Exclusions	Wellbeing	Adult Education Service	
Education infrastructure e.g. property, cleaning, capital projects		Family Learning	
Pupil Place Planning		Employment and skills	
Lead for relationship with: Early Years, Schools and settings, Birmingham Education Partnership, Regional Schools Commissioner		Digital Inclusion Strategy	

# Current Leadership Team



# Leadership team – interim proposed structure

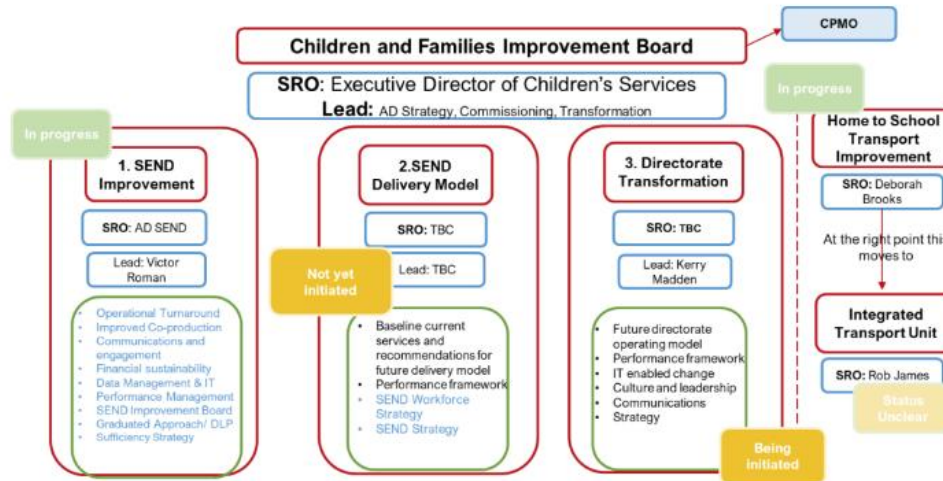


# IMPROVEMENT IN CHILDREN'S SERVICES



# Directorate Improvement Programme

- In October 2021, a paper was brought to CLT and then Cabinet to outline the first phase of improvement work post the Local Area SEND Inspection. The programme shown here has now been initiated as a result.
- Cabinet approved spend on transformation of **£7.29m** spready across these programmes.





# Department Improvement Programme

- This funding was for: 2 years funding for SEND Improvement but only 6 months funding for H2ST and Directorate Improvement. The paper signalled that the Directorate would carry out further scoping work and return for a more detailed ask in 2022. This will go to Cabinet in April.
- Initially efforts have been focused primarily on the SEND Improvement Programme and work has only just begun on the Directorate Transformation Programme
- The **SEND Delivery Model** programme is paused pending reporting by the DfE Commissioner and key elements being delivered through the SEND Improvement Programme instead
- The **ITU Programme** is paused

# Children's Services Improvement

- The LGA has published research into improvement in local children's services. It identifies three key phases of improvement:

## The three phases

Poor-to-fair

Fair-to-good

Good-to-great

## Defining Characteristics

1. Getting the basics right – driven by leadership
2. Building the ethos and culture – and engaging the workforce

1. Capacity for robust self-assessment, vigilance
2. Locus of leadership shifts and becomes more broad
3. From “mission-critical” aspects to whole-service view

1. Improvement no longer a discrete project – it is the norm
2. Disciplined innovation embedded within delivery
3. Openness to others – challenge and system leadership role

# Children's Services Improvement (continued.)

- The services delivered directly by BCC are not homogenous and some perform well, but as a directorate we would identify ourselves as being in **Phase 1** with a strong need to ensure that the basics are in place and residents receive consistently good services
- Birmingham Children's Trust and Adult Services are further ahead on this journey and there are lessons to learn from the ways in which this has been achieved
- BCT's most recent focussed visit identifying '*a more child-focused culture*', '*senior managers understand the service well and work quickly to address weakening performance*' and '*a comprehensive and effective approach to assuring quality of practice and impact*'.
- The LGA research identifies that it typically takes '*two years from the frank recognition and acceptance of the service's weakness to running a safe, effective core service*' i.e. two years to go from poor to fair, and identified seven key enablers for improvement

# Seven enablers of improvement in children's services APAS Assessment

	Criteria	Self-Assessment
Strategic Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rigorous and forensic self assessment</li> <li>Honest and open response to feedback and inspections</li> <li>A vision and strategic plan that is right for the organisation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acceptance of current performance and need to improve</li> <li>Initiating full baseline of services</li> <li>Initiation work on Children's Plan and Directorate Plan</li> </ul>
Leadership and Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain the right, stable, focused leadership at all levels</li> <li>Don't rush into a restructure</li> <li>Effective, professional governance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Permanent Director of Children's Services appointed</li> <li>Plans being worked up for some immediate changes and longer term redesign to align resources with priorities</li> <li>Governance being re-established</li> </ul>
Engaging and Supporting the workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Change the rhetoric and avoid the 'blame game'</li> <li>Articulate high expectations and ambitious goals</li> <li>Stabilise the workforce</li> <li>Develop staff from within</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff have been impacted by leadership churn and insufficient focus on staff development</li> <li>Lack of clear departmental plans being addressed</li> <li>Staff are being engaged in improvement programme</li> </ul>
Engaging partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage senior partners'</li> <li>Align thresholds to ensure consistent decision making</li> <li>Review practice through multi-agency audits</li> <li>Remain outward facing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Birmingham Children's Partnership re-established to bring partners together</li> <li>Need to conduct work on thresholds and consistent practice</li> </ul>
Build Supporting Apparatus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain a secure front door</li> <li>Ensure the flow of cases reflects a child's journey</li> <li>Know the business and track progress</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Front Door Unclear</li> <li>BCC Services not user-friendly, joined up or reflective of child's journey</li> <li>Use of performance data needs to be developed</li> </ul>
Fostering Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a learning culture</li> <li>Test and pilot new ideas carefully and evaluate rigorously</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning culture not yet embedded</li> </ul>
Judicious Use of resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure strategic and financial planning are aligned</li> <li>Invest where it is needed</li> <li>Sustain investment</li> <li>Focus on long-term priorities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BCC has invested in SEND and directorate but more investment needed over a long period of time</li> <li>Work being done to align improvement and financial planning for medium to long term</li> </ul>

# Progress to date

- **SEND Improvement programme initiated** –majority of project staff recruited and in post, Improvement Board established, SROs for all workstreams. Improvements already evident in service performance
- **Home to School Transport improvement programme in place** – service performance stabilising but next phase now needed to tackle long-term challenges
- **Programme of staff engagement initiated and culture being reset** – over 400 staff attend sessions and many involved in transformation
- **Birmingham Children's Partnership reinstated** – plans being worked up to ensure sufficient resources to deliver work programme
- **New permanent leadership role established and appointed to AD Strategy, Commissioning and Transformation** – start date agreed for July 2022.
- **Additional leadership post created** (AD SEND Transport) and AD SEND has been advertised. Building a permanent, stable team.
- **Experienced Programme Manager for Directorate Improvement Programme** appointed and in post

# Priorities for next 12 months

## APPENDIX A



**Establish a Children's Plan for the city and an Improvement Plan for Directorate**



**Get the right leadership team in place underpinned by strong central functions**



**Establish strong governance**



**Improve communication and engagement with staff and stakeholders**



**Baseline all services**



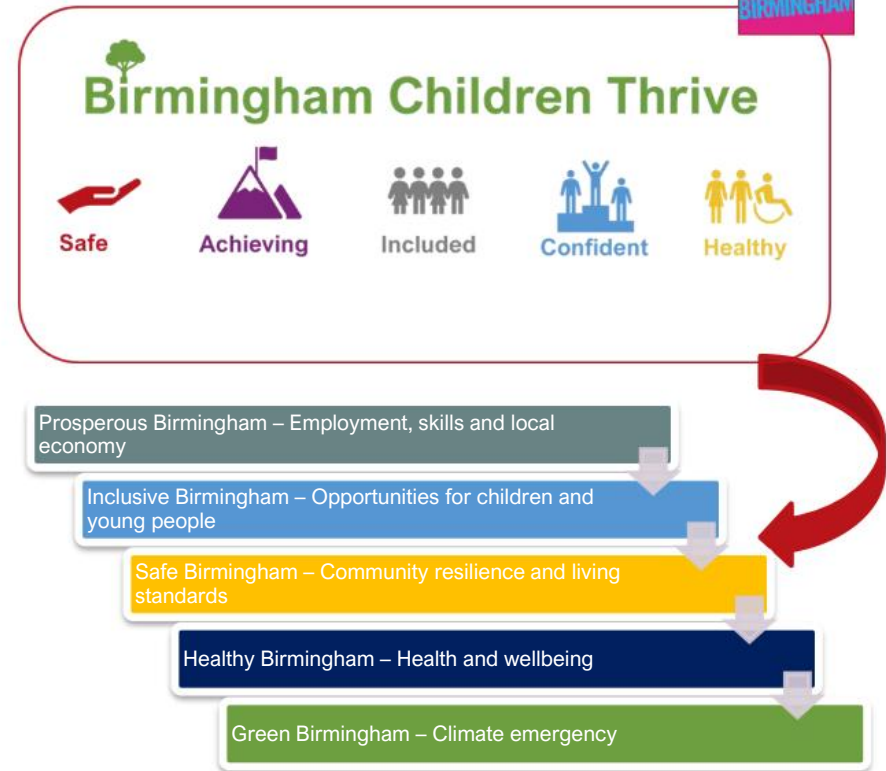
**Continue to drive improvements in SEND**

# VISION, CULTURE AND IDENTITY



# Vision

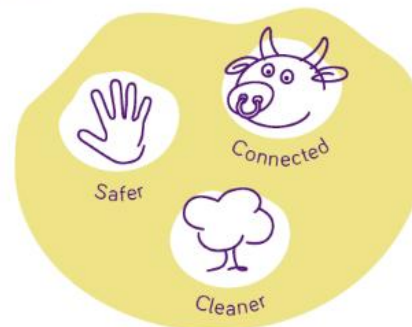
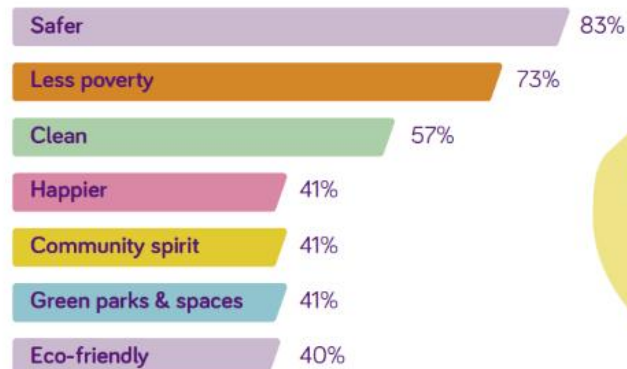
- The Director of Children's Services has been road-testing a vision for the Directorate with staff, Members, and stakeholders and this has been well-received
- We want to create the environment where all children and young people in our city are supported to achieve their full potential
- This vision is part of BCC delivering for the citizens of Birmingham





## Children & young people's vision for the City

Nearly 4,000 children and young people took part in surveys and workshops. They were asked what are the top five things you want for Birmingham? **This is their vision for the City:**



# Directorate Role in delivering the Vision

- In order to deliver this, we need a strong Directorate at the centre of BCC – with the right capacity and capability to provide city-wide leadership
- The Director of Children's Services, acting as the leader and convenor of Children's Services in the city will also chair a strong Birmingham Children's Partnership with a clear agenda and ownership of a city-wide Children's Plan



**Birmingham Children Thrive**



Supported by a **Children's Services Directorate** that has:  
Strong governance, strong management, engaged staff, clear strategy

And partner organisations across the city working together as  
**one system** that puts children and families at the heart of all we do



# The Culture we will create in the Council:

**Children at the**



# DIRECTORATE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME



# Directorate Improvement Programme

- The Directorate Improvement Programme will deliver a stable platform from which to lead an ambitious vision for the children and young people of Birmingham
- With one clear, Improvement Plan and vision it will ensure that all parts of the directorate and partners work together to deliver better outcomes
- In time, people will want to come and work in Birmingham's Children's Services because they know that we are on a journey to excellence

# Directorate Improvement Plan

CPMO

## APPENDIX A

Birmingham Children Thrive



### Where we will be

Stable, permanent, ambitious SLT  
Performance culture embedded – measure the right things  
Quality Assurance embedded  
Clear strategy and directorate plan  
Central functions that support leaders to deliver  
Working together well with partners  
The child at the centre  
Parental confidence restored  
Digital tools in place to support customer journey

### Improvement Programme Board

#### Phase 1 – 2022/23

- Baseline all services
- Stable leadership team
- Directorate improvement plan
- Support functions in place
- Directorate operating model agreed
- Work to understand children's experience

#### Phase 2 – 2023 - 2025

- Full Directorate Redesign
- Fit for purpose IT systems in place
- Consistent Localities Model established
- One Front Door
- Balanced SEND System

### Where we are now

High churn, interim leadership  
Weak understanding of performance data and impact  
Quality Assurance patchy  
Reactive – led by external scrutiny or reacting to issues  
Insufficient central functions  
Partners have lost trust  
Voice of the child not at centre  
Very low trust from parents  
Immature use of digital tools



# Birmingham Children's Services: Road Map to Excellence

## Get the basics right

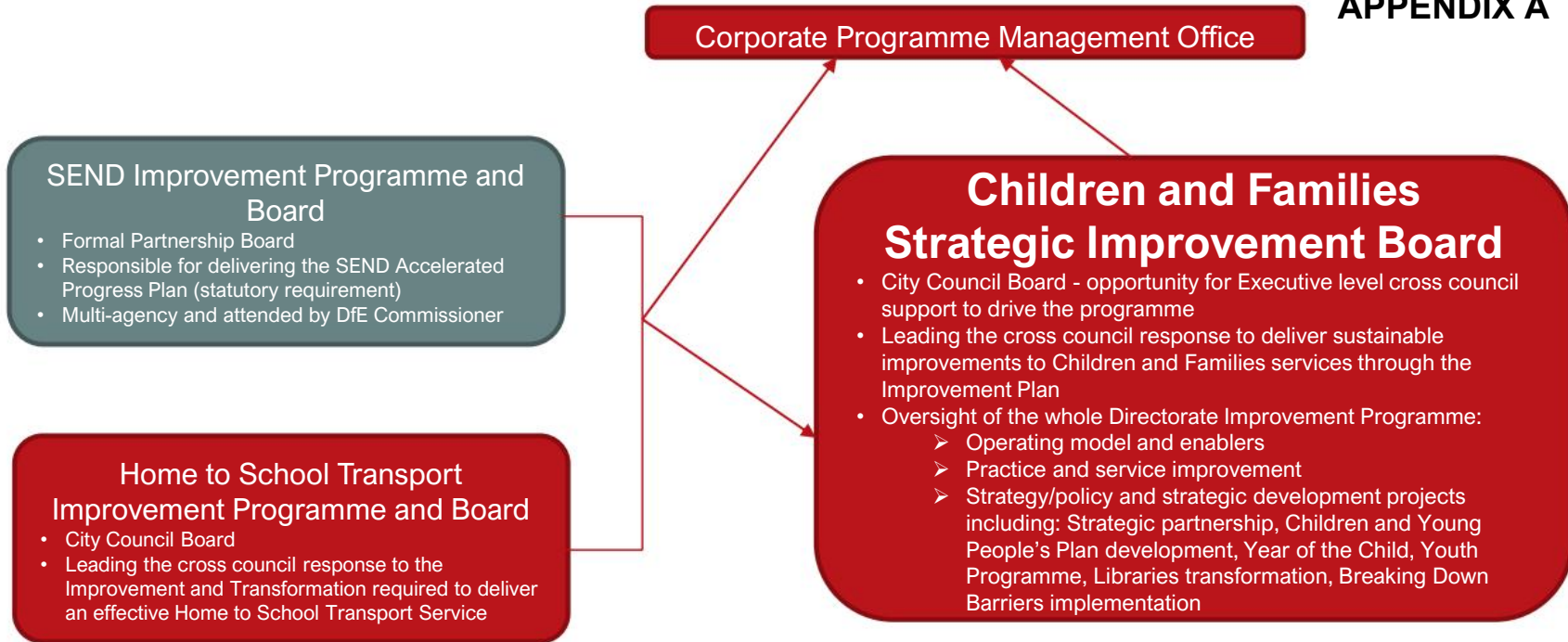
- Well managed teams with manageable workloads
- Staff have the right tools to get the job done
- Underpinned by robust quality assurance
- The right data and evidence to inform decision making

## Get the culture right

- Everyone a leader, everyone a learner, everyone accountable
- Listen to children, recognise their lived experience and aim high
- Establish council's role in leading and shaping Birmingham's children's services

## Deliver Better Outcomes

- Develop a clear strategy and Children's Plan for the children and young people of Birmingham
- Partnership working by default – working well with partner organisations
- Delivery Plans with clear, measurable milestones



**CHILDREN AND FAMILIES DIRECTORATE PROGRAMMES: IN FLIGHT/IN PIPELINE**  
 (GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS AS AT MARCH 2022)



## APPENDIX A

